



**Proposals to change how the
English or Welsh language
proficiency of qualified lawyers is
assured**
Consultation responses

April 2024

Sensitivity: General

These are the texts of the responses from respondents who asked us to name them and publish their responses.

2. About you

First name(s)

Alya

Last name

Abdullah

I am responding..

in a personal capacity

In what personal capacity?

Aspiring solicitor

How should we publish your response?

Please select an option below.

Publish the response with my/our name

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2. About you

First name(s)

Sara

Last name

john

I am responding..

in a personal capacity

In what personal capacity?

Academic

Please enter the name of your institution

How should we publish your response?

Please select an option below.

Publish the response with my/our name

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2. About you

First name(s)

MiCKAELA

Last name

FOX

I am responding..

on behalf of an organisation

On behalf of what type of organisation?

Law society

Please enter the name of the society

Liverpool Law Society

How should we publish your response?

Please select an option below.

Publish the response with my/our name

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:We agree that the SRA should be assured of English language proficiency before a qualified lawyer is admitted as a solicitor. Indeed, we consider that it represents better consumer protection if proficiency in English language is a requirement for admission and is not just checked as part of the application process for a practising certificate.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:We agree that a lawyer's professional qualification if assessed in English would be sufficient evidence of English language proficiency and should be accepted when considering an applicant who is applying for SEQ2 exemption.

3) To what extent to you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:We do not consider that a degree taught in English which is not also the professional legal qualification of the applicant is adequate. To be admitted as a solicitor the applicant should be required to demonstrate proficiency in legal terminology. A degree which is not a legal qualification is not evidence that the applicant is so proficient.

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:We have some concerns about this proposal. The acceptance of an IELTS 7.5 score or the equivalent standard in an alternative SELT represents a dilution of the current requirements. However, we note that the change would bring the requirements in line with the thresholds set by other regulators. It would have been helpful to know the identity of those regulators and to what extent the current standards applied by the SRA make it an outlier.

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:Our answer reflects the fact that our members felt it would be difficult for the SRA to insist on a different standard to one accepted as adequate by the UK Government when approving applications for visa or citizenship.

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:Our agreement is predicated on the statements in the consultation that language proficiency tests tend to have a shelf life of circa two years. Our answer would have differed if test providers were prepared to extend validity beyond that period.

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:On balance we consider that the transitional arrangements represent the best

course. Some of our members thought it would be unfair to change the requirements for applicants that had already been admitted because they began the process under the current criteria. However, we considered that any unfairness was outweighed by the need to act in the interests of consumers of legal services. Furthermore, the observations made in the consultation paper about applicants seeking admission and not applying for a practising certificate and our understanding of the timescale for issuance of a practising certificate, led us to believe that those caught by the transitional arrangements would be in the minority.

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2. About you

First name(s)

Dawn

Last name

Lawson

I am responding..

on behalf of an organisation

On behalf of what type of organisation?

Law society

Please enter the name of the society

Surrey Law Society

How should we publish your response?

Please select an option below.

Publish the response with my/our name

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: I believe it would be beneficial for the applicants if any pre-requisites to obtaining a practising certificate were dealt with as early as possible to avoid disappointment at a later stage and to afford more time for the pre-requisites to be met. It would also afford the regulator sufficient opportunity to make any necessary checks.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: If a student has studied law in English and passed the relevant exams in English then I think to require a further assessment of their English language proficiency would be superfluous.

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: The use of the English language in a legal context incorporates archaic and legal terminology which are not commonly found in other subjects. I think it would be prudent therefore if an applicant has studied a subject other than law in English that there is a separate assessment.

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: I think there needs to be a higher standard applied to Lawyers.

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed

amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2. About you

First name(s)

Last name

I am responding..

on behalf of an organisation

On behalf of what type of organisation?

Law society

Please enter the name of the society

The Law Society of England and Wales

How should we publish your response?

Please select an option below.

Publish the response with my/our name

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Please add any comments you wish to make:The Law Society recognises the importance of maintaining the highest standards for the profession and also of ensuring that the SQE is as inclusive as possible. We wish to ensure that qualified foreign lawyers wishing to requalify as solicitors have a proportionate and straightforward route to requalification. We believe that foreign qualified lawyers bring a welcome diversity to the profession and support the global reach of English law and of England and Wales as a global legal centre to the benefit of all solicitors. Any changes to the process of foreign qualified lawyers requalifying as solicitors via the SQE route should be carefully considered to ensure that they do not act as unnecessarily burdensome barriers to qualified lawyers while ensuring that the standards of the profession are maintained. On the question of when English language proficiency should be demonstrated—for admission or on application for a first practising certificate, we recognise that there are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. The current system of not requiring a demonstration of English language proficiency until applying for a practising certificate does mean that there will be foreign lawyers admitted as solicitors who are then unable to demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency to obtain a PC. On the other hand, requiring demonstration of English language proficiency for admission will disadvantage foreign lawyers who did not intend to

practice as a solicitor and therefore do not need to hold a practising certificate.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: It seems reasonable that where a qualified lawyer has been assessed in English for their professional qualification that this should be taken as evidence of English language proficiency. There needs to be a way to ensure that those qualified lawyers with high levels of English proficiency (native speakers or those who have lived in an English-speaking country for many years while achieving their professional qualification and so on) not be required to sit an English language examination.

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: We believe this may be overly restrictive. The stated reason for this change is that a degree taught in English in another subject may not provide the needed background in legal terms need as a solicitor. However, the IELTS (or equivalent SELT) does not specifically test proficiency in legal English either. If the concern is that a qualified lawyer educated at an English language university may still not have sufficient background in legal terminology, then the alternative proposed (IELTS or other SELT testing) does not address this concern.

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: We agree that the CEFR C2/IELTS 8.5 level is too demanding and an unnecessary barrier to otherwise highly qualified foreign lawyers. We support IELTS 7.5 or equivalent as the new standard.

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: We support efforts to make the process of demonstrating English language competence as straightforward as possible. A greater choice of tests would make the process more easily accessible for more qualified lawyers, providing more options of test providers, testing centres, testing times and so on. If the UK government has determined that these SELT are equivalent to IELTS then we support their acceptance by the SRA.

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Please add any comments you wish to make: We have a concern that the test providers have an economic incentive to keep the period of validity unnecessarily short in order to require more retesting. There is no evidence that a qualified lawyer who

tested to the required level more than two years prior (or the relevant time limit of the test provider) will have had a decline in their English language proficiency. The SRA should consider that, rationally, the qualified lawyer has met the required standard, regardless of time constraints. The SRA will not be re-checking the proficiency of the individual's English language after qualification, so to ask for it to be re-checked prior to qualification is an unnecessary burden on the individual who has already demonstrably met the required standard.

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Please add any comments you wish to make: We support the proposed transitional arrangements. It is not reasonable to seek further evidence of English proficiency from any foreign lawyer already admitted as a solicitor and issued with a practising certificate but the new system should apply during the transition for qualified lawyers not yet admitted. However, admitted qualified lawyers who have not yet demonstrated the required English proficiency in order to be issued a practising certificate should continue to be able to demonstrate proficiency through an English language university degree. It seems unfair that a qualified lawyer who has been admitted as a solicitor under the previous system, on good faith that their English language degree would be accepted as proof of English language proficiency in applying for a practising certificate, should have the system changed on them partway through the process.

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your answer

Our main concern is that there is no way other than testing for a non-English language qualified lawyer to demonstrate proficiency in English language. Many qualified lawyer candidates will have been working in an English language environment—probably even in a legal work environment—in the UK or elsewhere for many years and have full English proficiency including in legal English.

We would like the SRA to consider adding a route to the requirements, allowing individuals to demonstrate English language proficiency via experience—demonstrating having lived and worked in an English-speaking country for a certain period of time. The period of time could be a minimum of two years—in line with the length of work experience required in order to be exempted from SQE2. Qualified lawyers who have achieved English language proficiency through working in an English language environment should not need to study for an artificial exam. IELTS and other SELT are artificial examination situations that require test-taking preparation and can be difficult even for skilled English speakers who are not prepared.

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: We have no comments.

Sensitivity: General

These are the responses from respondents who asked us to publish their responses but not their names.

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Good spoken and written English is essential to advise clients properly.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: 1. Some countries have very dubious qualification systems and are riddled with corruption. 2. We should check English language competency again in all cases - ie an option not considered in the consultation of making all foreign lawyers pass SQE2.

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: As above answer to (2)

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: As above - I think they should all have to do SQE2 even if they are a top US lawyer working in English in New York for 20 years.

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: As above

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: We certainly need to be very careful before rushing to accept these kinds of things. Would be better if they all had to take SQE2

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Disagree because I would prefer an option that they all must do and pass SQE2

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Successfully passing SQE-1 is, in theory, a clear indication of candidate's English language proficiency. Any further competency requirement beyond that should be asked at the time of practising certificate, rather than admission.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your answer

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Assessing English language proficiency when a qualified lawyer applies for their first practising certificate, rather than before admission, could be supported by the idea that legal practice involves ongoing development and refinement of skills. This approach acknowledges that language proficiency can improve with practical experience in the legal field, allowing practitioners to enhance their communication skills over time. Additionally, it aligns with a more inclusive perspective, recognizing that individuals may bring valuable legal expertise despite initial language proficiency levels. Even most native speakers are often failing to pass IELTS 7 out of 9 threshold. Also, there many llm masters degree programs in the UK accepting 6.5 points as a minimum to be accepted in a law related master's degree programs.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Arguing against a separate language skills exam, one could posit that the stringent English exams required for solicitor admission already demonstrate a sufficient level of language proficiency. These exams are designed to assess both theoretical knowledge and practical application. Assuming successful completion implies an inherent ability to communicate effectively in English, negating the need for an additional language skills exam. Moreover, entrusting the responsibility to the individual lawyer reinforces the notion that those who pass such demanding exams possess the requisite language skills for legal practice without necessitating an extra layer of assessment.

3) To what extent to you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: I recommend considering a language proficiency requirement of 6.5 or 7, given the prevalence of UK universities offering law degrees that accept a minimum score of 6.5 for admission. If the Solicitors

Regulation Authority (SRA) acknowledges these degrees as sufficient evidence of English proficiency, there could be a rationale for lowering the minimum level for independent language exams to maintain consistency across different pathways to qualification.

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your answer

Placing a certain procedure that the caseworkers are in full compliance to be more diligent.

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your answer

I believe that the proposed changes unfairly target BAME groups and individuals aspiring to become solicitors in England and Wales. This highlights another instance where the current government, in collaboration with the SRA, appears to discourage foreign solicitors exempt from one or both of the SQE exams. It seems like a substantial barrier is being erected, potentially causing future solicitors to struggle, lose interest, or abandon the process altogether.

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Foreign qualified lawyers may wish to obtain the admission for development purposes rather than practice in the uk or as a uk solicitor.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Legal experience in English provides a reliable evidence of language competency, especially where it is longer than one year. For example, experience in an international law firm would necessitate strong language competency in drafting and negotiating legal documents. Thus, it is a reliable test of language proficiency.

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Either tests can be used to determine language proficiency.

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: This score is in line with what the top uk universities require. As such, it is a reasonable requirement. C2, on the other hand, is an unnecessary difficult requirement that may be a blocking point toward qualification, as it requires nearly perfect score. The qualifying test itself does not require such demanding score.

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Fair.

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: This is an additional burden on SRA registered lawyers who have been practising in England and holding a practising certificate. It is unreasonable to ask RFLs who already hold a practising certificate and can show extensive legal experience in England - to prove the knowledge of English via an IELTS test or otherwise as section 6 requires. Being able to practice in England as a RFL (e.g. legal counsel) is proof of their English knowledge. Under the rule of law, the legislation cannot apply retrospectively for RFL who at the moment of their registration have met the then criteria - English language not being one of them. It is not fair to ask RFLs who: (i) have already been granted an exemption from SQE2 and (ii) who have been working in England (e.g. for more than 2 years), to provide the same level of evidence regarding English language, as required from qualified lawyers who do not have any experience in England. SRA should differentiate qualified lawyers who do not hold a SRA practising certificate from RFLs who practised in England under England & Wales legislation and who hold a valid SRA practising certificate. SRA RFLs should not be required to provide the suggested evidence for English language. Therefore, Section 6 should either expressly exempt RFLs who have been granted a SQE 2 Exemption from providing the English language evidence or add as an alternative evidence for RFLs (e.g. confirmation from their manager).

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: This is reasonable considering that this is the level of knowledge required for any person who lives in the UK. This is the foundation on which a lawyer can easily build on his professional legal English skills.

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Reasonable would be to provide evidence of a test at any time and not only at the time it is submitted to SRA. It is not reasonable to require a person who has already proved their English knowledge, to provide a more recent certificate as English language will not be forgotten, especially of that person lives in England or practices under England & Wales jurisdiction.

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your answer

This is an additional burden on SRA registered lawyers who have been practising in England and holding a practising certificate. It is unreasonable to ask RFLs who already hold a practising certificate and can show extensive legal experience in England - to prove the knowledge of English via an IELTS test or otherwise as section 6 requires.

Being able to practice in England as a RFL (e.g. legal counsel) is proof of their English knowledge. The legislation cannot apply retrospectively for RFL who at the moment of their registration have met the then applicable criteria - English language not being one of them. It is not fair to ask RFLs who: (i) have already been granted an exemption from SQE2 and (ii) who have been working in England (e.g. for more than 2 years), to provide the same level of evidence regarding English language, as required from qualified lawyers who do not have any experience in England.

SRA should differentiate qualified lawyers who do not hold a SRA practising certificate from RFLs who practised in England under England & Wales legislation and who hold a valid SRA practising certificate. SRA RFLs should not be required to provide the suggested evidence for English language.

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:Section 6 should either expressly exempt RFLs who have been granted a SQE 2 Exemption from providing the English language evidence or add as an alternative evidence for RFLs (e.g. confirmation from their manager).

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: Considering that the minimum English Language requirement for an LLM in UK is 7.5 overall with at least 7.0 in each of the individual sections of reading, writing, listening and speaking, the same criteria should be accepted as evidence of a qualified lawyer, in order to not cause inequality. Also, all the other careers do not require such a demanding standard, and an individual with a great level of English shouldn't be prevented from being a solicitor for that.

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: If the candidate was able to pass the test and prove their English proficiency the time shouldn't be a problem to the SRA

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3. Consultation questions

1) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should check the English language proficiency of a qualified lawyer before they are admitted as a solicitor, rather than when they apply for their first practising certificate?

Agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of English language proficiency a qualified lawyer's professional legal qualification, where that qualification was assessed in English?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should not accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency a degree taught in English where that degree was not also the professional legal qualification of the qualified lawyer?

Disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept as evidence of a qualified lawyer's English language proficiency an IELTS score of 7.5 or higher (or a score of an equivalent standard in an alternative SELT)?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make: My first language is Italian but I live in London since a number of years and use only the English language to advise my clients (mainly English clients) and interact with my colleagues. The law firm I work for is an English law firm where the mother language of more than 90% of the employees is English. I speak English with them on a daily basis. Moreover, I use my English not only when I relate with my supervisors but also when I manage junior resources. Notwithstanding the above, after doing the SQE1 and being admitted as a solicitor I discovered that I'm required to prove that my English is at C2 level. This is the highest level and, for professionals me whose first language is not English, means that there are changes I won't be able to reach that threshold on my first try and that it may take time to obtain such certification. In addition, such certification is also expensive and this kind of cost is not something that I will be reimbursed of.

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should accept a score from any SELT that is approved by the UK Government for use in visa or citizenship applications?

Strongly agree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

4. Consultation questions continued

6) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should only accept as evidence of a qualified lawyers' English language proficiency a SELT score where the test provider considers the outcome to be valid at the time it is submitted to the SRA?

Strongly disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make: I moved to the UK in January 2022 and since then I work in an English law firm with colleagues who speak only English. However, the English language examination I was required to do by the UK government is older than two year, this means I could not use such certification for the SRA. Please note that until 2 years ago I didn't speak English on a daily basis and my English level has now extremely improved. For such reason, I don't think it's fair to consider only outcomes that the test providers consider to be still valid.

7) To what extent do you agree with our proposed transitional arrangements?

Please add any comments you wish to make:

8) Are there any additional impacts, either positive or negative, to those we have identified in our initial equality impact assessment of our proposals?

No

9) Alongside this consultation, we have published a tracked change version of the amendments we proposed to make to our current regulations and Principles for Qualified Lawyers. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed amendments would give effect to the policy proposals on which we are consulting?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please add any comments you wish to make:

The following respondent asked to be named but for their response not to be published:
Caner Sevinc.

There were also respondents who asked not to be named and for their responses not to be published.