



Preparing students for the solicitors' profession

A guide to qualification and the profession

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Preparing students for the solicitors' profession: a guide to qualification and the profession

Foreword from the past President of The Law Society of England & Wales 2010/2011...6

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Foreword from the Linda Lee, President of The Law Society of England & Wales 2010-2011

Welcome to the Law Society.

Reading this toolkit could be the first step that you take towards a long and rewarding career as a solicitor. Before you decide your future you need as much information as possible.



The aim of this pack is to answer some of the questions about the qualification process and to educate and inform you about what a career as a solicitor might mean for you.

I'm biased. I've had an enjoyable and fulfilling career working as a solicitor, but I am very aware of what challenges there are currently facing people considering a legal career or who are newly qualified.

At its best the profession can offer a rewarding and diverse career whether you choose to pursue a traditional career in a law firm or to work as an in-house solicitor in the public or private sector and provide top quality legal advice to individuals who will use it to inform their business choices, or you might choose to represent people with mental health or housing issues or you could follow my own specialism; clinical negligence and coronial law.

There are many reasons why a career as a solicitor appeals to people; it is hard work, intellectually challenging and you have the expertise, knowledge and professional skills to help people from all walks of life who are in real difficulties.

I hope that this toolkit will provide you with some of the information that you need before you embark on a career as a solicitor. It outlines the qualification process, illustrates some of the options that will be open to you if you choose to go down this career path

and provides practical hints about maximising your chances of success in an increasingly competitive jobs market.

A career in the law will not be for everyone, and I would strongly encourage you to do your research; read this toolkit, talk to others in the profession and make sure that you are committed to the hard work and dedication that it will require. Entering the legal profession in today's competitive market is a daunting prospect. I know; I also qualified at a difficult period in the profession's history when training contracts were very hard to obtain.

If, after serious consideration, you think that the law is for you then I can only recommend it, but getting a training contract is not guaranteed and not everyone who wants to be a solicitor will succeed. I hope that by reading this guide and following the advice given it will give you a competitive advantage, as will membership of the Junior Lawyers Division.

The JLD is the independent voice of junior lawyers across England and Wales. The Division offers a diverse range of services, including mentoring, networking events, careers advice and an annual conference. If you need them contact them – they are the best first stop for any questions you may have.

Good luck!

PART ONE - OVERVIEW

Overview of the solicitors' profession

A career as a solicitor can be incredibly rewarding, providing many exciting challenges and opportunities. There are approximately 160,000 solicitors on the Roll in England and Wales with between 5,000 and 7,000 admitted each year.

Who becomes a solicitor?

To succeed as a solicitor, you need to be determined and highly motivated.

You will need to:

- show you have the academic ability to cope with a demanding course
- find a firm that will supervise you while you complete your training
- compete with very able people to win a place

A career as a solicitor demands:

- Intellectual ability – the law is complex
- Versatility – no two days are the same
- A desire to work with people
- Commitment – the training is rigorous and requires substantial effort and resources

Academic excellence is important, but employers look for many other personal skills and attributes which will be important as you progress through your legal career:

- Dedication, commitment and a capacity for hard work.
- Professional responsibility – personal integrity and an ethical approach - this forms the basis of solicitor/client relationships.
- Commercial awareness.
- Numeracy skills – the ability to understand financial statements and interpret accounts.

- Organisation skills – the ability to manage your time, prioritise conflicting demands, delegate and plan projects.
- Flexibility and a positive approach to new ideas and concepts.
- Problem solving skills.
- Communication skills, both written and oral - the ability to understand complex language and information and to present information in plain English.
- Interpersonal skills – you will have to work well with other people and in teams. You must be cooperative, collaborative and a good listener, with the ability to communicate with people at all levels and win their confidence and respect.
- IT skills – you will need to be proficient in word processing, case management systems, spreadsheets, financial accounting packages, e-mail and information retrieval systems.
- Commitment to continuing personal development.

What solicitors do

Solicitors work in many different areas and offer many different services. As a solicitor you will find a diverse range of career paths available to you, enabling you to find work that suits your particular interests and skills. You are expected to be a confidential adviser, and will often have direct contact with your clients. You will provide expert legal advice and assistance in a range of situations.

Everyday issues

Solicitors provide expert guidance on the issues people regularly face such as buying and selling houses, drawing up wills, and dealing with relationship breakdown.

Promoting business

Solicitors help businesses with the legal side of commercial transactions.

Protecting the rights of individuals

Solicitors advise people of their rights, ensuring they are treated fairly by public or private bodies, and that they receive compensation when they have been unfairly treated.

Supporting the community

Many solicitors undertake legal aid work or spend a portion of their time providing free help for those unable to pay for legal services.

Advocacy

Solicitors can represent clients personally in the lower courts (Magistrates' courts, County Court and tribunals) and with specialist training are also able to represent them in higher courts (Crown Court, High Court, Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court).

Career options

Once you qualify there are a variety of different career options available. You could choose to work in private practice, within a business or organisation, in local or national government or in the court services. See Part IV: Different Ways to Work as a Solicitor for more information on the varied career paths available to you.

The realities of qualifying: a warning

Qualifying as a solicitor is not easy. Qualification requires considerable academic and financial commitment and competition for training positions is fierce. Many firms/organisations receive large numbers of applications for their training vacancies, outnumbering the amount of vacancies they have available. The legal profession is subject to the same fluctuations in the market as any other market sector. It is not a career choice that is 'recession proof'. You must take these issues in to account before investing in the Legal Practice Course or conversion course.

Training to become a solicitor demands considerable commitment over a number of years. It will take at least three years to train if you are a law graduate, at least four years if you are a non-law graduate and at least six years if you are not a graduate. Do your own research to find out as much as you can about what a career as a solicitor is really like. Talk to people in the profession and try to secure some work experience.

It is important to make sure that you are right for the profession and the profession is right for you. It is also important to continually work to maximise your chances of being successful, both by focussing on academic excellence and relevant extra-curricular activities. Recruiters will be most impressed if you are able to demonstrate that you love the law.

You will face the intellectual challenge of exams and you will have to fund your studies. Many trainee solicitors finish their training with debts. Others are not able to finish their training because they cannot get a training position. There is no guarantee of getting a job either as a trainee or as a solicitor. However, some students are sponsored through part of their studies and the great majority of students who pass the Legal Practice Course qualify and enjoy successful careers. See Appendix II for statistics on entry to the profession.

“Stay positive and work hard”: A message from Tony King, Chair of the Law Society’s Education and Training Committee 2008-2012

The qualification process to become a solicitor is not easy. Much has been written about the high costs of legal education, demand outstripping supply for training contracts and the competitive nature of the profession. It would be very easy to read these warnings and abandon all hope of qualifying as a solicitor.

Yet there are jobs out there. Ensure you are well informed about the profession and the market for training contracts. Start preparing for your traineeship early. Be “realistically ambitious” about your prospects of securing an offer.

If you are armed with all the information about the realities of qualifying as a solicitor, work hard and demonstrate your passion for a career in law, you will maximise your chances of finding the right job for you.

A message from Beth Wanono, Law Society Council Member for Students and Trainees 2009-2011

You are probably reading all of the information out there and listening to all of the advice given by us well-meaning people inside the profession and wondering 'what are my chances?'. Starting a career in the law can be very difficult. You may be one of the lucky ones who just gets a training contract straight away, you might be stuck in a room with twenty other students all with a training contract offering you best wishes and commiserations, or you could be from a completely different background from the majority of other students and wondering - worrying - whether you will be treated equally.

Weighing up one's 'chances' can be even more nerve-wracking especially when so much money is involved and even more so when banks step in with loans and credit. But there is no magic formula to becoming a solicitor. The advice I'd like to give you is to be sure you have the stamina and the commitment for the long haul, please make sure you have a back-up plan (which can include working as a paralegal), do everything you possibly can to ensure that your CV is as credible and relevant as possible and make sure you use every opportunity open to you, whether it's at your law school, through the Law Society or JLD or in your local area. Even if you think you have no connections and are so far on the outside of the legal community you'll never be able to do it, there are organisations which can offer support, assistance and advice.

Only 1 in 1,000 candidates are a 'safe bet' and you're never going to be able to have absolute certainty in your career. Few people ever do - and I can tell you from experience that those worries don't suddenly disappear once you've got a training contract. The only thing you can do is manage the things that are in your control. Deal with the 'art of the possible' and try, when you can, to enjoy what you do. You will never be able to totally sidestep the element of 'chance' but you can do your best to reduce it.

Good luck!

PART TWO - PROCESS

Routes to qualification

There are two key stages to qualifying as a solicitor in England and Wales, the academic stage and the vocational stage. There are a number of ways that you can complete the academic stage of training but if you are studying or intend to study in a UK university the usual routes are either by completing a qualifying law degree at a UK university or a degree in a different subject followed by a conversion course. The vocational stage includes the Legal practice Course, a period of recognised training and the Professional Skills Course.

Apprenticeships

In September 2014 the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education approved the Welsh apprenticeship and Trailblazer apprenticeship as routes to qualify as a solicitor, chartered legal executive or paralegal through workplace-based training. These apprenticeships are open to those with or without a degree. Further information on this route to qualification will become widely available once launched

The three main routes to become a solicitor in England and Wales are:

The law graduate route

- Qualifying Law Degree – three years full-time or five years part time
- Legal Practice Course – one year full-time or two years part time
- Period of recognised training incorporating the Professional Skills Course – two years full-time.
- Admission to the roll of solicitors

The non-law graduate route

- Degree in any subject – three years full-time or five years part time

- Common Professional Examination / Graduate Diploma in Law – one year full-time or two years part time
- Legal Practice Course – one year full-time or two years part time
- Period of recognised training incorporating the Professional Skills Course – two years full-time
- Admission to the roll of solicitors

The Chartered Institute of Legal Executive (CILEX) routes

- CILEX examinations undertaken while you are working under the supervision of a solicitor or CILEX Fellow
- Common Professional Examination / Graduate Diploma in Law (exemptions may be available on a subject-by-subject basis)
- Legal Practice Course
- Period of recognised training - CILEX membership route only
- Professional Skills Course
- Admission to the roll of solicitors

Qualifying Law Degree

The majority of solicitors qualify by completing an undergraduate law degree which is approved by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board as a Qualifying Law Degree.

As part of your qualifying law degree you will study the following foundation subjects:

- Contract
- Tort
- Criminal Law
- Equity and Trusts
- Law of the European Union
- Property Law
- Constitutional Law and Administrative Law

In addition, you will also be expected to have received training in legal research.

You should note that not all law degrees are qualifying law degrees if you want to qualify as a solicitor you should ensure that the programme you undertake is a qualifying law degree..

It is no longer the case that the qualifying law degree is only valid for entry to the Legal Practice Course for up to seven years after graduation.

Common Professional Examination or Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE/GDL)

Approximately 20 per cent of solicitors qualify via the non-law graduate route. Students can complete a degree in any subject and then undertake a year long 'conversion course'.

The CPE/GDL is an intense course that prepares non-law graduates for the Legal Practice Course and covers the same foundation subjects as are covered during the Qualifying Law Degree:

- Contract
- Tort
- Criminal Law
- Equity and Trusts
- Law of the European Union
- Property Law
- Constitutional Law and Administrative Law

This course would be suitable for those that have acquired career experience or academic/vocational qualifications that the SRA consider to be equivalent to an undergraduate degree. This is known as accreditation of prior learning. If you think you may be eligible for credit you should formally apply to your CPE provider, ideally at the time of making your application to the course.

The CPE/GDL is offered by many academic institutions as a one-year full-time or two-year part-time course or by distance learning over two years.

If you have received an offer of a training position before commencing your CPE, your training firm may pay for you to complete your CPE.

Applying for a course

Your application for the Common Professional Examination/Graduate Diploma in Law will be assessed on academic merit. Lists of institutions offering the courses and entry criteria are available from your careers adviser. Details of institutions can also be found at Annex I and the SRA website (*see useful contacts*).

Places on full-time courses are allocated through the Central Applications Board (*see useful contacts*). For part-time courses, contact the academic institution direct.

FAQ Are firms likely to look on me less favourably as a non-law degree graduate?

No. You may actually find that you have benefits in being a non-law graduate. Having three years experience in a subject other than law can be a great advantage when making your application. For instance, a language degree could be useful to an international firm. What an employer will be looking for is your commitment to law. Ensure that your application is strong, attend open days held by firms and secure work placements. Remember that this experience does not only have to be gained via a formal vacation placement. Consolidate any experience you gain and use that in your applications to demonstrate you have the skills and commitment to a career as a solicitor.

Exempting law degree

An exempting law degree integrates the academic and vocational stages of training into a four-year course which is the equivalent of completing a Qualifying Law Degree plus the Legal Practice Course or Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC). Combining the two stages of training can be a more affordable option than completing the law degree and LPC separately.

The Exempting Law Degree must cover the same compulsory subjects as covered in the Qualifying Law Degree and Legal Practice Course.

The CILEx routes

There are two routes to qualifying as a solicitor through the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) – the CILEx fellowship route and the CILEx membership route. These routes are based on exams set and authorised by the CILEx. These routes do not require a university degree.

Qualification by the CILEx routes is longer than the other routes because it is designed to enable you to study while working. The CILEx routes will take a minimum of five years.

CILEx examinations

To qualify for the CILEx routes, it is recommended that you have a minimum of four GCSEs (including English language or literature) or equivalent.

The academic part of the CILEx training programme is made up of two stages of training:

- CILEx Level 3 Professional Diploma in Law – this level is considered to be A-level standard.

- CILEx Level 6 Professional Diploma in Higher Law and Practice – this level focuses on three specific areas of law, one of which requires the student to demonstrate a practical understanding of the legal practice that arises from the law. Study of two mandatory Professional Skills units – Client Care and Legal Research – is also required. This level is considered to be equivalent to degree level.

Completion of the Level 3 stage of academic training provides students with Associate Membership of CILEx, and completion of the Level 6 stage leads to Graduate Membership of CILEx.

Most students work full-time and study part-time. Study is usually at a local college or through a home-study course.

Qualifying Employment

You may not need to undertake any qualifying legal employment experience in order to achieve membership status, however in order to become a Fellow of CILEx, and use the title Chartered Legal Executive, you will need to complete five years of qualifying employment. Two years of this experience must take place after you have become a Graduate Member.

Qualifying employment includes carrying out work of a legal nature under the supervision of a solicitor, legal executive, barrister or licensed conveyancer. Employment can be in legal practice, in the legal department of a private company or in local / national government.

You can start your employment before, during or after your studies. Most CILEx students are either working in a legal environment at the time that they start their studies, or obtain employment as a trainee Chartered Legal Executive during their period of study. This will count towards CILEx's qualifying employment requirements.

Qualifying as a Solicitor

In order to go on to qualify as a solicitor, a chartered legal executive (CILEx Fellow or Member) must then go on to complete the Legal Practice Course as above.

CILEx membership route – No period of qualifying legal employment is required in order to become a CILEx member. If you wish to qualify as a solicitor after becoming a CILEx member, you would either need to undertake a period of qualifying legal employment to become a CILEx fellow (see CILEx fellowship route below), or undertake a period of recognised training after completion of the Legal Practice Course.

CILEx fellowship route – This route involves working and training under the supervision of a solicitor for at least two years after gaining membership. A CILEx Fellow will not be required to undertake a period of recognised training to qualify as a solicitor if:

- the SRA is satisfied that they have completed their academic stage of training (i.e. their Level 3 and Level 6 exams);
- they completed a Legal Practice Course *after* qualifying as a Fellow. They must also have been continuously engaged as a Fellow in the practice of the law between the time they qualified and the time they attended the course, or they must be able to satisfy the SRA that their experience in the practice of law since qualifying as a Fellow is sufficiently recent; and
- they have completed the Professional Skills Course.

For further details on these routes to qualification, or for information on a career as a legal executive, contact the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (*see useful contacts*).

Character and suitability

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) will check the character and suitability of all applicants applying for admission to the roll of solicitors and also before the start of your period of recognised training.

If you know that you have a character and suitability issue that may risk you not qualifying for admission, or you are unsure as to whether you may have an issue, it is very important that you disclose this as early as possible to the SRA and at least six months before you would anticipate starting a period of recognised training.

Character and suitability issues would include:

- any criminal conviction, including cautions, reprimands, fines and warnings (even if they are spent)
- any instance of cheating in examinations or plagiarism during a course of study
- any County Court Judgments against you, declarations of bankruptcy (even if they have been satisfied) or evidence of inability to manage financial affairs
- any incidents in which your character has been called into question.

Failure to declare any relevant information may have serious implications if you wish to practise as a solicitor in the future.

Legal Practice Course (LPC)

After completing your law degree (or the relevant work experience and examinations if you are following the CILEx route) you will have to take the LPC, which ensures you have the necessary skills to work in a solicitor's office. The full time LPC takes one year to complete. If you have secured a training position prior to embarking on the LPC, your training firm may ask you to undertake a shorter course.

Changes were introduced to the LPC to allow greater flexibility with the ability to tailor courses to better meet the needs of both the student and employer.

The LPC can be delivered and studied in two stages:

Stage 1 **Core practice areas of litigation** – Property and Business, legal skills such as advocacy and legal drafting. You will also learn about the rules of professional conduct and solicitors accounts.

Stage 2 **Vocational electives** such as Employment law, Family law, Commercial Property law. The vocational electives focus on specialist areas of law and practice. You must study three from a range of subjects covering different aspects of practice.

The validity of the Legal Practice Course does not expire.

Applying for a course

There are a number of colleges and universities across the country offering the Legal Practice Course. Details of institutions can be found at Annex I and the SRA website (*see useful contacts*). Law undergraduates should apply from September onwards in their final year and non-law graduates from September onwards in their GDL year. There is no closing date for applications. Applications are dealt with as they are submitted and institutions are notified weekly of new submissions.

You can take the LPC as a full-time or part-time course. For full-time courses, you should apply to the Legal Practice Course Central Applications Board (*see useful contacts*). For part-time courses, you should contact the academic institutions direct.

If you have received an offer of a training position before commencing your LPC, your training firm may specify which institution you should attend or may have preferred LPC providers. Your training firm may pay for you to complete your LPC.

FAQ Is it advisable for me to embark on the LPC having not secured a period of recognised training?

You need to think carefully before spending money on the LPC if you have not managed to secure a training position. It is risky taking on the levels of debt that can be incurred whilst studying the LPC without having any guarantee of income at the end. It is important to be realistic of your chances of securing a training position straightaway. There are more LPC students seeking training positions than are available. You need to be mindful that you may not be able to locate training for some time, in which case you need to be sure that this is a cost you can bear.

If you choose to defer the LPC until you have secured training, it is important to use that time to make yourself a strong candidate. Enhance your chances of securing a position by ensuring that you are well informed and well prepared. Conduct research, secure work placements and enhance your skills to ensure that your CV/application stands out.

You should also bear in mind that it is only the larger firms that recruit trainee solicitors two years in advance. Many firms recruit trainees from current LPC students. Look out for such vacancies in the Law Society Gazette (see useful contacts) and via your careers adviser.

Period of recognised training

Once you have completed the academic and vocational stages, the next step to qualification is to undertake practice-based training, known as a period of recognised training. The training builds upon what you have already learnt by combining it with practical work experience. Training can take place after the LPC or whilst you are completing the LPC.

This part of the qualification process will enable you, under supervision, to apply the

skills and knowledge you have acquired during the academic and vocational stages of training. You may have the opportunity to handle your own cases, see clients and carry out many of the responsibilities of a solicitor. Your work will be closely supervised and regularly reviewed. Usually this training can be undertaken full-time over two years, or part-time over a longer period.

Competition for training positions is very strong and you should start applying in the second year of your undergraduate studies. Many firms/organisations receive large amounts of applications for their training vacancies. When seeking a training place you need to know that the number of employers able to offer training positions may be dictated by economic factors and can be significantly lower than the number of LPC graduates.

You must be focused and prepared to put in the work to secure the right training position. Give serious thought to the areas of work and types of firms that interest you. If client contact and experience of a broad range of legal areas interest you, a high street firm may be the appropriate choice. If you have an interest in working abroad, working as part of a large team, have an interest in areas such as intellectual property, company, entertainment and media law and wish to experience high value commercial cases or cross jurisdictional work, you are more likely to be suited to looking for a large or City firm.

The majority of trainees undertake their training within private practice. Be aware that other organisations such as the government legal service, local government and the Crown Prosecution Service also offer training. It may suit your personal circumstances not to work within private practice. A good place to start researching firms/organisations that offer training positions is the Training Contract and Pupillage Handbook (see useful contacts). Vacancies for training positions and other positions in the solicitors' profession are advertised in the weekly Law Society Gazette (see useful contacts).

Be aware that firms are not obliged to keep on trainees after their traineeship. Your

training period should be used to impress as the training firm will also be assessing your prospects for a job as a newly qualified solicitor.

This period of your professional development is regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) to ensure that there is a framework within which your learning will take place. All the information you need to know about regulation of your training can be found in 'Training Trainee Solicitors: the Solicitors Regulation Authority requirements' which is published on the SRA's website (see useful contacts).

SRA requirements

At the start of your training you are required to sign a standard SRA training contract, this is available on the SRA's website (see useful contacts). It is the responsibility of your training principal to ensure that the contract is signed within three months of your start date and registered with the SRA. The training contract registration form and fee should be submitted to the SRA within 28 days of the contract being signed.

A letter will be sent to you from the SRA confirming the registration of your training position and notifying of the expiry date. If you do not receive a letter within 30 days of registration you should contact the SRA to confirm that the contract has been registered.

Failure to register the training position could mean that not all of the time will count, and your admission to the roll could be delayed.

The SRA will check your character and suitability before the start of your training.

Counting previous experience

If you have gained relevant legal experience equivalent to what would be obtained during a period of recognised training before starting your training position you may be able to count that time towards your training period, resulting in a reduction in the period of your training.

The relevant application form and guidelines for considering time to count are available on the SRA's website (see useful contacts).

Experience during the period of recognised training

During training , you are required to gain good experience of at least three distinct areas of law and practice. You are also required to develop your skills in both contentious and non-contentious areas of practice. There are also nine skills standards that you must be given the opportunity to practise and/or observe:

- Advocacy and oral presentation
- Case and transaction management
- Client care and practice support
- Communication
- Dispute resolution
- Drafting
- Interviewing and advising
- Legal research
- Negotiation

Examples of seats you may undertake include:

- Crime
- Personal Injury
- Corporate
- Property
- Litigation
- Private Client
- Finance/banking
- Environmental
- Construction
- Planning
- Healthcare

Further details can be found in the 'The Trainee Information Pack which is available on the SRA's website (see useful contacts).

The period of recognised training record

During your training, you should keep a record of the work you have done, the skills you have gained and what you have learnt. The record also needs to be verified by your supervisor and training principal. It is important that you maintain a record, as the SRA may ask to review it.

Performance review

You should have regular informal reviews of your performance with your training principal or supervisor. In addition, you should have at least three appraisals, during the two-year period, including at least one in the first year, one in the second year and one at the end of the contract. This is an opportunity for you to reflect upon your development and progress.

FAQ What should I do if I am unhappy with the firm/organisation?

If you have any queries or problems relating to your training, you should discuss these with your training principal in the first instance. If you are unable to deal with the matter you can call the SRA Contact Centre 0370 606 2555.

Should you find yourself facing an ethical dilemma or bad practice within a firm, please contact the Professional Ethics Helpline on 0370 606 2577 to raise the issue and to avoid recurrence. The SRA is keen to stamp out malpractice and all queries will be dealt with confidentially.

Professional Skills Course (PSC)

The PSC must be completed during the two year training period. You cannot attend the PSC until you have satisfactorily completed the Legal Practice Course. The PSC builds on the LPC and aims to develop the professional skills of the trainee once they have been exposed to practice. This course must be completed in order to qualify as a solicitor.

The PSC consists of electives and three compulsory core areas:

- Financial and Business Skills

Advocacy and Communication Skills

- Client Care and Professional Standards

The compulsory element involves 48 hours tuition with assessments and the elective element 24 hours tuition.

Your firm must pay for the PSC and give you paid time off to attend the course as well as pay reasonable travel expenses.

Admission to the roll

Once you have successfully completed your academic stage, Legal Practice Course, Professional Skills Course and training period, you can apply to the roll of solicitors in England and Wales, which entitles you to practise as a solicitor. The SRA has the responsibility to ensure that anyone admitted to the roll has complied with training regulations and is of satisfactory character and suitability.

To apply for admission to the roll, you must have

- complied with the SRA Training Regulations,
- satisfactorily completed the Professional Skills Course, and obtained a satisfactory standard disclosure from the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS). This must be sent to the SRA a minimum of 8 weeks prior to your anticipated admission date.

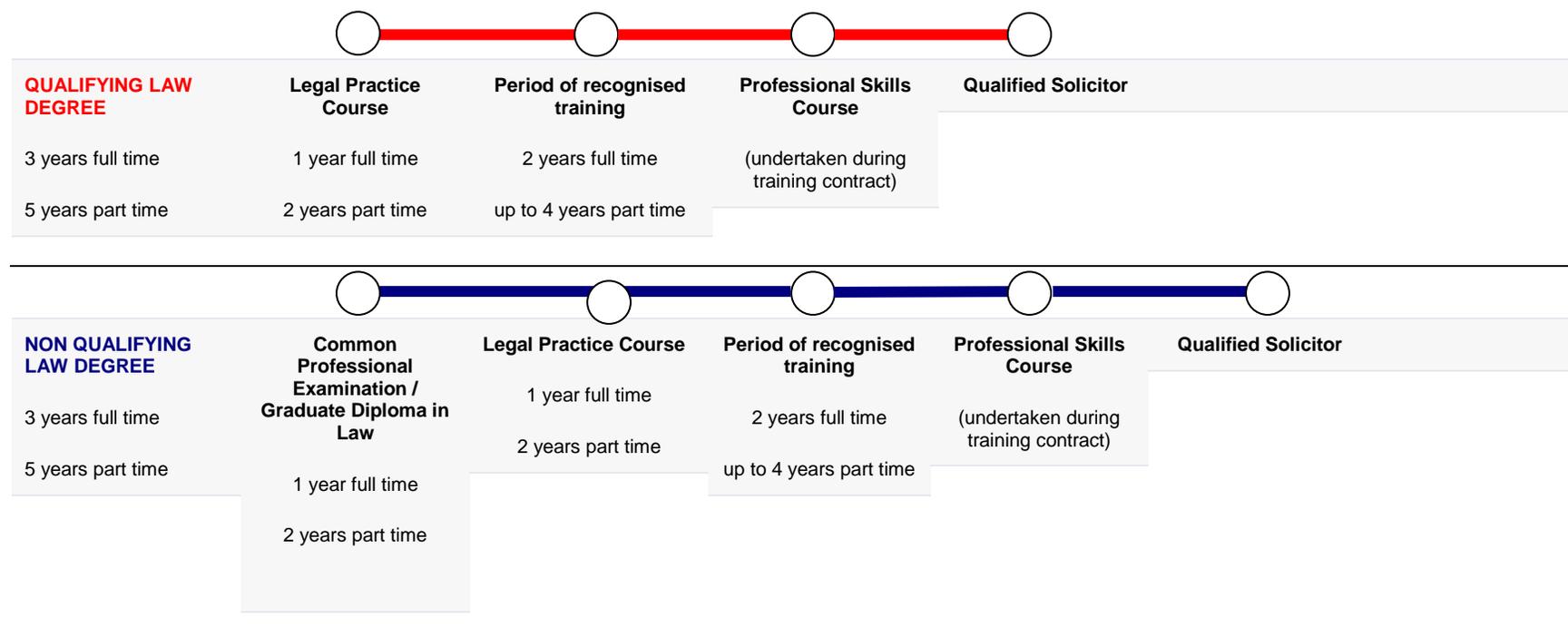
There are two admission dates each month, usually the 1st and the 15th. Applications must be received at least 28 days before the date on which you would be expected to be admitted.

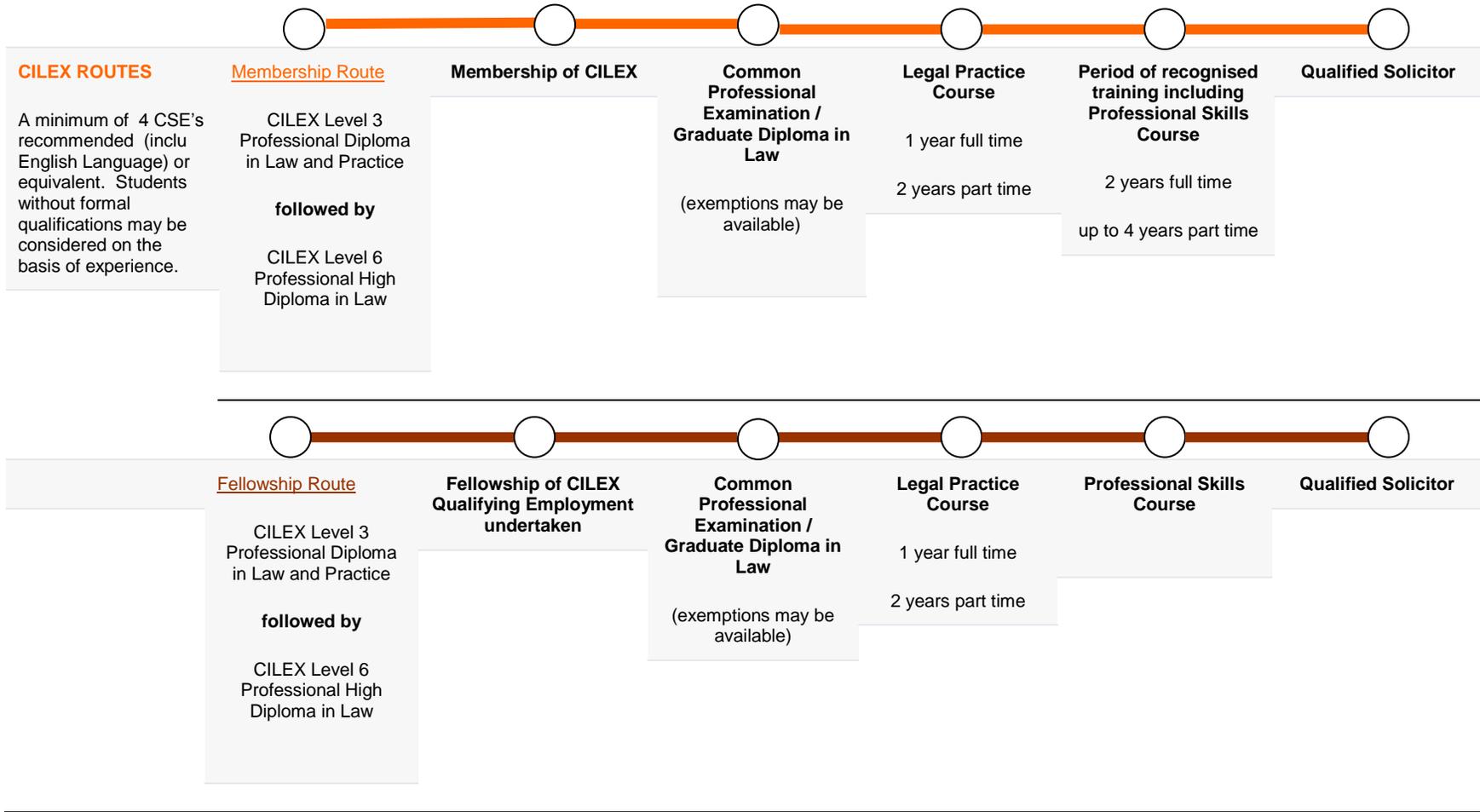
You will automatically be invited to attend an admission ceremony in the Law Society Hall in Chancery Lane, London. Please note that your admission ceremony will not be on the date of admission. The Law Society will contact you following your admission, with details on how to book a ceremony date online. Attendance at an admission ceremony is not mandatory.

Table: Routes to becoming a solicitor

NO A'LEVELS OR EQUIVALENT

- Clex Route (see below)
- Access / Introductory Programme – 1 year full time (Access Certificate qualifies you for University entry)





Case Studies

Experience of a GDL student

Helen Mooney – CPE/GDL and LPC Student

Why did you decide to become a solicitor?

I decided to become a solicitor due to the excellent opportunities for progression and the career structure offered by the profession. I wanted a career that was intellectually demanding as the idea of being constantly challenged greatly appeals and will drive me in my career. There is plenty of opportunity to work in a team and with clients. I tried a variety of work experience placements in various professions before deciding on the law and was therefore able to make an informed decision that becoming a solicitor was right for me. The money was obviously a factor.

What source(s) did you use to research about qualifying as a solicitor?

I looked at the Chambers Guide and online sources such as Lex 100, the Lawyer, Legal Week, Lawcareers.net. I also spoke to the careers advisor at BPP before I even started the GDL at the college. I'll be honest, I never stepped foot into a law fair.

What A' levels did you study? Why those subjects?

French, English Literature, Fine Art, General Studies and AS levels in Human Biology and Critical Thinking. I had no idea what I wanted to do in terms of career and I chose a variety of subjects that would keep my options open. I basically chose the subjects I enjoyed and thought I could do well in.

What activities did you undertake at university that you feel assisted in enhancing your CV and making you stand out?

I was quite actively involved in activities at university as extra-curricular societies were really encouraged at my university. I was part of the rowing club, cheerleading squad at my college, jazz dance group and I wrote for the university newspaper. I also took part in a development project in Sri Lanka where we raised money to build a school and then spent the summer working in our school. I definitely think this assisted with making my application stand out as I was asked at every interview without exception about my involvement with extra-curricular activities. It also meant that I had a lot of examples to back up my answers to competency based questions

in interviews and on application forms. I had three interviews for training contracts and each time I was asked in detail about the Sri Lanka project. The interviewers seemed interested and impressed by this and the skills developed as a result of my experience in Sri Lanka.

What route are you taking to qualification?

I am from a non-law academic background. I completed my degree in English Literature at Durham University and then did the GDL at BPP Law School. I have just completed the LPC also at BPP.

How did you go about funding your studies?

My GDL and LPC fees were paid by my firm.

Did you undertake work experience within the legal profession? How did you go about securing the placement(s)?

I had a contact at a large commercial law firm and he allowed me to go into the office for work experience for a week. I then secured two further vacation schemes at commercial firms in Manchester.

Have you secured a training contract?

Yes.

Where are you doing your training contract?

Addleshaw Goddard (2010)

How did you go about finding a training contract?

I knew I wanted to work in Manchester, so applied to Manchester firms.

At what stage of your route to qualification did you secure your training contract? How many applications did you submit?

I applied prior to the GDL. I submitted three applications and was very lucky because I got offers from all of them.

What three top tips would you give to anyone considering qualifying as a solicitor?

Exploit your contacts, and if you don't have any contacts in the legal profession find someone who does and exploit theirs. Don't limit your work-experience to law only as I think it is helpful to demonstrate that you have tried a variety of work-experience and you have made an informed decision to become a solicitor.

Experience of a student

James Betts, Student

Why did you decide to become a solicitor?

I enjoyed my law degree and after taking a bit of time to consider other careers, namely teaching, after my degree. I realised that I liked the mix and variety of work that law offered, e.g. one to one client contact, time spent on your own drafting, attending court etc.

What source(s) did you use to research about qualifying as a solicitor?

Law Careers.Net and BPP careers service mainly.

What A' levels did you study? Why those subjects?

- Law – As I thought it would be interesting
- Maths – As I enjoyed it at school
- English Language – As I thought it would be useful

What activities did you undertake at university that you feel assisted in enhancing your CV and making you stand out?

I undertook pro bono work whilst at law school and represented the college at squash. Whilst at Lancaster University there was a great emphasis on team work.

What route are you taking to qualification?

I am doing paralegal work at the moment which I hope will lead to a training contract.

How did you go about funding your studies?

Graduate loan and parents' assistance

Did you undertake work experience within the legal profession? How did you go about securing the placement(s)?

Yes. I mainly arranged work experience through friends but also made requests by writing direct to firms.

What sort of work do you intend to pursue after your studies?

Education or employment law.

What three top tips would you give to anyone considering qualifying as a solicitor?

- Get a variety of work experience
- Identify an area you are passionate about
- Use the careers service at university and law school

Experience of a paralegal

Sophie Grew – Paralegal, Financial Services Company

Why did you decide to become a solicitor?

I have had a keen interest in all things legal from an early age and secured my first legal work experience at 15. Therefore I was always confident that I wanted to study law at University. It wasn't until I went to University that I started thinking about my career in more detail. I decided that I wanted to be a Solicitor rather than a Barrister having arranged work experience for myself in various law firms and Chambers. It was the client interface and the personal stability that attracted me more towards qualifying as a Solicitor rather than a Barrister.

What source(s) did you use to research about qualifying as a solicitor?

I completed work experience in the summer holidays every year from the age of 15-21 at various law firms and Barrister's Chamber's who advised me on the different routes and how to qualify.

My university were also very helpful and provided careers events during the second year, featuring guest speakers from various local firms.

I also found the website lawcareers.net very useful.

What A' levels did you study? Why those subjects?

I studied English History and Sociology because I thought that the analytical skills acquired would help me with a career in law. I was also told from qualified professionals on my work experience to try and stick to 'older' subjects and that if I wanted to study a law degree not to take law A-level as the way it is simplified into an A-level could pose confusing when studying as a degree.

What activities did you undertake at university that you feel assisted in enhancing your CV and making you stand out?

I am not a sporty person and so I got involved in the University Law society helping out with the organisation of events.

I also took part in the internal mooting competition, in which my partner and I got to the final which was judged by Judge Bull and Barrister's from local chambers. We then went on to compete in the Essex Court Chambers competition.

How did you go about funding your studies?

I applied for a professional enhancement loan from HSBC which covered my fees at law school for the year and gave me £1000 to pay for train fares and materials. I was lucky as I could live rent free with my parents just outside of London and only a 30 minute commute from the College of Law.

Did you undertake work experience within the legal profession? How did you go about securing this placement?

I used all of my contacts to secure work experience. A friend of my mum was a secretary at a law firm, she managed to secure me a week at her Covent Garden Firm. My Dad's company uses a law firm who gave me my very first work experience at 15. I then started to make my own contacts through this work experience who would arrange for me to shadow barrister's that they used when they had a good case coming up.

How did you find your current paralegal placement?

Whilst at university in the Summer holidays I always temped for various recruitment agencies in London. In 2007 I was placed for a week at Markit, a Financial Services Company in London Bridge, I had in fact by chance been placed in the Legal Department. I told the head that I was studying law and kept in contact with him at

the end of each year. I did another couple of week's work for him in the summer of 2008 and as I came to the end of my time at law school I contacted him again.

He informed me his Paralegal had handed her notice in that day and could I start ASAP.

What sort of work do you undertake as a paralegal? Can any of this work go towards reducing the time of the training contract?

I have now been a Paralegal for this firm for 12 months which as I understand from the SRA regulations will allow me to knock 6 months off my training contract. So long as my current employers and the training firm agree.

The work I do is varied and can not be predicted from one day to the next. As a team of 6 I am relied upon heavily to carry out tasks that the qualified solicitors would carry out (with their guidance) whilst at other times tasks can be menial.

We work closely with two large city firms and I carry out similar work to their trainees. I look after all the Companies House documentation. I deal with the Company's Share and Option register. This involves compiling reports for Option and Shareholders, carrying out the exercise of Options (when an Option holder purchases their share) dealing with all the administration involved in a liquidity event. This allows Share and Option holders to sell their stock and involves a huge amount of effort and organisation as such events involve around 800 Stock holders.

I have also recently taken on the Company's Trade Mark Portfolio of over 150 registered and pending marks. This involves advising the business areas on relevant Classes and Jurisdictions to register their marks in, carrying out the relevant research into similar marks, advising if and when oppositions occur as well as the usual correspondence with local associates.

Have you secured a training contract?

No

What three top tips would you give to anyone considering qualifying as a solicitor?

- You can never do too much research.

- Never give up.
- Use every contact you can think of.

Experience of a trainee solicitor

Catherine Banton – Trainee, Large City Firm

Why did you decide to become a solicitor?

I always enjoyed debating and discussing various topics / points of law while in tutorials at University but was never great at standing up and presenting in front of an audience. I also loved solving problems and puzzles so I decided that as a solicitor I would get to solve problems relating to relevant, current topics and attend trials without having to stand in front of Court as a Barrister does.

What source(s) did you use to research about qualifying as a solicitor?

My University had a great careers service which I regularly used. I also read The Lawyer and looked at their list of top 100 law firms. This gave me guidance on law firm websites to look up. A lot of firm websites have information on being and becoming a trainee solicitor in their particular firm which gave me an idea of the steps I had to take to qualify.

What A' levels did you study? Why those subjects?

I studied A/S Level Maths and A-Level History, English and Physics.

I always enjoyed the problem solving involved in Maths and Physics although I found numbers difficult to grasp. I chose English and History because I loved writing and reading and because I found History an interesting topic to study. I was also keen to ensure I did more academic subjects.

What activities did you undertake at university that you feel assisted in enhancing your CV and making you stand out?

I think any extra-curricular activity you do at University will enhance your CV. I helped with a project which twinned my university with a school. As students, we then went to the school and spoke to the pupils about Human Rights and how this affected their every day lives. I also helped out at a legal advice centre a few times whilst at

University and Law School. This kind of experience is excellent as it shows you can deal with clients and the general public.

What route are you taking to qualification?

I completed a straight LLB Law Degree at Nottingham University, I then took a year out working as a paralegal before completing my LPC at BPP Law School in Leeds. I began my training contract in February 2009 which gave me 7 months after Law School to go travelling. I am due to qualify in February 2011.

How did you go about funding your studies?

I funded my University studies through a combination of student loans, working behind a bar during the summer months and contributions from my parents. I spent 1 year working as a paralegal and living at home to save enough money to cover my LPC Fees. However, I was lucky enough to gain a training contract before I began my LPC so the fees were covered by my firm and they provided me with a maintenance grant.

Did you undertake work experience within the legal profession? How did you go about securing this placement?

Yes, I took on 1 year's role as a paralegal with a small in-house solicitors. In order to find a job when I left University I went through the Yellow Pages and as many legal websites as I could find, sending out CVs to any law firm listed. I sent my CV accompanied by a covering letter explaining that I was looking for work to fund my LPC and was invited to an interview for the job I took.

Where are you doing your training contract?

CMS Cameron McKenna LLP

At what stage of your route to qualification did you secure your training contract? How many applications did you submit?

I secured my training contract In September 2008, the day before I began my LPC. I had been applying for training contracts and going to interviews since the end of my first year at University so it took me 3 years and probably around 60 applications before I was able to secure a place.

What three top tips would you give to anyone considering qualifying as a solicitor?

- Work Experience is vital – the law you study at University and the law you do in practice are very different!
- Don't give up – it is very hard to secure a training contract but learning from your mistakes is something that Law Firms love to see so don't be embarrassed about going back to the same firm a year later and showing them how you have developed from last time.
- Keep up to date with the law and how it is changing so that you are aware when speaking in interviews and used to doing this for yourself when it comes to working.

PART THREE – PRACTICAL ADVICE

University Checklist – what to do and when

Law undergraduate

First year

1. When you choose your options for your second and third years, ensure that you will cover the foundation subjects (see page 13).
2. You must work hard from the outset. Be aware that firms will ask for your first year grades when you apply for vacation schemes in your second year. First year grades will often also be considered by firms when recruiting for training positions.
3. Talk to career advisers, they will have information on the profession, career fairs/open days and work placement schemes.
4. Take part in extracurricular activities. Even non-law related activities will develop your skills and enhance your CV. Most universities have law societies run by students, this will be a valuable source for careers related information.
5. Find vacation placement work, either through a formal vacation scheme or through informal work experience – this will give you an insight in to the different types of firms and assist you in knowing whether the profession is right for you. This will also demonstrate to recruiters that you are serious about a career in law. Many firms automatically offer an interview for a training position to students that have secured vacation placements with them.
6. If you have been unable to secure a formal vacation placement through a scheme, try to find any sort of legal work experience. You should also consider work experience outside of the legal profession that will enhance your skills.
7. If you wish to become a commercial solicitor you should be crafting your commercial awareness and developing an understanding of the business context in which firms operate. Consult the business pages and legal press.
8. You may also take part in pro bono work.
9. Give thought to where you want to work and the area of law in which you would wish to practise.

Second year

1. Make full use of your careers service to discuss the profession generally to ascertain whether a career as a solicitor is right for you.
2. Talk to members of the profession.
3. Explore funding possibilities for your legal training.
4. Apply for vacation placement work. Remember if you are unable to secure vacation placements consider working outside of the profession where you will gain relevant experience. Also participate in pro bono work.
5. Attend law fairs / open days. This is your opportunity to meet firms face to face. Ensure that you prepare well thought out questions that are tailored to the law firms/organisations that you intend to visit.
6. Apply for a period of recognised training in your final term. Many of the larger firms, especially commercial firms look to fill their training places two years in advance. Many smaller firms only accept applications a year in advance or less. Training positions are not offered until 1 September each year but you will find that the larger commercial firms set the end of July as their application deadlines. Applications should be made direct to the contact responsible for trainee recruitment at the firm/organisation.
7. Research the type of firm or organisation that interests you and prepare your CV carefully. Each application should be tailored accordingly. Firms/organisations can spot regurgitated information. It is better to research the firm/organisation and try to match your personal qualities to that which the firm/organisation is looking for, rather than sending out hundreds of the same applications.
8. If you are not successful in securing training at this stage, be mindful that you can continue applying each year as some firms take on graduates after they have completed the postgraduate stage of qualification. Some students secure training whilst they are studying the LPC.

Third /final year – Autumn

1. Attend interviews for a training position
2. Apply for a place on the Legal Practice Course

Third /final year – Spring term

1. Disclose any character and suitability issues to the SRA ahead of starting the LPC.
2. Apply for training if not already secured.
3. Register with the Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) (see useful contacts) to receive regular updates and join local (JLD) groups for local activities that you could become involved in.

Non-law graduate

In your first degree – third/final year

1. Apply for a place on the Common Professional Examination / Graduate Diploma in Law Course.
2. Arrange funding for the conversion course.
3. Find vacation placement work, either through a formal vacation scheme or through informal work experience – this will give you an insight in to the different types of firms and assist you in knowing whether the profession is right for you. This will also demonstrate to recruiters that you are serious about a career in law. Many firms automatically offer an interview for a training position to students that have secured vacation placements with them.
4. If you have been unable to secure a formal vacation placement through a scheme, try to find any sort of legal work experience. You should also consider work experience outside of the legal profession that will enhance your skills.
5. If you wish to become a commercial solicitor you should be crafting your commercial awareness and developing an understanding of the business context in which firms operate. Consult the business pages and legal press.
6. You may also take part in pro bono work.
7. Research the type of firm / organisation that interests you and prepare your CV carefully.
8. Attend law fairs / open days. This is your opportunity to meet firms face to face. Ensure that you prepare well thought out questions that are tailored to the law firms/organisations that you intend to visit.

9. Apply for training in your final term. Many of the larger firms, especially commercial firms look to fill their training places two years in advance. Many smaller firms only accept applications a year in advance or less. Training positions are not offered until 1 September each year but you will find that the larger commercial firms set the end of July as their application deadlines. Applications should be made direct to the contact responsible for trainee recruitment at the firm/organisation.
10. If you are not successful in securing training at this stage, be mindful that you can continue applying each year as some firms take on graduates after they have completed the postgraduate stage of qualification. Some students secure training whilst they are studying the LPC.

CPE / GDL year

Autumn

1. Apply for your place on the Legal Practice Course for the following year.
2. Apply for training if not already secured.

Spring term

1. Disclose any character and suitability issues to the SRA ahead of starting the LPC.
2. July / August – Arrange funding for the Legal Practice Course.
3. Register with the Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) (see useful contacts) to receive regular updates and join local JLD groups for local activities that you could become involved in.

Legal Practice Course

1. Apply for firms for a period of recognised training if not already secured.
2. Check for advertisements in the Law Society Gazette.
3. Talk to members of the profession.

Period of recognised training

Starting your training

1. Sign your contract of employment and ensure that the registration form is sent to the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The SRA will check your suitability at this stage.
2. Attend the Professional Skills Course.
3. Firms/organisations are not obliged to retain you once you complete your training. Use this opportunity to impress if you would like to remain at the firm/organisation after qualification.

At the end of your training

1. If the firm is not keeping you on after completion of the period of recognised training, apply for a post as a newly qualified solicitor.
2. Apply for admission to the roll of solicitors in England and Wales. The SRA will check your suitability again at this stage.

Vacation schemes and work experience

Work experience is an important addition to your CV, indicating to recruiters that you are serious about a career in the solicitors' profession. **You are advised to obtain work experience in different types of firms to assist you in deciding what area of law and type of firm you have an interest in.**

Many law firms run vacation schemes for prospective solicitors during the spring and summer vacation periods, some of which are paid. These are formal structured programmes, often for a period of two weeks although lengths can vary. It is your opportunity to learn about the workings of a law firm, experience what it is like and importantly, decide whether law is right for you. You should use this time to impress, as many firms invite all their vacation placement students for interview for a training position. You will find that competition for vacation placements is fierce.

If you are unable to secure a vacation placement be mindful that this is not the only way to enhance your CV. Consider approaching local solicitors' firms, law centres, Citizen Advice Bureaux, magistrates' courts, the Crown Prosecution Service,

Government Legal Service and companies with in-house legal departments. These organisations could potentially offer unpaid work experience that would provide valuable experience. You may also consider undertaking pro bono work. Details of local firms can be located at the 'Find a Solicitor' section at the Law Society website (see useful contacts). You should also consider posts outside of law that will enhance your skills.

Application deadlines for placements are usually around late January/early February. It is advisable to check with firms for exact dates. Details of firms that offer vacation placements can be found at sites such as Law Careers website (see useful contacts)

First year undergraduates are encouraged to undertake work experience that will provide relevant skills, this could be volunteering. Many leading firms offer some sort of work placement for first year undergraduates.

Research the market

The initial research into training positions can be quite daunting. You should familiarise yourself with the range of firms before deciding on what firms/organisations you wish to apply to. Undertaking work placements in different types of firms will assist you in identifying what areas of law or firms you are interested in. Research the firms you wish to apply to and tailor each application accordingly. For the best chances of success, it is advisable to try to match your personal qualities to that which the firm/organisation is looking for, rather than sending hundreds of applications containing the same information.

Firms/organisations can spot regurgitated information.

It is also important to be aware of the state of the legal market, and the economy in general, when following the path to qualification. A career in law is not 'recession-proof'. The cost of legal education is high and competition for training and for newly qualified positions is fierce.

Talk to legal recruiters about the number of job vacancies and the current requirements of firms. Talk to contacts in the profession or to the Law Society's Junior Lawyers Division about how to stand out from the crowd. Read the law section

in your newspaper or subscribe to daily emails from the legal press. This will help you learn more about recent developments in the law, and also provide you with valuable information about issues affecting the legal sector.

Gather as much information as possible so that you are fully prepared for the challenges that lay ahead, and are able to tackle them head on.

Application / Selection

Applying for a period of recognised training is a time-consuming exercise. Competition is fierce. The selection process may include interviews, psychometric tests, written tests, presentations and group exercises.

Some firms accept CVs, which will require a covering letter as part of your application (see guidance below). Other firms require an application form to be completed, whether in hard copy or online (see applications guidance).

Top Tips - Covering Letters

Research

Spending time at the outset will assist in focussing your thoughts and will save time when it comes to completing your applications.

Before putting pen to paper:

- Read the firm's literature or information. Find out as much as you can about them. (size of the firm, its areas of practice, its clients, its competition, deals the firm has been involved in recently, issues that may be affecting the firm etc.). A lot can be revealed by looking at a firm's website. You will then be in a better position to compose a letter about why you are suited to the firm.
- Consider the firm's requirements and decide what they are looking for.
- Consider whether you have the skills, abilities and qualities required, and, if so, how these can be best conveyed. Remember that as well as a good academic record firms are looking for applicants with strong skills.

- Does your C.V. cover all the necessary points? If not, you may need to revise it. If it does, what points are there on the C.V. that you would wish the employer to note?
- You must also consider what it is you want from your career and select those firms that initially fit your criteria.

The Letter

Every C.V. sent by post needs to have a covering letter to introduce it.

The letter **must**:

- encourage the employer to take your C.V. seriously
- set the reader's expectations of what will be in the C.V.
- persuade the employer that you are a suitable candidate for the job
- indicate evidence for the claims you make about yourself.

The letter **should** include:

- the purpose of the letter i.e. the application for a period of recognised training
- the reasons why you are applying to that firm / organisation
- highlight the best two-three things you can offer the firm /organisation
- a positive 'signing off'

Presentation

- First impressions are important, so make your letter an attractive document. Ensure it is well laid out, and printed on A4 paper.
- Ensure that there is no spelling mistakes or other errors.
- As far as possible address your letter to an individual. If necessary telephone to find out the correct name and title.
- Capture the reader's attention.
- Express what you need to say as concisely as you can.
- Convey a positive attitude and reasonable confidence.

Letter Format

Like every good story, your letter should have a beginning, a middle and an end.

- **BEGINNING – Introduction**

Brief introduction of who you are; which job you are applying for; where you saw the advertisement and why you decided to apply. Mention here that your C.V. is enclosed.

- **MIDDLE – Selling yourself**

Further explain the reasons for applying; why you are interested in the job and why this firm. Demonstrate that you understand the requirements of the role and demonstrate that you know about the firm/organisation.

Sell yourself – Why are you right for the role; highlight your achievements and experiences that are of particular relevance to the role. Having identified what the employer is likely to be looking for, refer them to your C.V. to indicate that you would meet their requirements. Demonstrate your strengths and why you are a suitable candidate. Indicate what sort of contribution you could make and be clear about what you have to offer.

The letter should be tailored to the specific job and firm/organisation that you are applying to. Tailor your letter to fit the firm's interests or needs, prove to the firm that you have done your homework.

- **END**

End the letter on a positive note, saying when you will be available for interview and that you look forward to hearing from them.

Don't forget to sign your letter.

Top Tips - CV Writing

Do

1. Make sure your C.V. is 2-3 pages in length at most.
2. Make your C.V. easy to read by choosing a clear typeface and font size.
Remember that the legal profession will demand clarity from its practitioners.

3. Use good quality paper. Print your C.V. in black ink on white paper. Covering letters should use identical stationery.
4. Use positive language and a confident tone.
5. The first page should contain enough personal details for any potential employer to contact you with ease.
6. Education and experiences should be arranged clearly, with the most recent appearing first. Try to keep dates down the left or right side of the page.
7. Highlight key skills relevant to the job. Ensure bullet points and headings contain reasonable detail and do not read simply as a checklist.
8. Question the relevance of everything you include. Leave out any irrelevant or negative information.
9. List all your professional memberships and relevant qualifications.
10. Place information that is relevant and demonstrates suitability for the post nearer the beginning of the C.V.
11. Your career history should give an impression of your role, status and achievements. Try to give examples of interesting and relevant matters which demonstrate your skills.
12. Ask someone else to read your C.V. and find out his or her impressions.

Don't

1. Binding your C.V. is inconvenient. It may be copied to a number of departments or scanned to a PC. It also gives the impression of trying too hard. If your C.V. is over a page long, use a paper clip.
2. Lying can lead to instant dismissal if discovered. Be aware that if contacted, past employers may reveal a different picture.
3. Avoid jokes, not everyone will share your sense of humour.
4. Avoid writing your whole life story. Positions of responsibility at junior school are rarely of interest and give the impression of doing little since.
5. Leaving unexplained gaps in your career history gives the employer the feeling you are trying to hide something. State whether travelling, taking a career break etc.
6. Avoid writing bland profile/objective sections. Statements such as 'highly motivated team player' can be better demonstrated through examples in the body of your C.V.

7. Don't list your interests unless they are current. Think carefully about the impression they will give the reader. Only include those interests that demonstrate positive skills that the firm/organisation may be looking for.

Typical C.V. Outline

Contact Details

- At the top of the first page should be your contact details. The text should be centred. It's not necessary to give the document a heading i.e. 'Curriculum Vitae'. Instead, your name should be the heading. Use a larger type and in bold.
- To save space, include your address on the line below your name.
- Contact telephone numbers and an e-mail address should also be recorded in this section.

Overview

- More recently, but not essential, candidates include at the top of the CV a brief overview, approximately 4-5 lines in length. This is a summary of what you have done, your core skills and what you are interested in doing.

Education and Qualifications

- This section should include all professional memberships as well as your general academic achievements. If you are currently studying, this should also be included (at the top of the list) with an anticipated result. Lay it out with the most recent first. Ensure that you include the name of the establishment and the dates you attended the institution.

Work Experience

Start with the most recent job first, compile the following information:

- Dates
The dates should be placed vertically in either the left-hand or right-hand margin.
- Organisation and location
Underneath the organisation's name, give a brief description about the business allowing the reader to quickly make comparisons about the size and complexity of the organisation.

- **Job title**
Underneath the job title describe what you were employed to do. Be selective and mention the principal tasks and responsibilities of your role, include those things you enjoy and are good at doing. Leave out things you do but do not enjoy so much, unless they are crucial parts of the job you are targeting. The function statement should be no longer than 4-5 lines in length.
- **Achievements**
These, potentially, set you apart from the competition. Each achievement statement should include whether you worked independently or as part of a team, what you did, and the results of your actions. Achievements should be written in the form of short, punchy, bullet-point statements of fact. There is no need to provide salary details or reasons for leaving on your C.V.

IT Skills

- Try to give an impression of your familiarity with computers. List any software packages that you are familiar with that would be relevant to the job e.g. Word or Excel and your level of proficiency. Law firms nowadays want to see that their potential trainees have some experience in tools used for legal research e.g. CD-ROM's and primarily the Internet. Mention that you have used WestLaw or Butterworths or Lawtel if you have.

Interests and Activities

- Law firms are also looking for evidence of your team working and social skills in an extra-curricular capacity. Therefore mention your involvement in sporting teams and other organisations and highlight positions of responsibility you have held. You should however be careful not to give irrelevant activities/interests that do not demonstrate any skills to the firm e.g. reading, or listening to music.

Referees

- Before you submit your C.V. you need to contact potential referees to obtain their agreement to act as referees. It is not conventional to reveal the identities of your referees on the C.V. Some employers will request such information prior to an interview, in which case you provide the names and contact details in your covering letter. Other employers will wait until they have met you and decided on whether they want to take matters further.

- You are responsible for referee management. When a potential employer or recruiter asks you for your referees, you should take the opportunity to contact the referees to explain to each the nature of the role you are applying for. Detail the skills the employer is interested in. This will enable the referee to have a relevant, constructive conversation with the employer/recruiter.

Top Tips - Interviews

Preparing for the Interview

Interviews can be a very stressful and traumatic process for a lot of people. The best way to allay interview fears is to ensure that you are prepared.

The most important questions you should ask yourself before an interview:

- Why do you want a career in the law?
- What areas of law are you most interested in and why?
- Are your sights set on a commercial firm, a general firm or a high street firm?
- Why did you choose the firm to which you are applying?
- What can you offer that firm?

If you want to work in the law because you enjoy a challenge, like getting a deal done then say just that, but try and think of comparative achievements in your past which have made you feel good. For example, if you ran for student office you can tell your interviewer briefly of the challenges you faced and your sense of satisfaction at having got the job done. This will reveal something unique in your personality to your interviewer, and indicate what you expect of the law at the same time. However, do not plan out what to say word for word, as it will sound rehearsed.

Obviously, one of the reasons for wanting a job is to make money, but your interviewer already knows this and knows that every other candidate wants the same thing. So instead, concentrate on the things that make you stand out from the crowd. Find out as much as you can about the firm before arriving for an interview. Most firms have websites and are happy to send brochures to interview candidates. You can also search the websites of the legal press for a more objective view. You should try to get a feeling of the ethos of the firm - what are their buzz words, do they put

most value in ambitious, confident people, or instead prefer communicative team players.

If you know who will be interviewing you, then find out a little about them. If they have published articles then try and get hold of them. Remember firms have 'personalities' too. Establish the personality of the firm to which you are applying, compare it to the personalities of its competitors - why you chose to apply to firm A over firm B, and then work at what you and your chosen firm have in common.

Always remember that the purpose of your preparation is to ensure you are making the right choice. For example, to arrive at a firm with no construction department professing a desperate desire to practise construction law will make you appear ill prepared and a waste of time.

The final rule on preparation is knowing when to stop. No interviewer expects you to know everything about the firm. You do not need to have memorised the firm's client list or read every book the interviewing partner has ever written. All they want to know is that you have thought through your decision to apply to them carefully. Once you have thought these issues through you will be able to perform with far more confidence at an interview.

Typical Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you decide on a career in law?
- What did you learn at university that you could bring to this job?
- What do you consider your strengths/weaknesses?
- Why do you want to be a solicitor?
- What are your main achievements to date?
- Have you ever had a position of responsibility?
- What did you gain from your work experience/vacation employment?
- How do you manage your time?
- How well do you work under pressure? Give examples.
- Where do you expect to be in five years' time?
- Why do you want to work for this firm/organisation?
- What do you know about this firm/organisation?

- Are you flexible to move/travel?
- Are you applying for other training positions?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a personality conflict with a colleague.
- Tell me about a time you handled a stressful situation well.
- Tell me about a time you built a rapport with a difficult person.
- Describe a time when you worked with a colleague to finish a project on time.
- Give an example of a time when you showed initiative.
- What's the biggest challenge you've ever had?
- Give me an example of a time when you were particularly creative in solving a problem.
- What's your view on? (current affairs/business question)
- Have you any questions to ask me?

Finding the Right Answers

An employer will choose criteria that you must fulfil and the interview is the chance to prove that you possess them. Such criteria will be different for each firm, but examples would be drive and initiative, influencing skills, personal qualities, analytical skills, flexibility, technical skills and organisational skills. Always back up your answers with one or two examples from your life. Here are some guidelines for answering some of those difficult questions.

- How well do you work under pressure?
Emphasise that you work as well under pressure as you do at any other time but that you prioritise tasks so that your workload is manageable. Point out your ability to leave work at the office and find time and ways to relax.
- Are you applying to other firms?
You need to show that you are sufficiently interested in a career in law and that you have not just been applying for training positions indiscriminately, so only mention firms with a good reputation with similar attributes to the one you are at an interview for. You should also demonstrate a particular interest in and commitment to that firm.

- **Tell me about yourself**
Be prepared for open-ended questions, the interviewer not only wants to hear your answer but how you answer. This is a test of your verbal communication skills. Do not waffle or tell them your life story. Concentrate on a brief summary, recent experiences and major relevant achievements. You can then ask if they would like you to expand on any area.
- **What salary are you looking for?**
Part of your pre-interview research should be to find the firm's salary range. Say that you expect to be within that range. Think about the whole package (pensions, healthcare, etc.) not just salary. Remember your primary objective is to qualify with good training - hopefully the money will flow later.
- **What is your greatest weakness?**
A good approach is to admit a real weakness (which does not impact on the job), then describe how you overcome it by using strengths which are relevant to the job. For example, overcoming nervousness at public speaking by extensive preparation and organisation. Be prepared for the possibility that they may ask for several weaknesses, so have several answers prepared.
- **How would you go about generating business for the firm?**
The key issue when answering this question is your ability to network and have a social life outside the firm. Another issue to consider is the quality of service you provide when you secure a client, to make sure they return in the future.
- **Why do you want to work for us?**
This is something you should have thought about in your preparation. It could be the excellence of the firm, their size, their training, their specialisation, etc. Try to find a fit between your strengths, values and interests and those of the firm. Try to emphasise what you can do for them, not just what they can do for you.

At the Interview

Remember that the profession you have chosen involves a good deal of client contact and the solicitor/client relationship requires the client to place their complete

confidence in the solicitor. If you cannot put an interviewer at ease and convince him/her of your professionalism, you will not be let loose on their clients.

What the interviewer will be noting as your interview progresses:

- Your appearance - Are you business-like?
- Are you a serious, committed candidate?
- Is your interest in law genuine?
- What sort of temperament/ personality are you revealing?
- Are you articulate/able to 'think on your feet'?
- Will you get on with the rest of their staff?
- Would you fit in to their particular organisational structure and culture?
- Do your responses correspond or conflict with those on your C.V./application form?
- Can you use your initiative?
- Do you display intellectual/analytical/reasoning ability?
- What is your attitude to working alone/under supervision?
- Do you seem able to cope with pressure/deadlines?
- Are you organised/able to manage your time?
- Do you possess self-awareness?
- Do you have a sense of humour?

General Tips

1. Dress smart
2. Walk through the door with a smile on your face, make eye contact with your interviewer(s), and always offer a firm handshake.
3. Sit upright in your chair, do not slouch, or lean too far back. Leaning slightly forward indicates interest and engagement. Also hold you hands together - this stops you fidgeting and also appears attentive and interested.
4. If there is more than one interviewer present then try to address your answers, equally, to each of those present.
5. Do not look out of the window or let your eyes wander around the room. You will appear disinterested and disrespectful.
6. Be succinct and to the point whilst also ensuring you sell yourself.

7. Do not attempt to fill silences while the interviewer is looking at your C.V. or a list of questions in front of him/her.
8. Listen carefully to the questions you are asked in their entirety and answer them precisely. Remember that this is what your clients will expect of you as a practising solicitor. Remember to adapt your pre-prepared answers to the precise question asked.
9. If you do not understand something you are asked or told, ask your interviewer(s) to explain.
10. Feel free to ask a couple of questions yourself, and think about them in advance. If you find that your questions have been answered for you in the course of the interview then cross them off mentally as you go.
11. Thank your interviewer(s) for seeing you, shake hands and smile. Remember to say goodbye.

Your Questions

At the end of the interview, the interviewer will commonly ask if you have any questions, this is a good opportunity for you to show off your interest in the job and the firm.

Do not ask anything you should already know from details they have sent you, or about salary, holidays, etc. Good topics to ask about are:

- Training - how the seats are rotated, how work is allocated, how they manage the Professional Skills Course, etc.
- The organisation - strategic goals, challenges they are facing, why do the interviewer(s) enjoy working there, most significant recent developments in the firm, etc.
- The working conditions - opportunities, career development, what percentage of trainee's become partners, how is performance evaluated, etc.
- The process - what happens next, how many people are being interviewed, do you fill open positions from within the firm first, etc.

After the Interview

- Think about what you have learned and your impressions of the employer. The interview is your opportunity to decide if you want to work for them.

- Reflect on the interview. Make a note of the questions they asked. Were you satisfied with your answers, or could you do better next time?
- If they do not contact you when they said they would or if it has been a long time since the interview (more than two weeks), try ringing to check the situation.
- If you are not successful, try ringing to ask if they could tell you the main reasons.

Top Tips - Applications

- Some organisations argue that there is not enough detail on a CV to select you for interview and are opting to use application forms or the online application process. Firms with online application processes may not consider paper CVs. You should check with the firm in question to make sure you don't waste your time crafting a paper CV unnecessarily.
- An application is your chance to demonstrate your written communication skills – be clear and concise. Employers are looking to see early evidence of this skill.
- As with all applications, preparation is the key to making any good application. Find out as much as you can about the organisation and its recruitment criteria, information can be found on their website or any promotional literature.
- Many application forms are designed to test your powers of précis. At first glance, the spaces provided for your answers do not appear big enough. Application forms are designed for this purpose. Gauge how long your answer should be by the size of the space provided.
- Use each section's specified word count as a guide to how much detail they want from you (for on-line applications).
- Read through the form carefully and follow instructions. Do not attach extra information to your application, such as your C.V. Applications are carefully designed to extract the right amount of information to make a decision to select or reject you. Any additional information will usually be ignored. Consider it only if the form invites you to do so or if the form is inadequate and gives you no space at all to sell yourself.
- Do a draft of your answers first, preferably on a photocopy of the form, so that you can be sure they are going to fit in the boxes.

Make your application a pleasure to read. Any form that is easy to read and the product of intelligent thought will have an immediate advantage.

- You are wasting your time if it does not look visually decent. Under no circumstances should you resort to tiny writing to cram more in. Knowing the ethos of a firm/organisation puts you in a much better position to explain why you are right for them. This is most relevant for the skills or achievement-based questions.
- Have a clear idea of what the selection criteria are and what matching skills, knowledge and experience you have. When answering questions that ask about how you have demonstrated teamwork or found original ways to solve a problem, choose examples from different parts of your life and be as specific as possible when describing them. Concentrate on your personal contribution to whatever it is you are writing about and stress achievements and outcomes.
- Ensure that your answers are tailored to the particular section of the application you are completing and that questions are addressed directly and succinctly.
- Do not leave gaps in your life. It is always a better idea to explain what happened i.e. travelling, gap year.
- Choose your referees with care - reliable people who have agreed to help. Your offer of employment will be subject to receiving references.

Assessment centres

Assessment centres are now used by many firms as a major component of their selection process. An assessment centre invites candidates to undertake a combination of individual and group exercises. These are designed to assess your competencies and personal qualities to measure your suitability for the firm and the role. The length of the assessment varies. They can be as short as half a day or as long as three days. The employer will inform you beforehand of the length of time. Throughout the exercises you will be observed by assessors. These could be made up from partners and graduate recruiters within the firm.

It can be daunting but remember, this is your opportunity to show off your skills and also to assess whether the firm is right for you. It is best to be yourself, showing yourself in the best possible light. You should also bear in mind that being invited to an assessment centre means that you have overcome one hurdle, as you will have

been chosen on the strength of your application. Employers normally only invite promising candidates to assessment centres. Whilst you will be expected to perform satisfactorily across all the activities, you will not be expected to excel at everything. An assessment centre enables the assessors to see you in a variety of exercises. If you perform less favourably in one exercise you have the opportunity to make up for it in other exercises.

You will need to prepare in the same way you would for an interview, give thought to how you may approach a case study or working within a group. Traditional interviews are often part of the assessment event. It is advisable to practise presentation skills and in-tray exercises (see below) as these are widely used. Do seek advice from your university careers adviser.

Assessment exercises test your analytical skills and business sense rather than your legal knowledge. The exercises are designed to mirror the tasks applicable to the role you have applied for, and assess you against the skills required. You will be assessed on how you perform under pressure, work with other people and react in certain situations. There are a range of exercises you may encounter, such as:

Psychometric tests

There are two main types of psychometric tests:

- **Aptitude tests**
These assess your numerical, verbal and reasoning skills. You are given a specific number of multiple choice questions, and you must answer as many as possible in the time allowed.
- **Personality questionnaire**
There are no right or wrong responses to these questions as you are asked to describe things about yourself, such as whether you are honest, loyal, helpful etc. It looks at your personal characteristics, social skills, preferred style of working etc. This exercise enables your strengths and weaknesses to emerge.

Group exercise

This exercise is widely used and assesses leadership, team working, motivation and problem solving. You will be given a task to work on with a group of candidates whilst assessors observe your performance. You are being tested on how you

interact within the group, how you build relationships, how decisions are reached and your communication and influencing skills.

In-tray exercises

This is designed to simulate the administrative aspects of a role and assess your ability to prioritise, your judgement, general communication, planning and organisational skills as well as looking at how well you handle complex information. There is seldom enough time allocated to complete everything so it also assesses your ability to perform under pressure. You will be provided with a large amount of material that will need to be assessed and prioritised. Material provided may include minutes, emails, telephone messages, reports, memos, articles, letters etc. You will invariably find one or two high priority issues hidden among the in-tray items. Ensure that the reasons for your actions are clearly documented.

Written

This could include tests on grammar, numeracy, logic, reasoning and written communication. You are assessed on your ability to analyse problems, prioritise tasks and put forward effective arguments with clarity and tact.

Exercises may include:

- **Summary writing**
This will involve being given a limited time to read through various pieces of information and producing a summary.
- **Drafting exercise**
This will involve being presented with information and asked to draft a letter, perhaps to a client.
- **Case study exercise**
This exercise will involve being given a series of material and a problem to solve. You are required to produce a written report, including your interpretation of the problem and possible solutions.

Presentations

This will test your communication skills, the structure of your presentation, your ability to plan, the content, timing, your delivery, and how well you present yourself in front of others.

Make sure you know what resources are available to you at the Assessment Centre.

After the assessment centre, you should assess your own strengths and weaknesses and analyse the kind of work you feel will suit you. Do not only reflect on your performance but also use the time to assess how you feel about the firm. The type of exercises you encountered is a good way to learn about the firm and its culture, giving you a general feeling of whether you feel you are suited. Many firms also have their current trainees attend assessment centres so you will be able to ask what it is like being a trainee at the firm and learn more about the culture.

How to impress the recruiter

Claire Lay, Graduate Recruitment Executive – DLA Piper

What is your role at DLA Piper?

Graduate Recruitment Executive

How long have you been in your role?

Just over six years.

What are your main job responsibilities?

I look after the marketing of the firm to potential applicants, so dealing with careers and legal publications, universities, our brochure and website etc. I also look after DLA Piper's Manchester and Liverpool offices' trainees, both in terms of recruitment and development. I spend a lot of time at careers events, law fairs and presentations. It's a very busy and varied role!

What benefits do you see trainees bringing to your firm?

Trainees are the future associates and partners of the firm so the links they make with friends in business at a really early stage could be essential for bringing new clients into the firm in the future. The trainees at DLA Piper are really valued members of the teams they're in and can often bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the work their team is doing.

How does your firm recruit trainees? How do you market your training contracts?

We recruit our trainees via first round interviews and second round assessment days in August/September, and also via our summer scheme. Training contracts are advertised via careers service websites, our own website, law fairs and company presentations.

What about a candidate impresses you and would make them stand out?

We want people to understand what the career involves and be enthusiastic. Being able to show that you've done your research into DLA Piper by attending relevant events, for example, can also help differentiate candidates.

What common mistake(s) do you see being made by candidates?

The most common mistake is poor spelling and grammar in application forms, you are just giving firms an easy excuse to reject you.

In your opinion, why would a candidate want to work for DLA Piper?

We offer the opportunity to experience a really broad training contract, great work for multinational clients, early responsibility and the opportunity to apply for client and international secondments. All of these opportunities are available to trainees across our eight UK offices which also means if London doesn't appeal, you can do fantastic legal work closer to home.

Would your firm consider a candidate with poor A level grades?

Yes, if they were taken a long time ago and their experiences or career since then would be of real benefit to them as a future lawyer. Alternatively if there are mitigating circumstances around why their grades were low, we would consider them. The best thing someone with poor A Levels can do is achieve grades as high as possible in their university exams, and if applicable, their GDL and LPC to prove their A levels were a 'blip' and not a true reflection of their ability.

Do you and/or partners socialise with trainees?

The partners would socialise with trainees more than our team as they tend to go out on more team events and nights out (sometimes these are client related). Trainees will also socialise a lot with other trainees in their city via the local trainee solicitors' group. We cover the membership of these societies for our trainees and pay for them to attend the city's trainee ball each year.

What three tips would you give to anyone considering entering the solicitors' profession?

- Do your research into the career.
- Be prepared to work hard to get the best grades you can at university.
- Gain work experience.

What would you do if you were not in recruitment?

I would love to take a photography course and be a photographer.

Anna King, Graduate Recruitment Manager , Simmons & Simmons

What is your role at Simmons & Simmons?

Graduate recruitment Manager.

How long have you been in your role?

12 months.

What are your main job responsibilities?

Attraction and recruitment of all trainee lawyers and vacation scheme interns.

What benefits do you see trainees bringing to your firm?

Trainees are integral to our firm as we see them as future partners and leaders of our business. Trainees are involved in all aspects of client work and relationships. They support all our major transactions and provide valuable knowledge on legal developments. They also actively contribute to all our pro-bono and social activities and are therefore a vibrant community across our network.

How does your firm recruit trainees? How do you market your training contracts?

We advertise in a wide variety of publications and websites, as well as running 40/50 campus events. Applications are made online and shortlisted. Shortlisted candidates are then invited to an assessment day.

What about a candidate impresses you and would make them stand out?

An appropriately confident, engaging personality.

What common mistake(s) do you see being made by candidates?

Poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. Cut and paste errors. Poor research into the role of a commercial solicitor and/or the firm.

In your opinion, why would a candidate want to work for Simmons & Simmons?

Simmons & Simmons has a wide international network and interesting client base. We focus our efforts on 4 key sectors which means there is a great opportunity to

work with some of the most dynamic industries. Our working atmosphere is supportive and inspiring from day one which brings out the best in people.

Would your firm consider a candidate with poor A level grades?

Yes. Our screening criteria is split into eight parts (academics being one) and each is scored separately. Candidates who do not perform well at A level are not automatically screened out.

Do you and/or partners socialise with trainees?

Yes. My role involves a great deal of interaction with trainees on a daily basis. Trainees have the opportunity to socialise with partners through departmental/networking events.

What three tips would you give to anyone considering entering the solicitors' profession?

- Do your research on the type of lawyer you would like to be - being a lawyer in a city firm is very different to a more niche firm.
- Gain first hand experience. How lawyers are portrayed in the media can be different from the day-to-day activities of a lawyer.
- Consider carefully what your strengths are and whether this would suit a career as a solicitor.

What would you do if you were not in recruitment?

I'd be travelling around the world.

PART FOUR – WORKING AS A SOLICITOR

Different ways to work as a solicitor

Private practice

Over 86,000 solicitors in England and Wales work in private practices. These range from sole practitioners to multinational firms, such as magic circle firms, with hundreds of partners and offices across the world. Magic circle refers to a group of leading City- based international law firms that deal with a range of commercial work and high value international transactions for huge global companies.

Many solicitors in private practice work with individual clients. You may become involved in helping to buy and sell property, investigating claims for injury compensation, arranging wills, advising on divorce or representing clients in court and at tribunals.

You might work for a firm advising businesses and corporate clients in areas such as employment law, contracts or company mergers and acquisitions.

Work in overseas offices may involve advising local clients on English, EU or foreign law.

Other firms advise on insurance, the registration of patents and copyrights, shipping, banking, the media, entertainment and other specialist areas.

In private practice solicitors are employed at various levels of seniority. You may eventually become a partner or proprietor of a firm – in other words, you own the business. This carries with it the rewards of profit-sharing but also the risk of fluctuating success.

Types of firms

There are many different types of firms. Generally, larger and mid-tier firms tend to be commercial law practices advising major organisations; with medium to smaller firms tending to be high street firms used by the local community and businesses.

High street firms

These firms vary in size from medium to small, ranging from sole practitioners to those employing around 100 people. The main client base is small to medium sized businesses and individuals, usually from the local community. You are more likely to become involved in the day to day operation of the firm. The work undertaken will tend to be very diverse, covering all areas of commercial law, property, private client, family, conveyancing, crime and employment.

International firms

These firms vary in size and have offices in London, Europe and the world. The firm undertakes complex and high-value work dealing with contracts worth millions of pounds.

National and regional firms

These firms are typically of a medium to large size with a number of offices. National firms tend to have offices in major cities, with regional firms usually focused on a particular geographical area. The client base tends to be diverse, from public and private companies to individual clients, and the work covers all areas of legal practice.

City and corporate firms

These firms are usually international in focus and many have a worldwide network of offices. They deal with issues such as mergers, acquisitions and corporate finance at an international level. The client base is mainly public companies and financial institutions.

Specialist or niche firms

These firms tend to be quite small specialising in either one specific area of law or several related areas, in which they are experts.

Types of work within private practice

The type of work undertaken in private practice depends on the practice area and the size of employer. It is important that you conduct thorough research to assist you in selecting the firm and practice area that are right for you.

Practice areas are generally split in to two categories: contentious work, where there is some sort of dispute; or non-contentious work. More detailed information on the various areas of law can be found at the Law Society website (see useful contacts)

Commerce and industry

Approximately 14,000 solicitors are employed by commercial and industrial organisations dealing with their legal business in-house.

Legislation has considerable impact on corporate decisions and, as an in-house solicitor, you will play a key role in developing and implementing corporate strategy. Your work will be demanding and varied – ranging from multi-million pound projects such as mergers and takeovers to employment issues and industrial relations. You could also have opportunities to move into more general management roles.

Local and central government

Around 4,000 solicitors are employed in local government where their role is to advise on the services the authority provides to the community. The range of this work is diverse and you could be providing advice on everything from education and social services to planning and construction.

Approximately 1,000 solicitors work in the Government Legal Service. This could involve advising government ministers and implementing government decisions, as well as prosecuting people who contravene regulations.

Court services

You might choose to apply to the Crown Prosecution Service, which employs approximately 2,000 solicitors. The Crown Prosecution Service prosecutes the majority of criminal cases in England and Wales and advises the police on prosecutions.

It provides the opportunity to work in all areas of the country and to practise advocacy.

Other careers

Other opportunities include the Magistrates' Court Service where you would be involved in advising magistrates on a wide range of matters, including criminal law, family law and licensing.

There are also increasing opportunities for solicitors to join the judiciary, in roles ranging from High Court judges, masters and district judges in the Principal Registry of the Family Division, county courts and magistrates' courts, or tribunal judges.

Additional career paths include law centres, charities and the armed forces.

Alternative careers for law graduates

A career in law is not limited to the positions of solicitor, barrister or legal executive. A large proportion of law graduates go on to pursue careers outside the three main branches of the profession. This does not mean that they are not involved in the profession in some way or have not gone on to have extremely successful careers.

The opportunities to transfer the skills picked up in the study of law into other employment areas are endless. Law graduates are sought after by a wide variety of employers as legal training is an extremely valuable commodity. The skills a legal education develops are vast. They include:

- the ability to research
- the ability to collect and analyse amounts of information
- the ability to weigh-up points and counter points
- the ability to create a logical argument and reasoned conclusion from a set of facts
- the ability to communicate clearly with the public and the profession alike
- discretion
- the ability to handle and work under pressure
- a first-class memory

All of these abilities are valued in the general career market.

Support roles within the profession

There are other opportunities available in the profession for those that do not want to go on to qualify fully but still wish to be involved in one of the branches.

Paralegal

The duties of a paralegal will vary according to the type of firm and practice area that is worked in. Generic paralegal tasks may include research and document drafting, attending meetings and document management.

Firms usually look for law graduates or non-law graduates who have completed the Common Professional Examination or Graduate Diploma in Law to fill paralegal roles. Some of the larger firms, however, will look for graduates who have also passed the Legal Practice Course.

Paralegal vacancies are generally not well advertised. In the first instance individuals should submit their CVs to firms or organisations which they are interested in working for. Also publications such as the Law Society Gazette run advertisements for positions (see useful contacts).

Ushers

Law graduates may find working as a court usher of interest. Ushers duties include escorting judges to and from court, preparing and closing courtrooms. A large part of the job is the carrying out in court duties. This includes obtaining names of legal representatives, preparing court lists, maintaining order in the courtroom, administering oaths in court, and handing round exhibits.

Vacancies are advertised GOV.UK. website. For further information, please contact www.justice.gov.uk

Law costs draftsmen

Law costs draftsmen ensure that a firm's clients are properly charged for work undertaken on the clients' behalf.

They also help apportion costs between the two sets of legal advisers at the end of long and complex cases. In some instances, they represent clients in court when there is an issue over costs.

Many law costs draftsmen are school-leavers. Completion of a two-year, learn-while-you-earn course is required to qualify.

For further information, please contact The Association of Costs Lawyers
www.associationofcostslawyers.co.uk

Legal cashiers

Legal cashiers usually work in solicitors' practices. They keep financial records and keep solicitors informed of the financial position of the firm.

For further information, please contact The Institute of Legal Finance and Management (ILFM) www.ilfm.org.uk

Legal Secretaries

Legal secretaries provide secretarial clerical support to solicitors, barristers and law courts. They deal with large quantities of correspondence and help prepare documents such as wills, divorce petitions and witness statements.

Legal secretaries are specialists because legal documents are composed differently from other commercial documents. Positions can usually be found by contacting firms directly or checking with local recruitment agencies.

Further information can be found at the Institute of Legal Secretaries and PAs
www.institutelegalsecretaries.com

The Law Commission

Every year the Law Commission recruits an intake of research assistants to work on legal review and reform projects. Posts are temporary and last for twelve months.

For further information and application materials, please contact The Law Commission www.lawcom.gov.uk

Careers outside of law

A career outside of the law can be equally as rewarding as within the profession. There are many career paths to choose from. A small selection of possibilities are outlined below.

The Civil Service fast stream

The fast stream is an accelerated recruitment route into the Civil Service. Applicants can choose from the many governmental departments in which positions are made available. The fast stream requires at least a lower second class honours degree in any subject.

For further information, please contact The Civil Service fast stream website www.faststream.civilservice.gov.uk

Political opportunities

A career in politics is an obvious path for law graduates, however, if the Civil Service route does not appeal, law students will find their skills match perfectly to the work in research and policy for the wide range of governmental and non governmental organisations that exist. A good website to use for vacancies is www.w4mp.org, which regularly updates vacancies for internships as well as full time permanent posts for these organisations all around the country.

The police service

The police service runs a high potential development scheme, which is an accelerated promotion scheme aimed entirely at graduates.

For further information, please contact website www.policecouldyou.co.uk

The company secretary

A further position in which graduates can apply their legal knowledge is in the position of company secretary. A company secretary manages the processes involved with developing and implementing company legislation, regulation and best practice. They are essentially responsible for ensuring good governance of a company.

For further information contact Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators www.icsa.org.uk

The City

The City is a hive of graduates from all disciplines, but is especially attractive to law graduates. Financial institutions and accountancy firms will value the thorough legal knowledge that a law graduate can bring with them. The best approach is to look at the graduate recruitment opportunities available with individual institutions.

For further information, please contact www.targetjobs.co.uk

Teaching

Many law graduates go on to pursue successful careers in teaching. A further option is to consider participating in the Teach First programme, which allows for students to pursue two years in teaching before being given the option to then qualify into the solicitors' profession. Completion of the programme automatically puts a candidate through to the first round of training contract interviews with firms that are involved in the scheme.

For further information, please contact website www.teachfirst.org.uk

Appendix I CPE / GDL / LPC Teaching Institutions

Name of institution	Contact details	Courses
Aberystwyth University	Tel (01970) 622720 Email srw@aber.ac.uk Web http://www.aber.ac.uk/	Graduate Diploma in Law – Full time
	Tel 01970 622735 Email studyipc@aber.ac.uk Web www.aber.ac.uk	Legal Practice Course – Full time
Anglia Ruskin University	Tel 01245 493 131 Email louise.mckeeon@anglia.ac.uk Web www.anglia.ac.uk	Legal Practice Course - Full time
Aston University	Tel +44 (0) 121 204 3000 Email business@aston.ac.uk Web www1.aston.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught-programmes/school/abs/graduate-diploma-in-law/	Graduate Diploma in Law - Full time Graduate Diploma in Law - Part time Graduate Diploma in Law - Part time (distance learning)
Birmingham City University	Tel 0121 331 5641 Web www.bcu.ac.uk/law	CPE/Graduate Diploma in Law - Full time CPE/Graduate Diploma in Law - Part time
	Tel 0121 331 6697 Email martin.burnett@bcu.ac.uk Web www.bcu.ac.uk/law http://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/legal-practice	Legal Practice Course - Full time Legal Practice Course - Part time
Bournemouth University	Tel +44(0) 1202 961 916 Web www.bournemouth.ac.uk	CPE/Graduate Diploma in Law - Full time CPE/Graduate Diploma in Law - Part time CPE/Graduate Diploma in Law at GTA, Guernsey - Part time
	Tel +44(0) 1202 524 111 Email askBUenquiries@bournemouth.ac.uk Web www.bournemouth.ac.uk	Legal Practice Course - Full time Legal Practice Course - Part time
BPP Law School,	Tel 0121 237 3800/3801	LPC full time

Birmingham	Email admissions@bpp.com Web www.bpplawschool.com	LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend) LPC part time (day)
BPP Law School, Bristol	Tel 0331 228 176 Email service@bpp.com Web www.bpp.com/locations/loc/bristol	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (evening) GDL - Part time (day) GDL - Part time (Saturday)
	Tel 0331 228 176 Email admissions@bpp.com Web www.bpplawschool.com	LPC full time LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend) LPC part time (day)
BPP Law School, Cambridge	Tel 01223 309 295 Email service@bpp.com Web www.bpp.com/locations/loc/cambridge	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (day) GDL - Part time (evening) GDL - Part time (Saturday)
	Tel 0331 228 176 Email admissions@bpp.com Web www.bpplawschool.com	LPC full time LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend) LPC part time (day)
BPP Law School, Leeds	Tel 0331 228 176 Web www.bpp.com/about-bpp/aboutBPP/law-school	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (evening) GDL - Part time (day) GDL - Part time (Saturday)
	Tel 0330 060 3100 Email admissions@bpp.com Web www.bpplawschool.com	LPC full time LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend) LPC part time (day)

BPP Law School, Liverpool	Tel 0151 706 7470 Email service@bpp.com Web http://www.bpp.com/locations/loc/liverpool	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (day) GDL - Part time (evening) GDL - Part time (Saturday)
	Tel 0330 060 3100 Email admissions@bpp.com Web www.bpplawschool.com	LPC full time LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend) LPC part time (day)
BPP Law School, London	Tel 0330 060 3100 Web www.bpplawschool.com Web www.bpp.com/about-bpp/aboutBPP/law-school	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (evening) GDL - Part time (day) GDL - Part time (distance learning) GDL - Part time (Saturday)
	Tel 0330 060 3100 Email admissions@bpp.com Web www.bpplawschool.com	LPC full time LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend) LPC part time (day)
BPP Law School, Manchester	Tel 0330 060 3100 Web www.bpp.com/about-bpp/aboutBPP/law-school	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (evening) GDL - Part time (day) GDL - Part time (Saturday)
	Tel 0330 060 3100 Email admissions@bpp.com Web www.bpplawschool.com	LPC full time LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend) LPC part time (day)
Brunel University	Tel 01895 274 000 Web www.brunel.ac.uk	CPE - Full time
Buckinghamshire New University	Tel 01494 522141 Web www.bucks.ac.uk	CPE - Full time

Cardiff University / Law School	Tel 029 2087 4941 Email law-gdl@cf.ac.uk Web www.law.cf.ac.uk/	Graduate Diploma in Law - Full time Graduate Diploma in Law - Part time
	Tel 029 2087 4941 Email JonesBL@Cardiff.ac.uk Web www.cf.ac.uk/claws	Legal Practice Course - Full time Legal Practice Course - Part time
City Law School (formerly Inns of Court School of Law)	Tel 020 7404 5787, ext 332 Email lpc@city.ac.uk Web www.city.ac.uk/law	LPC full time
City University London	Tel 0207 040 5060 Web www.city.ac.uk	Law CPE/Graduate Diploma - Full time
De Montfort University	Tel 0116 257 7177 Web www.dmu.ac.uk	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (distance learning)
	Tel 0116 257 7458 Email bal@dmu.ac.uk Web www.dmu.ac.uk/law	Legal Practice Course - Full time Legal Practice Course - Part time
Keele University	Tel 01782 583 243 Web www.keele.ac.uk	CPE/Graduate Diploma in Law - Full time CPE/Graduate Diploma in Law - Part time
Kingston University	Tel 0208 547 7336 Web www.king.ac.uk	PGDL - Full time PGDL - Part time
Leeds Beckett University	Tel 0113 283 7451 Web www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk	PGDL - Full time PGDL - Part time
	Yvonne Marsh – LPC Course Leader Tel 0113 8126421 Annie Johnstone – LPC Administrator Tel 0113 8126082 Email lawadmin@leedsbeckett.ac.uk Web www.lmu.ac.uk	Legal Practice Course - Full time Legal Practice Course - Part time

Liverpool John Moores University	Tel +44 (0) 151 231 2121 Web www.ljmu.ac.uk	CPE - Full time
	Anita Ellis Tel 0151 231 3936 Email a.ellis@livjm.ac.uk Web www.livjm.ac.uk	Legal Practice Course - Full time Legal Practice Course - Part time
London Metropolitan University	Tel 0207 320 4900 Web www.londonmet.ac.uk	CPE/Diploma in Law - Full time CPE/Diploma in Law - Part time (day) CPE/Diploma in Law - Part time (evening)
	Tel 020 7133 4202 Email admissions@londonmet.ac.uk Web www.londonmet.ac.uk For enquiries about courses – Sarah Campling (LPC Director) Email s.campling@londonmet.ac.uk	Legal Practice Course - Full time Legal Practice Course - Part time
London South Bank University	Tel 0207 815 8232 Web www.lsbu.ac.uk	Postgraduate Diploma in Law - Full time Postgraduate Diploma in Law - Part time
Maastricht University	Tel +31 43 388 3038 Email GDL-law@maastrichtuniversity.nl Web www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/gdl	Graduate Diploma in Law – Full time
Manchester Metropolitan University	Tel 0161 247 3050 Web www.mmu.ac.uk www.hku.hk	CPE/GDL - collaborative partnership with HKU SPACE - Part time CPE/GDL - Full time CPE/GDL - Part time (evening) Under a franchise agreement with Manchester Metropolitan University, HKU SPACE (a college of Hong Kong University) offer the G.Dip.L on a part time basis which satisfies the requirements of the CPE in England and Wales.
	Premila Vaghji Tel 0161 247 3047 Email p.vaghji@mmu.ac.uk Tel 0161 247 3054 Web www.mmu.ac.uk	Legal Practice Course - Full time Legal Practice Course - Part time

Middlesex University	Tel 0208 411 6722 Web www.mdx.ac.uk	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (distance learning) Full time course also available as open learning — attendance one day per week. Part time distance learning is internet-based — attendance at induction and two revision weekends.
Northumbria University	Tel 0191 227 4453 Web www.northumbrialawschool.co.uk	CPE/GDL - Full time CPE/GDL - Part time (distance learning) Also offer an e-learning option
	Zena Smith – Course Leader (Full-time – General Practice Route) Tel 0191 243 7545 Email zena.smith@northumbria.ac.uk Amanda Davison – Course Leader (Part-time) Tel 0191 243 7457 Email amanda.davison@northumbria.ac.uk Web www.northumbrialawschool.co.uk	Exempting law degree LPC full time LPC part time
Nottingham at Kaplan Law School	Web www.kaplanlawschool.org.uk	CPE/GDL - Full time
	Michael Walton Tel 0207 367 6455 Email admissions@kaplanlawschool.org.uk Rebecca Taylor Tel 0207 367 6400 Web www.kaplanlawschool.org.uk	LPC full time LPC part time

Nottingham Trent University	Tel 0115 848 4460 Email nls.enquiries@ntu.ac.uk Web www.ntu.ac.uk/nls	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (distance learning)
	Tel 0115 848 4460 Email nls.enquiries@ntu.ac.uk Web www.ntu.ac.uk/nls	Exempting law degree LPC full time LPC part time
Oxford Brookes University	Tel 01865 484 931 Email gdl@brookes.ac.uk Web www.brookes.ac.uk/postgraduate/gdl	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time GDL in collaboration with Maastricht University, The Netherlands - Full time
Sheffield Hallam University	Tel: 0114 225 5555 Web www.shu.ac.uk	CPE/GDL – Full time CPE/GLD – Part time
Southampton Solent University	Tel 0238 031 9132 Web www.solent.ac.uk	CPE - Full time CPE - Part time
Staffordshire University	Tel 01782 294 550 Web www.staffs.ac.uk/law	CPE/Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies - Full time CPE/Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies - Part time (day) CPE/Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies - Part time (evening) Part time course also available as combination of day and evening studies.
	Julie Gingell – Course Administrator Staffordshire University Tel 01782 294452 Email j.gingell@staffs.ac.uk Web www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/law	LPC full time LPC part time

Staffordshire University and Worcester College of Technology at Worcester	Tel 01905 725 555 Web www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/law www.wortech.ac.uk	CPE/Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies - Part time
Swansea University	Tel 01792 295 831 Tel 01792 295 913 Web www.swan.ac.uk	GDL - Full time
	Michaela Leyshon – Admissions Tutor Tel 01792 602374 Email m.e.leyshon@swansea.ac.uk Web www.swan.ac.uk/law	LPC full time
University of Birmingham	Tel 0121 414 6312 Web www.law.bham.ac.uk	Graduate Diploma in Law - Full time
University of Bradford	Tel 01274 234321 Web www.bradford.ac.uk	CPE - Full time CPE - Part time
University of Brighton	Tel 01273 642572 Web www.brighton.ac.uk	PGDip Law - Full time PGDip Law - Part time
University of Central Lancashire	Tel 01772 893 088 Web www.uclan.ac.uk	CPE/GDL - Full time CPE/GDL - Part time Full time (distance learning) - Full time (distance learning)
	Lynne Livesey Tel 01772 893087 Email LMlivesey@uclan.ac.uk Web www.uclan.ac.uk	Exempting law degree LPC full time LPC part time
University of Derby	Tel 01332 591896 Web www.derby.ac.uk	LPC full time
University of East Anglia	Tel 01603 592 520 Web www.uea.ac.uk	Diploma in Legal Studies - Full time

University of Hertfordshire	Tel 01707 286 227 Web www.herts.ac.uk	CPE - Full time CPE - Part time
	Steve Goulton Tel 01707 286212 Email s/goulton3@herts.ac.uk Web www.herts.ac.uk	LPC full time
University of Huddersfield	Tel 01484 472 192 Web www.hud.ac.uk	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (flexible learning) Both courses are by flexible learning over the internet.
	James Mendelsohn – Admissions Tel 01484 473607 ext 3607 Email j.b.mendelsohn@hud.ac.uk Web www.hud.ac.uk	Exempting law degree LPC full time LPC part time
University of Law, Birmingham	Tel 0800 289 997 Admissions 0800 328 0153 Web www.law.ac.uk/birmingham	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (day) GDL - Part time (weekend)
	Freephone UK 0800 289 997 Overseas +44 (0)1483 216500 Email admissions@law.ac.uk Web www.law.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (day) LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend)
University of Law, Bristol	Tel 01483 216220 Email studentservices-bristol@lawcol.co.uk Web www.law.ac.uk	Graduate Diploma in Law - Full time Graduate Diploma in Law - Part time (day)
	Tel 0800 289 997 Email studentservices-bristol@law.ac.uk Web www.law.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (day) LPC part time (weekend)

University of Law, Chester	Tel 0800 289997 Admissions 0800 328 0153 Web www.law.ac.uk/chester	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (weekend)
	Freephone UK 0800 289 997 Overseas +44 (0)1483 216500 Email admissions@law.ac.uk Web www.law.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (day) LPC part time (weekend)
University of Law, Guildford	Tel 0800 289 997 Admissions 0800 328 0153 Web www.law.ac.uk/guildford	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (day)
	Freephone UK 0800 289 997 Overseas +44 (0)1483 216500 Email admissions@law.ac.uk Web www.law.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (day) LPC part time (weekend)
University of Law, Leeds	Freephone UK 0800 289 997 Overseas +44 (0)1483 216500 Email admissions@law.ac.uk Web www.law.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (day) LPC part time (weekend)
University of Law, London	Tel 0800 289 997 Web www.law.ac.uk/bloomsbury Tel 0800 289 997 Admissions 0800 328 0153 Web www.college-of-law.co.uk/moorgate	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (evening) GDL - Part time (weekend)
	Freephone UK 0800 289 997 Overseas +44 (0)1483 216500 Email admissions@law.ac.uk Web www.law.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (day) LPC part time (evening) LPC part time (weekend)

University of Law, Manchester	Tel 0800 289 997 Web www.law.ac.uk/Our-Centres/Manchester/Manchester/	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (day)
	Freephone UK 0800 328 0153 Overseas +44 (0)1483 216500 Email admissions@law.ac.uk Web www.law.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (day) LPC part time (weekend)
University of Law, York	Tel 0800 289 997 Admissions 0800 328 0153 Web www.law.ac.uk/york	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (weekend)
University of Lincoln	Tel 0152 288 2000 Web www.lincoln.ac.uk/home	CPE - Full time
	Tel 01522 882000 Web www.lincoln.ac.uk	This institution has been authorised to offer the LPC. No specific courses have yet been validated
University of Plymouth	Tel 01752 232 864 Email ssb.enquiries@plymouth.ac.uk Web www.plymouth.ac.uk	GDL - Full time
	Tel 01752 232864 Email ssb.enquiries@plymouth.ac.uk Web www.plymouth.ac.uk	LPC full time
University of Sheffield	Tel 0114 222 6752 Web www.sheffield.ac.uk/law/prospective/pgt/pgprogrammes/gdl	Post Graduate Diploma in Law - Full time
	Tel 0114 222 6819 Email lpc@sheffield.ac.uk Web www.shef.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time

University of South Wales	Tel 01443 654638 Email helen.power@southwales.ac.uk Web www.courses.glam.ac.uk/courses/216-graduate-diploma-in-law-common-professional-examination	CPE / GDL - Full time CPE / GDL - Part time (day) CPE / GDL - Part time (evening) The University of South Wales was formed in April 2013 by the merger of the University of Glamorgan and the University of Wales, Newport. The CPE / GDL course, in its three modes of learning, provided by the University of South Wales, is in direct continuity with the same course that was provided by the University of Glamorgan.
	Tel 01443 482635 Email sian.hill@southwales.ac.uk Web www.courses.glam.ac.uk/courses/288-legal-practice-course	LPC Full time LPC Part time Exempting law degree
University of Strathclyde	Tel: 0141 548 3738 Email hass.courses-law@strath.ac.uk www strath.as.uk/humanities/lawschool	Postgraduate diploma in English law – Full time Postgraduate diploma in English law – Part time
University of Sussex	Tel 01273 877 175 Web www.sussex.ac.uk	CPE - Full time
University of the West of England, Bristol	Tel 0117 965 6261 ext 2709 Web www.uwe.ac.uk	GDL - Full time GDL - Part time (distance learning) UWE are authorised to deliver the CPE through the National College of Legal Training (NCLT) at their London, Manchester and Southampton sites
	Tel 0117 32 82709 Email FBL.PAAT@uwe.ac.uk Web www1.uwe.ac.uk/bl/bls/courses/professionallawcourses/legalpracticecourse	LPC full time LPC part time

University of West London	Julie Day – Admissions Officer Tel 0208 231 2163 Email julie.day@uwl.ac.uk Web www.uwl.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time
University of Westminster	Tel 0207 911 5000 ext 2584 Web www.wmin.ac.uk	CPE/GDL - Full time GDL - Part time
	Miles Mcleod – LPC Administrator Tel 0207 911 5000 ext 5017 Email lpcadmin@wmin.ac.uk Web www.wmin.ac.uk	Exempting law degree LPC full time LPC part time
University of Wolverhampton	Tel 01902 321 564 Web www.wlv.ac.uk	CPE - Full time CPE - Part time
	Jo Osborne Tel 01902 321754 Email j.m.osborne@wlv.ac.uk Web www.wlv.ac.uk	LPC full time LPC part time
UWE, NCLT - Coventry	Tel 0121 362 7529 Email nclt@nclt.co.uk Web www.nclt.org.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (weekend)
UWE, NCLT - Derby	Tel 0121 362 7529 Email nclt@nclt.co.uk Web www.nclt.org.uk	LPC full time LPC part time (weekend)
UWE, NCLT - London	Tel 0121 362 7529 Email nclt@nclt.co.uk Web www.nclt.org.uk	GDL - Part time (weekend)
UWE, NCLT - Southampton	Tel 0121 362 7529 Email nclt@nclt.co.uk Web www.nclt.org.uk	GDL - Part time (weekend)

Appendix II Statistics on becoming a solicitor

Trends in the solicitors' profession

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) maintains records at each stage of training from the point at which traineeships are registered to admission to the Roll of those who successfully complete their training. Details of ethnic origin, as well as other biographical data, are sought at the time of enrolment. Individuals are not obliged to complete the question on their ethnicity but historically a high proportion have been prepared to do so.

This research helps the Solicitors Regulation Authority to monitor the make up of those wanting to enter the profession.

Undergraduates and graduates in law

In 2012, 32,345 people applied to study law at undergraduate level in England and Wales. Out of these 20,070 were accepted onto courses. Women made up 62.4% of students accepted onto university law degree courses. Overseas students made up 12.1% of those accepted. Students from minority ethnic groups accounted for 36.3% of those starting a first degree law course in 2012.

Training contracts

The training contract is the final hurdle in becoming a solicitor. It is a work based training period, generally undertaken over two years, with a firm of solicitors. In the year ending 31 July 2013, 5,302 new traineeships were registered with the SRA. 61.5% of these trainees were female. We have ethnicity data for 90.8% of these trainees. Trainees from minority ethnic groups represented 22.7% of those with known ethnicity.

Admission to the Roll

Once the qualifying law degree, the Legal Practice Course and the training period have been completed successfully, application can be made to the Roll of solicitors of England and Wales, which entitles the applicant to practise as a solicitor.

6,758 individuals were admitted to the Roll in the year that ended 31 July 2013.
59.1% of these were women.

1,600 solicitors admitted were from minority ethnic groups. 62.9% of those admitted from minority ethnic groups were female.

The average age of those entered onto the Roll in 2012-13 was 29.7 years. The average age of males was slightly higher than that of females.

Solicitors on the Roll

The Solicitors Regulation Authority is required to collect and maintain records of all qualified solicitors on the Roll. As at 31 July 2013, there were 158,644 solicitors on the Roll. Of these 81,530 (51.4%) were men and 77,114 (48.6%) were women. There were 21,431 solicitors from minority ethnic groups on the Roll.

In 2013, 127,676 solicitors held current practising certificates. 16,701 of those holding current practising certificates came from minority ethnic groups, 60,871 (47.7%) were held by women and 66,805 (52.3%) were held by men.

Source: Law Society's annual statistical report, 2013 – www.research.lawsociety.org.uk

Appendix III Potential cost of qualifying as a solicitor

University

Fees

These can vary depending on personal circumstances. Exactly what you are charged depends on the university you are attending, the chosen course and where in the UK you are studying. It is advisable to check the prospectus of your university for exact fees and how much the fees are likely to rise over the length of your course.

University tuition fees have risen substantially from 2012/13 with a maximum annual fee of £9,000.

There are no regulations stating how much tuition fees universities can charge for most part-time courses. You would need to check with your university how much they charge.

Rent

This will depend very much on where you decide to study. Rent in London and the larger cities, for example, will be higher than elsewhere. Average rent costs can vary from approximately £2,600 to £7,800 per academic year.

Food

This is a variable cost but could amount to between £1,450 to £3,165 per year.

Living costs

This will depend on personal preference and circumstance. Figures can fluctuate from £1,500 - £4,000 per year. Various factors can make up living costs such as:

- Travel – take into account that there may be some travelling to and from campus.
- Socialising – your budget as well as your studies may dictate how much you spend on socialising.

- Study costs - each law student will be required to spend money on books, other costs may include stationery, printing and photocopying. The average student spends between £200 – £540 on study costs.
- There will be many more costs such as clothes, laundry and phone calls.

Converting to law

If your first degree is not a qualifying law degree, you will have to complete a conversion course in order to go on to the further stages of legal training. You will need to undertake what is known as the Common Professional Examination (CPE) or Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL). This can be taken over one year full time or two years part time. The course is an intensive exploration of the core modules that are studied on qualifying law degrees.

The costs for your undergraduate degree will be roughly the same as outlined previously. With regard to costs for the conversion course, rent, food and living costs will be similar to those you incurred at university. However, the fees charged for conversion courses are different from those charged per year for undergraduate degrees. Fees for the Common Professional Examination/Graduate Diploma in Law can vary, it could cost more than £9,000 for the year depending on the type of course you choose and where you decide to study.

The Legal Practice Course

If you wish to become a solicitor you must undertake a vocational stage of training called the Legal Practice Course (LPC) after obtaining a qualifying law degree or undertaking a conversion course. This is taken on a full time basis over a period of one year or part time over two years. This flexibility enables students to take paid work whilst they are undertaking the course.

When considering taking the Legal Practice Course you must appreciate the financial implications. Living costs are similar to those at university, however, fee costs are more expensive. Fees for the Legal Practice Course vary, it could cost more than £13,000 depending on the type of course you choose and where you decide to study. If you are lucky enough to have secured a training contract the firm may sponsor you. Sponsorship typically includes payment of the LPC fee plus a maintenance grant to cover living costs.

It is estimated that the overall cost of a degree could be as much as £32,000. Add to this the fees for the Common Professional Examination and/or the Legal Practice Course, it is estimated that an individual could be carrying a total debt of £25,000-£50,000 at the beginning of the training contract. Therefore, careful thought and extensive research is required before you embark on your legal path.

Further information on funding your legal studies can be found at the Junior Lawyers Division website (see useful contacts)

Appendix IV Sources of assistance

Junior Lawyers Division

The Junior Lawyers Division is the independent voice of junior lawyers across England and Wales. The JLD has been created for student members of the Law Society enrolled through the SRA, trainees and solicitors with up to five year's active PQE. Membership is free.

Support, advice and networking opportunities for students, trainees and newly qualified solicitors.

www.lawsociety.org.uk/juniorlawyers

The Law Society Diversity Access Scheme

The Diversity Access Scheme specifically aims to support a small number of individuals who have overcome or who face *exceptional* obstacles. These may be of a social or personal nature, relate to difficult family circumstances or to a disability that makes the goal of qualifying as a solicitor a particularly challenging one. There are three elements to the scheme:

- Bursary
- Work placement
- Mentoring

Applications for the Diversity Access Scheme and Bursary Scheme are invited around February/March of each year. Details are published nearer the time on the Law Society and Junior Lawyers Division websites (see useful contacts)

Enquiries on the Law Society schemes should be sent to

bursaryapplications@lawsociety.org.uk

The Law Society Mentoring Scheme

The Law Society mentoring service is available to members of the Junior Lawyers Division (law students, trainees and solicitors up to five years qualified). The scheme provides support on work related matters at the early stages of an individual's career provided by a fellow solicitor based on knowledge and experience.

Enquiries on the Law Society mentoring scheme should be sent to

juniorklawyersmentoring@lawsociety.org.uk

Other sources of funding

Details of further funding options can be found at

<http://juniorklawyers.lawsociety.org.uk/node/745>

Appendix V Useful contacts

Courses

For entrance requirements for admission to full-time undergraduate law degree courses at universities of higher education you should apply to:

The Universities and Colleges Admission Services (UCAS)

Rose Hill

New Barn Lane

Cheltenham

Gloucestershire

GL52 3LZ

Telephone 0371 468 0468

Apply online at www.ucas.ac.uk

Applications for full-time places on the Legal Practice Course and Common Professional Examination / Graduate Diploma in Law course are administered by the Central Application Board.

The Central Applications Board

Ground Floor, Suite 2

River House

Broadford Business Park

Shalford

Surrey

GU4 8EP

www.lawcabs.ac.uk

Emails to applications@lawcabs.ac.uk

Law Society Divisions

Support, advice and networking opportunities.

Ethnic Minority Lawyers Division - www.lawsociety.org.uk/ethnicminority

In-house Division - www.lawsociety.org.uk/inhousedivision/

Junior Lawyers Division - www.lawsociety.org.uk/juniorlawyers

Lawyers with Disabilities Division - www.lawsociety.org.uk/lawyerswithdisabilities

Women Lawyers Division - www.lawsociety.org.uk/women-lawyers-division/

Small Firms' Division - www.lawsociety.org.uk/smallfirmsdivision/

Useful sources

The Law Society

For information on how the Law Society can provide support throughout your career

www.lawsociety.org.uk

Association of Graduate Careers

www.agcas.org.uk

Kaplan

For further information on the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme

www.kaplanqlts@kaplan.co.uk

Professional and Career Development Loans

www.gov.uk/career-development-loans

Apprenticeships

For general information on apprenticeships

www.gov.uk/apprenticeships

Consult legal recruiters for the latest apprenticeship vacancies

Careers Service

Your careers adviser at your teaching institution will have a wide range of reading material.

Citizen Advice Bureaux

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Crown Prosecution Service

www.cps.gov.uk

Government Legal Service

www.gls.gov.uk

Graduate Prospects Ltd

www.prospects.ac.uk

Law Careers

www.lawcareers.net

Law Society Gazette

Access to the latest legal jobs

www.lawgazettejobs.co.uk www.lawgazette.co.uk

Local authorities / commerce and industry

If you wish to train within commerce, industry or a local authority, you should contact relevant organisations direct.

Professional Ethics Helpline

Telephone 0370 606 2577

National Pro Bono Centre

www.lawworks.org.uk

Solicitors Regulation Authority

For additional information on qualification requirements

Telephone 0370 606 2555

www.sra.org.uk

The Bar Council

Telephone 020 7 242 0082

www.barcouncil.org.uk and www.legaleducation.org.uk

The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives

Telephone 01234 841 000

www.cilex.org.uk

The Magistrates' Association

Telephone 020 7 387 2353

www.magistrates-association.org.uk

Useful publications

The Training Contract & Pupillage Handbook

Telephone 020 7 234 0606

E-mail info@tcph.co.uk

Lawyer2B

Telephone 020 7 292 3716

www.lawyer2b.com

Prospects Law

Telephone 0161 277 5200

www.prospects.ac.uk/law

TARGETjobs Law

www.targetjobslaw.co.uk