



EMPLOYER'S GUIDE:
**Graduate Solicitor
Apprenticeships**

February 2025

Dear Employer,

Thank you for your interest in our Graduate Solicitor Apprenticeship programme (GSA). We run two graduate apprenticeships programmes for law graduates and non-law graduates, every six months in line with SQE1 assessments.

We are very excited about the opportunities that these schemes give both employers and individuals, and you will read more about the benefits later. The College already supports over 20 employers with their GSA programmes.

This pack provides the key facts around the programmes to help you and your apprentice make an informed decision on whether to partner with the College as your training provider.

Our GSA programmes build on our very successful 40-week SQE preparation courses, with assessments and coaching support from trained lawyers.

We are looking forward to working closely with you, to invest time and care in ensuring that your apprenticeships thrive in their workplace and pass the SQE assessments.

I hope you find this pack informative, and please get in touch if we can assist in setting up your apprenticeship programme.



Giles Proctor

Dr Giles Proctor
CEO, The College of Legal Practice

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Kayleigh Jones
Graduate Solicitor Apprentice
The College of Legal Practice

"I'm currently finding the apprenticeship and studying for the SQE challenging, rewarding, surprising."

"The College has been able to provide me with a lot of support and assistance throughout, and I think that is the most important part. The challenge is on me to make sure that I can learn and retain the legal knowledge, but having that support network makes it ten times easier."

WHY HAVE AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME?



SQE Funding for the employer

Large employers can draw down 100% of the funding for the GSA through [the Apprenticeship Levy](#), making this an efficient way to bring in future solicitors in a sustainable way for your business. This funding channel is unique and can be put towards the full apprenticeship programme costs that includes training, coaching and SQE1 & 2 assessment costs, including one re-sit for SQE1.

And great news for smaller employers too, they can receive up to 95% of their apprenticeship programme costs from the government, even if they do not pay the Levy.



Increased likelihood of passing the SQE

We are seeing that students who are preparing for longer for the SQE are getting better results.

The apprentice programmes carefully cover every aspect of qualification. The candidates have a structured preparation pathway towards taking the SQE1 and SQE2, each over a one-year period. In addition to personal supervision, they receive discrete coaching to support their confidence and progression, and meet the requirements of QWE .

This pathway works brilliantly to ensure aspiring lawyers gain all the necessary preparation, the skills and qualifications required to move into the solicitor profession, with additional support to meet their goals.



Retention and Progression

The GSA is for graduates only, who are Your application process for apprenticeships is set up much like a training contract, with a clear programme and expectations for employment, training and progression to become a solicitor. Apprentices are unlikely to enter the programmes without a firm intention of completing it.

The GSA has the benefit of extensive apprentice support to limit the chance of apprentices dropping out due to personal challenges. Coaching is provided to meet apprentice needs both academic and wellbeing, allowing any concerns to be addressed at the earliest stage possible and the prerequisite support put in place swiftly.



Delivering value for your clients

Traditional apprenticeship schemes take apprentices out of the workplace for a day a week, impacting on client delivery. With our programmes, apprentices can study virtually, allowing them to focus on their work responsibilities and demands alongside their study. Our programmes avoid the need for travel time and costs and give apprentices options for study outside core working hours if need.

Different GSA providers take different approaches to the timing of training, and deciding on the right provider to match your intentions is a key consideration for you to factor in.



Improving access and social mobility

You can help achieve your social mobility objectives through the introduction of Graduate Solicitor Apprenticeships. The GSA is an excellent example of a salaried opportunity for those who perhaps can't otherwise afford to prepare for the SQE. For many students, who are the first in their family to get a degree, let alone enter this rigorous profession, we hope that having a clear and funded structure to progress will be the difference between pursuing their goals and not. This has a knock-on effect for employers leading to increased social mobility, a more diverse workforce and eventually a pool of future solicitors that better represent the society they serve. This future pool of solicitors is already built into your business through their experience and training, leading to higher staff retention.

PM Law Group, based in Sheffield, are using the GSA programme to train their SQE Trainees. Steven Sutherland, their Head of Training, tells us why they have taken this approach:

"We were delighted as a firm when we discovered this route was available. We have found that some students are a little overwhelmed at the prospect of the SQE, as it's very different to the more structured academic style of learning they are used to. With the GSA we get that clearly defined structure that recent graduates are more familiar with when they are fresh out of university, so it's a great fit.

We've found that the funding through the Apprenticeship Levy is also really appealing for us as a firm, and for our trainees. We can get a lot of talented individuals through the programme, leaving fully qualified. We found that with the SQE-only route, some trainees were falling behind. With the GSA, we're more heavily involved in their progress, and as such can spot where they're coming across gaps and support them more pre-emptively. We're utilising the tripartite approach to learning here by getting as much as we can out of the College coaches to spot these gaps too. It's a great relationship and has a positive impact on progression.

We felt that the onboarding process with the College was great. The learners were happy, and they were clear on timelines of what to expect and when. They met their tutors nice and early and we also found that the frontloading of physical and digital materials was really proactive. A lot of our apprentices are young and thirsty for progression - so having the manual from day one meant they could get to grips with the course straight way."

Steve Sutherland
Head of Training, PM Law Group





***THE COLLEGE'S
GRADUATE
APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAMMES***



▀ Learning designed for the SQE

Using our SQE and online design expertise, this highly interactive and structured training is designed for passing the SQE. We have not repurposed any LPC materials and designed our training specifically to address the new SQE syllabus and de-risk the national exams for Graduate Solicitor Apprentices. The learner journey also ensures there is a very clear and defined pathway to ensure the workplace evidence portfolio covers all the required apprenticeship standards.

▀ Support from our experienced solicitor supervisors

We give your apprentices high levels of personalised supervisor engagement and individual feedback on their performance throughout their training with us, plus through our online platform, your apprentices can access support throughout the week.

▀ Individual coaching from experienced legal professionals

We give your apprentice ongoing individual coaching throughout the programmes, working closely with both your apprentice and you as the employer. Our coaches have been trained and have a very strong understanding of the SQE national examination syllabus. We will endeavour to ensure the same coach works with you and your apprentices throughout the programme.

▀ Virtual learning to weekly deadlines:

The training makes the best use of technology, providing options that fit around your apprentices' work schedule. Much of the learning content is available online at any time, supporting your firm's commitment to work/life balance. Our technology allows us to provide accurate performance feedback to assist your apprentices and their employer/coach to give you an up-to-date view on progression.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE



Initial Diagnosis & Induction

The GSA has the benefit of extensive apprentice support to limit the chance of apprentices dropping out due to personal challenges. Coaching is provided to meet apprentice needs both academic and wellbeing, allowing any concerns to be addressed at the earliest stage possible and the prerequisite support put in place swiftly.



Training & SQE Preparation

The training for SQE1 and SQE2 is through guided learning and live support sessions from the College's supervisors. Weekly deadlines are set for completion of units of learning, and live surgeries, town halls, personal supervision and feedback sessions are all offered virtually in short sessions across the week. The detail of can found on our [SQE1](#) and [SQE2 preparation](#) course pages.

For non-law graduates, they start their training with seven foundation legal knowledge modules.



Coaching

Throughout the course the apprentices will have their coach by their side. They will act as a support contact throughout the two or three year programme, consistently advising them and monitoring their progress. The coach will also help build a portfolio of workplace evidence and meet with their line manager every 12 weeks.



SQE Exams

The programme is structured to fully prepare the apprentice for SQE1 in their first year of training. The apprenticeship must pass SQE1 to continue the apprenticeship scheme. After passing SQE1, SQE2 is taken at the end of their second year – the end point assessment for their apprenticeship.

Should your apprentice not pass SQE1 first time, they can look at one resit, as part of the programme at no additional cost.

PROGRAMME OPTIONS

For UK Law Graduates: 2-year programme

QUALIFYING WORK EXPERIENCE & PORTFOLIO

SQE1 PREP

SQE1

SQE2 PREP

SQE2

INDIVIDUAL COACHING

Admissions Criteria

- Level 2 in Maths and English or has evidence of exemptions.
- UK undergraduate law degree with minimum 2:2 classification or equivalent
- English language equivalent to IELTS level 6.5 with a minimum of 6 in each

For Non-law Graduates: 3-year programme

QUALIFYING WORK EXPERIENCE & PORTFOLIO

FOUNDATION
KNOWLEDGE MODULES

SQE1 PREP

SQE1

SQE2 PREP

SQE2

INDIVIDUAL COACHING

Admissions Criteria

- Level 2 in Maths and English or has evidence of exemptions.
- UK undergraduate degree with minimum 2:2 classification or equivalent, or three A Levels and two years legal work experience.
- English language equivalent to IELTS level 6.5 with a minimum of 6 in each

MEET OUR COACHES

Sarah Taylor



Sarah Taylor is an Apprentice Coach on our Graduate Solicitor Apprenticeship Programmes. Sarah was previously the College's Programme Leader for the SQE2 Preparation Course and the Graduate Diploma in Law programme between 2022 and 2024. Before joining the College, she was Course Leader and Deputy Programme Leader at Manchester Law School for 10 years. Prior to this, Sarah worked as an in-house solicitor with the Co-op Insurance Society and as a solicitor with Eversheds.

Lisa Morrison

Before joining the College, Lisa spent over 25 years working as a solicitor, qualifying in 1997 and beginning her legal career practising commercial property law before taking up opportunities with top tier firms in Birmingham. She then moved to HM Land Registry working as an in house solicitor and her recent role in practice was a partner in a large multi office regional firm in the West Midlands. Lisa is now a Module leader for the College's SQE2 preparation course and an Apprenticeship Coach.



The College's approach to coaching

"The coaching relationship begins with a formal induction which involves the candidate, the employer's representative, and The College of Legal Practice. We'll talk through the course expectations, all the paperwork that is required and how the relationship will work between candidate, employer and the College."

"Once the induction is complete, coaches will meet the candidate every six weeks. On alternate sessions, the employer will also join the conversation. The employer usually joins us to be clear on what is expected of the apprentice as well as offering verbal confirmation that they have met one of our knowledge or skill requirements. This is a big difference between SQE supervision and coaching. In the coaching sessions we're regularly reviewing their practical work and connecting this back in with their employer, as opposed to focusing purely on the theory covered in the SQE."

"We work on a cycle of delivering portfolio information at one meeting, the apprentice taking six weeks to complete the portfolio, then a further meeting to offer advice, feedback, and our wisdom from our practice, then another six weeks to complete the portfolio and submit it for assessment." With the coaching we have a really clear guideline of what each meeting is for, what is being fed back, and what is being assessed. We also find this coaching system is a good time to offer some pastoral support and raise any workplace concerns for safeguarding measures."

Lisa Morrison
SQE2 Prep Module Leader,
Supervisor and Coach

"I've really enjoyed the pastoral side of my work as a coach, drawing on the informal mentoring I've done throughout 26 years of private practice." Lisa



TEN STEPS TO SETTING UP AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME



Setting yourself up as an Apprentice Employer means setting up an Apprenticeship Services Account with the government and finding a Registered Apprentice Training Provider. Then you can take these steps...

- 1.** Employer and Training Provider contracts to provide the GSA programme
- 2.** Employer and Graduate Solicitor Apprenticeship enter into an agreement
- 3.** Employer completes Training Provider's GSA application forms with details of apprentice
- 4.** Employer registers with gov.uk for funding
- 5.** The Graduate Solicitor Apprentice applies directly to the Training Provider
- 6.** The Apprentice speaks with the Apprenticeship team to check they fulfil eligibility criteria
- 7.** The Apprentice takes the Maths and English diagnostic tests (GCSE equivalent)
- 8.** The Apprentice has an initial meeting with their Apprenticeship Coach
- 9.** The Apprentice has an induction meeting and starts their coaching and training
- 10.** The Employer, Apprentice and Training Provider meet regularly to review progress

[Sign up your GSA with the College now](#)

COLLABORATING WITH YOU

Find a training provider that can support you with setting your organisation up as an Apprentice Employer and give you the time, expertise and feedback you need. Peter Liver, our Chief Operations Director reflects on the College's approach to partnership

"One of our key goals at the College is to increase diversity in the profession and make it as inclusive as possible. So, we will do as much as we can to support firms who want to diversify their training offer through the GSA and support social mobility.

Primarily what we can offer you is our time and expertise. You should look for a supportive and expert SQE training provider to work with on delivering the GSA. The GSA is a tripartite relationship between employer, the GSA training provider, and the GSA themselves - so you want to make sure you have an engaged and committed partner. Check that your potential provider has the robust framework in place needed to deliver the GSA. Things to reflect include how the GSA is actually delivered and the level and quality of both the training content and the coaching. We have coaches who understand and have taught the SQE syllabus and who are solicitors themselves so they understand the working environment of legal service providers.

Your training provider should also help you secure buy-in at an executive level. Some firms have a more traditional idea of how a trainee should qualify or have assumptions attached to an apprenticeship. We can support you in dispelling these myths, and help ensure that everyone in your leadership team understands why an apprenticeship route is a strong step forward as a great pipeline for inclusive talent development.

Lastly, your training provider should be able to commit to engaging with you regularly and offering timely feedback on your apprentices' performance, via the coaching sessions and across your cohort. They should be able to advise you on how well they are progressing and what the apprentices can do to progress further."

Peter Liver
Chief Operations Director
The College of Legal Practice



ABOUT US

The College of Legal Practice is a fully accredited, virtual, postgraduate law school based in the UK. We're also part of a not-for-profit international legal training group - [The College of Law](#).

Our aim is to develop each student's unique potential using SQE expertise and high quality personal supervision. With no campus, we have lower overheads so our SQE courses are around half the price of the equivalent training at a university.

Preparing students for the SQE

Our SQE training is entirely online, using a purpose-built platform. It's also very flexible, with full and part-time programmes and weekly deadlines - but engagement is key. Drawing on over 25 years of digital learning experience, our experts have developed innovative online learning modules that thoroughly prepare each student to pass the SQE, as well as to develop the transactional business skills and competencies they need to succeed in the industry.

At the time of day that suits them, students must complete a weekly calendar of units consisting of step-by-step activities and exercises that progress all the way to full-scale mock assessments. They are supported all the way with regular personal supervisions with experienced practitioners. For SQE1 and SQE2 there are timed mock assessments, which give students a demanding set of practice exams to prepare them for the real thing.

Moreover, our students become part of a collegiate environment that ensures they're never isolated or adrift. Each has a personal supervisor and takes part in regular town halls, group surgeries and supervisions.

[Get in touch to find out more](#)

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 **The College
of Legal Practice**