

FAQs about English or Welsh proficiency

Updated 4 October 2024

To help explain how a qualified lawyer can meet our English or Welsh proficiency requirements, we have put together these questions and answers.

On 13 June 2024, we changed our rules about when and how we gain assurance that a qualified lawyer with an SQE2 exemption has the language proficiency needed to practise as a solicitor.

General questions

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What are the requirements for providing evidence of English or Welsh proficiency?

Most aspiring solicitors demonstrate their proficiency in English or Welsh by passing SQE2.

However, if you are granted an exemption from SQE2, you must demonstrate your language proficiency in a different way. This needs to be done before you apply for admission as a solicitor of England and Wales.

You can do this by:

- providing evidence that the professional legal qualification on which your exemption was based was assessed in English or Welsh, or
- passing a language assessment at an appropriate level.

You can also choose to sit and pass SQE2 instead.

I am a qualified lawyer and was admitted as a solicitor before 13 June 2024. However, I haven't applied for my first practising certificate, what do I need to do?

Before applying for your first practising certificate, you must demonstrate your English or Welsh proficiency in one of the following ways:

- by providing evidence that the professional legal qualification on which your exemption was based was assessed in English or Welsh, or
- by passing a language assessment at an appropriate level.

This is done through an application in [mySRA \[https://my.sra.org.uk/\]](https://my.sra.org.uk/) under 'Start a new application'.

I am a qualified lawyer who has not yet been admitted as a solicitor. However, I did receive an exemption from SQE2 before 13 June 2024, what do I need to do?

Before applying to be admitted as a solicitor, you must demonstrate your English or Welsh proficiency in one of the following ways:

- providing evidence that the professional legal qualification on which your exemption was based was assessed in English or Welsh, or
- passing a language assessment at an appropriate level.

This is done through an application in [mySRA \[https://my.sra.org.uk/\]](https://my.sra.org.uk/) and can be found in your SQE checklist in your profile.

I am a qualified lawyer who already had a practising certificate issued before 13 June 2024. Do I need to do anything?

No, you do not need to take any further action to demonstrate your English or Welsh proficiency.

Degrees taught in English or Welsh

I have a degree which was taught and assessed in English or Welsh. Can I use this qualification to provide evidence of my language proficiency?

You can use your professional legal qualification/degree as evidence so long as it is the same qualification you used for your SQE2 exemption and that it was taught and assessed in English. This includes anyone who was already admitted as a solicitor by 13 June 2024 but did not have their first practising certificate.

All other degrees, which do not form part of a professional legal qualification, will not be accepted as evidence.

English language tests

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If I need to take a language test, which one should I take/who are the providers?



You can choose a Secure English Language Test (SELT) test from any of the [UK Home Office approved providers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt#approved-test-providers) [<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt#approved-test-providers>].

What does SELT mean and how is this different from other tests?

A Secure English Language Test (SELT) is a test that has been designated by the UK Home Office as secure and is also known as UKVI for UK Visa and Immigration.

The test questions and format are the same but there is greater assurance of identification. Your certificate must be SELT (or UKVI) designated.

What are the minimum test scores needed for each SELT provider?

The minimum test score required from each provider is:

- [IELTS \(Academic\) UKVI](https://ielts.org/test-centres) [<https://ielts.org/test-centres>] - 7.5 overall
- [Pearson PTE \(Academic\) UKVI](https://www.pearsonpte.com/selt-tests/pte-academic-ukvi) [<https://www.pearsonpte.com/selt-tests/pte-academic-ukvi>] - 78 overall
- [Language Cert \(Academic SELT\)](https://www.languagecert.org/en/language-exams/english/languagecert-esol-selt/academic-selt) [<https://www.languagecert.org/en/language-exams/english/languagecert-esol-selt/academic-selt>] - 80 overall
- [LanguageCert SELT C1 International ESOL](https://selt.languagecert.org/search-selt-exam) [<https://selt.languagecert.org/search-selt-exam>] [<https://www.languagecert.org/en/language-exams/english/languagecert-international-esol>]- High Pass overall
- [Trinity College London - SELT ISE III](https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/SELT/C1-ISE-III) [<https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/SELT/C1-ISE-III>]- Level III (Reading - Distinction; Listening - Distinction; Writing - Distinction; Speaking - Merit).

Can I take the test online?

Yes, if your provider offers the SELT to the appropriate level online (ie an IELTS score of 7.5 or equivalent).

What ID will I need to bring to take the test?

Your provider will give you all relevant information before taking the test.

How old can the test certificate be before I need to retake the test?

Your SELT certificate can be up to three years old when using it for admission purposes.

Welsh language tests

[How can I provide evidence of my language proficiency in Welsh?](#)

If you want to provide evidence using an alternative language test in Welsh, please [contact us \[https://rules.sra.org.uk/contactus\]](https://rules.sra.org.uk/contactus) first.

We will review each request on a case-by-case basis and work with you to determine if there is a test that you can take that is equivalent to an IELTS standard of 7.5.