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## Advising Students on Qualifying Work Experience (QWE): The Careers Advisers' Companion

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# **ADVISING STUDENTS ON QUALIFYING WORK EXPERIENCE (QWE)**

## **THE CAREERS ADVISERS' COMPANION**

### **ADVISING STUDENTS ON QWE FROM LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC WORK AND WORK PLACEMENTS**

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Andrea Todd, Director of Pro Bono and Community Engagement, University of Chester

Lucy Blackburn, Director of Advice & Resolution Centre, University of Central Lancashire

With the introduction of the Solicitors' Qualifying Exam (SQE) in September 2021, sweeping changes were made to the rules relating to qualifying as a solicitor, including the introduction of a period of two year's Qualifying Work Experience ('QWE') which can be undertaken either before or after the candidate completes the SQE assessments.

QWE can be collected from working in up to four organisations, including law firms, law centres, charities, in-house legal teams, and university legal advice clinics.

The rules around QWE can be complex to decipher. Following discussions with stakeholders in this area, the authors have put together the following student-facing guides, which we hope will assist you when you are advising your students on navigating QWE. Please do feel free to distribute the guides to your students as you wish.

- 1. Recording, Confirming and Registering QWE from University Law Clinics: A 'Ten Top Tips' Toolkit for Student Volunteers - and Guidance on Completing the SRA QWE Template for Clinic Work** (attached to this Guidance, and also available on the Clinical Legal Education Organisation website, [here](#))
- 2. Recording, Confirming and Registering QWE from Work Placements: A 'Ten Top Tips' Toolkit for Students - and Guidance on Completing the SRA QWE Template for Work Placements** (attached to this Guidance and available [here](#)).

The five main points to focus on when advising students are as follows:

1. Candidates only need to register two years' QWE by the time they wish to register as a solicitor (they do so by applying online via the [mySRA](#) system). We strongly recommend that the student waits until they have collected at least four periods of QWE before deciding which periods of QWE to register with the SRA. They may later regret having registered with the SRA the QWE undertaken whilst at university if they then have the opportunity to gain a longer period of QWE with another organisation.
2. Students should be advised to speak to their work placement provider, or university clinic supervisor, about the arrangements for confirming their QWE internally (for the firm's or clinic's internal record keeping purposes). Recording QWE within the organisation should be done as soon as possible so that memories are fresh, and the England and Wales-qualified solicitor within the organisation (the 'Nominated Person') can confirm that the student has indeed undertaken the work (and been exposed to the competencies) they are claiming.
3. Students need to take personal responsibility for recording their QWE. The keeping of a personal QWE record is led by the individual, not the organisation. It is up to the student to explain to the Nominated Person, on the SRA template, what competencies they have been exposed to.
4. Law firms may still require students to complete a two-year period of training with them so they are familiar with the firm and its work prior to qualification, even if the student can show that they have a period or periods of QWE from elsewhere.
5. Some activities undertaken as part of pro bono work and/or within a placement environment will not attract QWE (see the guides for details). However, students should be advised that the experience gained from pro bono work and from non-QWE work placement activity can still be incredibly valuable to them, not least in their applications for graduate employment.

**We would be very grateful to know whether you plan to use these guides when advising your students.**

**If you could please spare no more than 20 seconds to fill in a very short survey, please click [here](#)**