



Qualifying Work Experience at Leicester Law School

A Guide for Students by the Legal Advice Clinic

All candidates looking to qualify through the SQE route will need to complete two years' full-time (or equivalent) qualifying work experience (QWE) after September 2021. You can find out more about QWE on the SRA website [here](#).

Summary

QWE is a work placement which meets the following criteria:

- It must involve experience of providing real-life **legal services** (see below).
- It must enable the individual to develop some or all of the **competences** outlined in the [Statement of Solicitor Competence](#), including professionalism and ethics.
- It may be obtained in England or Wales or overseas.
- In total it must be at least **two years working full-time or the part-time equivalent**.
- It can be obtained in **up to four separate organisations** providing legal services.
- It must be **signed off by a solicitor**.

Which pro bono activities at Leicester Law School may be eligible to count as QWE?

Certain pro bono activities are capable of being signed off as QWE, where the following apply:

(1) The activity involves the provision of 'legal services'

QWE can only be claimed when engaged in the provision of legal services. The term 'legal services' is not defined within the QWE guidance. Leicester Law School interprets 'legal services' as having the same definition as 'legal activity' under the Legal Services Act 2007 s12(3)(b) & (d):

'(b) any other activity which consists of one or both of the following –

- 1. the provision of legal advice or assistance in connection with the application of the law or with any form of resolution of legal disputes;*
- 2. the provision of representation in connection with any matter concerning the application of the law or any form of resolution of legal disputes.*

(d) but 'legal activity' does not include any activity of a judicial or quasi-judicial nature (including acting as a mediator).'

So where work involves the provision of either legal advice or legal assistance, this requirement is met.

(2) The work allows students to develop Solicitor Competences as outlined in the SRA's [Statement of Solicitor Competence](#) including professionalism and ethics.

This is likely to apply to all of our projects which provide legal services.

(3) The work is closely supervised by a solicitor.

A solicitor needs to sign off QWE. The solicitor has to confirm:

- That the experience amounted to QWE,
- That it took place for the stated time, and
- Whether any issues arose during the work experience which raise questions over the candidate's character and suitability to be admitted as a solicitor - for example anything relating to the honesty, integrity or professionalism of the individual.

In the Legal Advice Clinic and the Windrush Compensation Project, all work is supervised by a solicitor.

On the Citizens Advice Collaboration Project, students will record their volunteering time which will be verified by Citizens Advice, and may then be signed off by the Legal Advice Clinic Supervising Solicitor.

On the Miscarriages of Justice Project, students will record their volunteering time, which will be verified by the academic lead, Jessica Ritchie and may then be signed off by the Legal Advice Clinic Supervising Solicitor.

What does this mean for Leicester Law School's pro bono activities?

In light of the three criteria for QWE listed above, Leicester Law School has categorised its pro bono activities for QWE purposes as follows:

Eligible to be signed off as QWE

Legal Advice Clinic (Student Adviser Role, volunteer or final year modules)

Legal Advice Clinic / Citizens Advice Collaboration

Miscarriages of Justice

Windrush Compensation Project (Adviser Role)

Not eligible to be signed off as QWE

Amicus / Climate Crisis Project / Immigration and Asylum / Insight Project /

Lawyers Without Borders Student Division / Litigants in Person Project / Project LIGHT / Street Law

What do I need to do if I would like my eligible pro bono activities signed off as QWE?

You don't have to get your pro bono activities signed off as QWE. If you would like to, you should:

- Email laura.bee@le.ac.uk to confirm that you will be recording your eligible pro bono activity for pro bono purposes.
- Record your eligible pro bono activity using the Legal Advice Clinic Student QWE Record
- Send your completed Student QWE Record to laura.bee@le.ac.uk
 - o By 14 January 2022 for semester one activity
 - o By 10 June 2022 for semester two activity.

Failure to take these steps within these timescales may mean that the supervising solicitor will be unable to verify the time spent and will therefore be unable to sign off the activity as QWE.

How much time can I claim for QWE purposes for my pro bono work?

This will depend on the activity. Some projects will work on an average hours per client basis, whereas other projects will require you to keep a track of time spent.

For further details, speak to the academic lead for your project (Jess Ritchie (jess.ritchie@le.ac.uk) for the Miscarriages of Justice Project, Laura Bee (laura.bee@le.ac.uk) for Legal Advice Clinic, the Citizens Advice Collaboration and Windrush Project).

If I work on more than one pro bono activity during my time at Leicester Law School would this count as one of my four permitted organisations for accumulating QWE, or one per activity?

Once your QWE has been signed off, if you decide to register it, you can lump together any QWE gained at Leicester Law School and this will count as one of the four organisations from which you can gain your QWE.

Should I always “bank” time spent on pro bono activities as QWE?

Not necessarily. It may be useful to get a head start by getting some QWE signed off at Law School. However, at most, you are unlikely to gain more than a couple or a few weeks per year, and you need a total of 2 years’ QWE.

If you have any questions which are not covered above please contact Laura Bee, Legal Advice Clinic Director and Supervising Solicitor (laura.bee@le.ac.uk).