



Kaplan SQE Limited

SOLICITORS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (SQE)

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY

Last updated: August 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope and purpose

Kaplan SQE Limited (Kaplan SQE) has been appointed by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (“SRA”) as the sole provider of the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (“the SQE”) and the End Point Assessment Organisation (“EPAO”) for Solicitor Apprentices. Kaplan SQE handles reasonable adjustments in accordance with this Policy as required by the SRA.

We are committed to diversity and making sure our approach to the SQE is inclusive. This policy covers our approach to reasonable adjustments including how we communicate with candidates and the arrangements we can make to our assessment methods.

1.2 Fairness

We are committed to ensuring that this Policy is fair and transparent and is operated in a manner which:

- treats all candidates equally and fairly in the consideration of their claims
- gives reasons for our actions taken and the decision we make
- is free from bias
- has reasonable timescales for both submissions to and responses from us.

1.3 Confidentiality

We will keep the information provided to us confidential and as required by the General Data Protection Regulations 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Details of individual arrangements will be shared with those people with whom it is necessary in order to agree and/or implement the reasonable adjustment.

1.4 Timescales

We consider that candidates will normally be able to meet the time limits in communicating with us. Where there are circumstances which mean a candidate cannot reasonably meet such time limits they must communicate this to us at the earliest opportunity.

1.5 Candidates with a disability

Where a candidate has a disability, information will be made available to them in appropriate formats and reasonable adjustments will be made to proceedings to accommodate their needs.

1.6 Review of this Policy

This Policy and associated practices including the Q&As and information for disability assessors will be monitored on an ongoing basis and any necessary amendments will be made and implemented at the earliest opportunity. As a minimum, this and all associated policies will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of its ongoing quality assurance procedures.

1.7 Associated documents relating to this Policy

The [Q&As](#) and [information for disability assessors](#) set out further information about how this policy is applied.

2. Commitment and approach

- 2.1 The [Statement of Solicitor Competence](#) and the Functioning Legal Knowledge set out in the [SQE1 Assessment Specification](#) and the [SQE2 Assessment Specification](#) set out the competences and knowledge which all candidates must achieve to demonstrate their ability to practise. The [Threshold Standard](#) sets out the standard which must be achieved to qualify as a Solicitor of England and Wales. All candidates must be assessed against the Statement of Solicitor Competence and the Functioning Legal Knowledge and must reach the Threshold Standard to qualify. We recognise that to provide a fair opportunity for all candidates to demonstrate their competence to the required standard we must make arrangements to provide reasonable adjustments.
- 2.2 Our approach to developing assessments is to anticipate candidate requests for reasonable adjustments and where possible make assessment arrangements which minimise the necessity for adjustments to be made.
- 2.3 We are committed to making sure that a candidate is not disadvantaged by reason of a disability in demonstrating their competence and we will make reasonable adjustments to methods of assessment for candidates with a disability (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) to achieve this. We will also consider reasonable requests to accommodate candidates with other condition/s which impact on a candidate's ability to undertake the SQE. All such requests for accommodations will be considered in Kaplan's reasonable discretion and on a case by case basis.

3. Making a request for reasonable adjustments

- 3.1 Candidates requesting any adjustments referred to in 2.3 above must register for an SQE account online and complete a reasonable adjustments request form available on

the SQE candidate account. The form should be completed and submitted on the SQE candidate account as soon as possible ahead of an assessment. Candidates must advise which is their preferred test centre location and which assessment window they intend to sit. Candidates must apply separately for adjustments for SQE1 and SQE2.

- 3.2 Appropriate supporting documentation should accompany the completed reasonable adjustments request form. If supporting documentation is not available at the time of submitting the form, documentation should be submitted at the earliest opportunity. Some more complex arrangements evidenced by supporting documentation may take considerable time to discuss and then put in place. Guidance on the type of supporting documentation that is appropriate is set out in our [information for disability assessors](#) and the [Q&As](#).
- 3.3 We will be unable to agree a candidate's adjustments until appropriate supporting documentation is received. This means that if either a request for adjustments is not made and/or supporting documentation not received by the booking deadline for the relevant assessment, it may not be possible to put the adjustments in place in time for the assessment window.
- 3.4 To ensure that we provide the appropriate adjustments according to each candidate's specific disability or condition, supporting documentation must include relevant information which is sufficiently detailed to identify:
 - 3.4.1 the nature of the disability or condition; and
 - 3.4.2 the effect of the disability or condition on the candidate's ability to perform in the assessment; and
 - 3.4.3 requested reasonable adjustments for the candidate and how these adjustments will address the candidate's needs.
- 3.5 A member of the Equality and Quality team will acknowledge receipt of the reasonable adjustments request form within five working days. They will consider the adjustment/s requested in light of the disability or condition, the nature of the assessment and our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Further request/s may be made for supporting documentation or information from the candidate. The decision on what, if any adjustment/s can be offered will be communicated via the SQE candidate account.
- 3.6 A candidate who is not satisfied with the decision made on their request for reasonable adjustments can appeal against that decision. The appeal must set out the candidate's explanation of why they are not satisfied and be sent, together with copies of all relevant documentation and supporting evidence to the Academic Director Kaplan SQE by email (or other agreed means of communication).
 - 3.6.1 In considering the appeal, the Academic Director may request further information and take advice as appropriate.
 - 3.6.2 The Academic Director, taking all relevant factors into account, will determine whether any or all of:
 - 3.6.2.1 the adjustment offered to the candidate; and/or
 - 3.6.2.2 the manner in which the decision to offer that adjustment was reached; and/or
 - 3.6.2.3 the decision not to offer an adjustment; involved material irregularity and/or was manifestly unreasonable and/or irrational.

- 3.6.3 The Academic Director may:
 - 3.6.3.1 uphold the appeal; or
 - 3.6.3.2 reject the appeal.
 - 3.6.4 Where the Academic Director upholds the appeal they may recommend further action. Candidates whose appeal is upheld will normally be given an altered offer of reasonable adjustments arrived at in discussion with the Head of Equality and Quality and any other relevant advice. Where the Academic Director rejects the appeal the original offer of reasonable adjustments will stand.
 - 3.6.5 The decision of the Academic Director will be communicated to the candidate and the Head of Equality and Quality within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal in full. Where the Academic Director upholds the candidate's appeal a new decision on the candidate's request for reasonable adjustments will be communicated to the candidate via the SQE candidate account within 5 working days after the decision of the Academic Director.
- 3.7 Where a candidate is not able to use the SQE candidate account/online registration and booking process (including to make an application for reasonable adjustments and for submitting supporting evidence), we can offer alternative means of communication and provide information in different formats. Candidates requiring further assistance should contact us at enquiries@sqe.sra.org.uk or 0203 486 3080, and our team members will work with candidates to find the best way to help.