



Morrison Consults Ltd

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Clients Understand the SQE Pathway for African and Caribbean Lawyers in 2026

For African and Caribbean lawyers and graduates, the landscape for qualifying as a Solicitor in England and Wales has been fundamentally reshaped. The transition from the Legal Practice Course (LPC) to the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) is no longer an impending change—it is the established reality.

As of 2022, the LPC became a legacy route with a definitive end date, while the SQE represents the modern, universal standard. For legal professionals in Africa and The Caribbean, understanding this new pathway is essential for building a career with international reach and recognition.

The LPC Today: A Phasing-Out Legacy Pathway

It is important to clarify the current status of the LPC. The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) transitional arrangements, which closed to most new candidates in September 2021, created a limited window for those already on the path.

Today, the LPC route has a final sunset: 31 December 2032.

According to the latest SRA guidance (November 2025):

- The LPC is only available to a specific, pre-2021 cohort nearing the end of their qualification journey. This includes those who had accepted an offer for a qualifying law degree by 21 September 2021 and started the course by 31 December 2021.
- For any law student who began a qualifying law degree in September 2022 or later, the SQE is the only available route to qualification.
- From 1 January 2033, all Solicitors, regardless of background, must have qualified through the SQE.
- An LPC provides no exemption from the SQE assessments.

Consequently, career advice for aspiring Solicitors must now be centred on the SQE framework. This is not a matter of preference, but of regulatory fact.

Why the SQE is the Strategic Choice for Modern Lawyers

The SRA has been clear: the SQE is more demanding than the LPC. This increased rigor ensures newly qualified Solicitors are thoroughly prepared for modern practice. Data from



2024-2025 sittings shows that LPC graduates who attempt SQE2 without having taken SQE1 have significantly lower pass rates (ranging from 36% to 62%) compared to those following the integrated SQE pathway (79% to 85%).

For international candidates, the SQE offers distinct strategic advantages:

1. **Flexibility in Qualifying Work Experience (QWE):** The SQE replaces the rigid and increasingly scarce Period of Recognised Training (PRT) and Training Contract with QWE, which can be gained in up to four organisations (before, during and after completing the SQE). This includes law firms, in-house legal teams, and pro bono centres, offering a more achievable path to meeting practical requirements, potentially even within African and Caribbean-based roles.
2. **A Centralised, Consistent Benchmark:** The SQE eliminates variability between course providers. Every Solicitor now qualifies by passing the same national assessments (SQE1 on legal knowledge, SQE2 on practical skills), ensuring a uniformly high standard.
3. **Future-Proofs Your Career:** Qualifying through the SQE means your credential is aligned with the long-term future of the profession. It signals to employers and clients that you have met the latest and most demanding standard.

Navigating Your Path in 2026 and Beyond

For the vast majority of new entrants to the profession, the decision is clear. The SQE is the pathway. The critical task now is to navigate it successfully.

This requires a strategic approach:

- **Understanding the Two-Part Assessment:** SQE1 (Functioning Legal Knowledge) and SQE2 (Practical Legal Skills) demand focused and integrated preparation. The SRA data underscores that success is strongest when both parts are approached as a cohesive journey.
- **Planning Your QWE:** Strategically gaining the required two years of qualifying work experience is a key component of the journey.
- **Choosing the Right Preparation:** With various preparation courses available, selecting one that fits your learning style and complements your background is crucial.



In 2026, building an internationally recognised legal career begins with a clear understanding of the SQE. This modern pathway offers a rigorous, flexible route to qualification for ambitious African and Caribbean lawyers.

As business and education consultants, Morrison Consults specialises in guiding international professionals through the SQE.

Based in London, Morrison Consults provides tailored SQE, BPC University application support and clarity, helping you turn this new regulatory framework into a successful career advantage.

Ready to take the next step? Join us at the upcoming Morrison Consults STUDY LAW – AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE event, where we will explore the route to practice for Solicitors and Barristers in detail and map out your personalised path to qualification.

Register now to secure your place: www.morrisonconsults.co.uk/events