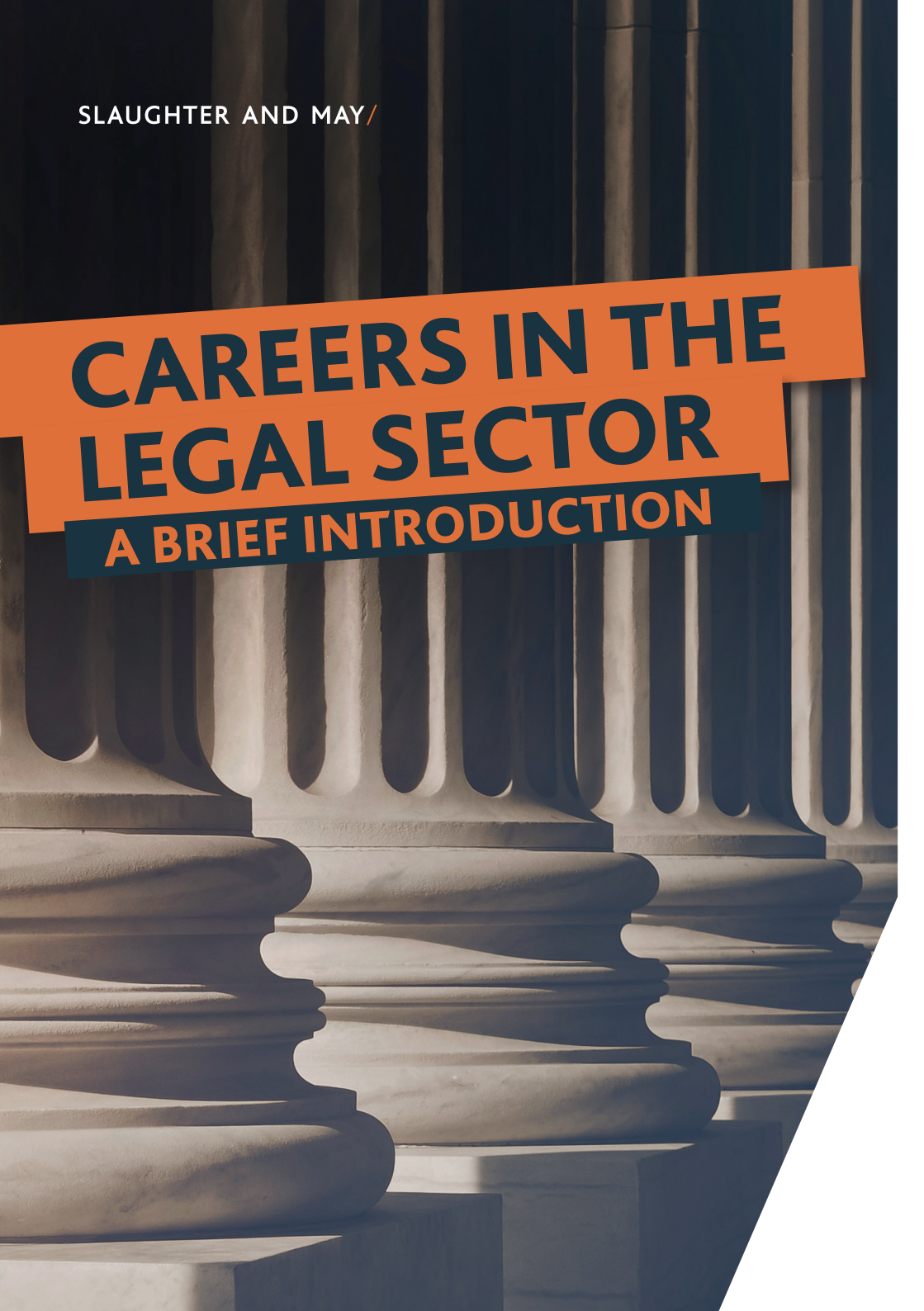


SLAUGHTER AND MAY /

CAREERS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION



LEGAL LINGO

// Lawyer

This is a broad term that refers to someone qualified to give advice about the law and speak for others in court.

// Barrister

Barristers are usually the people who argue a case in court. When you think of a lawyer you may think of the media images of people wearing wigs – these people are usually barristers. Barristers are often appointed by solicitors and typically become involved when a court appearance is needed. Barristers are likely to be self-employed.

// Solicitor

Solicitors are lawyers who work with their clients on a more regular basis than barristers, advising on the day-to-day legal issues their clients face. Solicitors sometimes argue for their clients in court, but typically are more 'behind-the-scenes' legal advisers. Solicitors are usually employed by a firm and work in a team alongside other solicitors.

// Judge

A judge is in charge of the court and makes decisions on matters of law and, in criminal cases, how a guilty person should be punished.

// Court

A court is a place where legal trials take place. At a court you will usually find judges, barristers, solicitors, claimants, defendants, witnesses and many others. There are different types of court, depending on what type of law is being discussed.

// Claimant

This is the individual, group of people or business who is making a claim.

// Defendant

This is the individual, group of people or business who is being accused by the claimant. In some circumstances, the defendant is known as the "respondent".

// Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE)

The SQE, which was introduced in September 2021, is the exam you must take to qualify as a solicitor. To qualify through the SQE route, you must have a university degree (law or non-law), pass the SQE1 and SQE2 exams, pass the SRA's character and suitability assessment and complete two years' qualifying work experience (QWE).

// Qualifying Work Experience (QWE)

This is the final stage of training required to become a solicitor. The QWE (which may take place in the form of a two-year "training contract") is a period of paid training before qualification as a solicitor. The work experience requirements of the SQE are flexible and can be completed in up to four separate placements taking place before, during and after your studies. However, many law firms prefer to train their future lawyers themselves through a two year "training contract". If you choose this route, you will get to experience lots of different types of law and will rotate around departments every three to six months (known as "seats").

// Pupillage

This is the final stage of training to be a barrister. It is a time of practical experience where you will work alongside qualified barristers and have the opportunity to put the skills you have learnt into practice. During this time you will get to experience lots of different types of law, rotating after six months (each six month period being known as "sixes").

// Firms

A firm is a business where lawyers work.

// Chambers

Refers to the office used by barristers and also to the judge's private office.

// The Roll and the Bar

You may hear the phrases 'being admitted to the Roll of Solicitors' or 'being called to the Bar.' These phrases are referring to the process of becoming a qualified solicitor or barrister.

// Pro Bono

This is short for the Latin phrase pro bono publico, "for the public good", and refers to the work that lawyers do for free for individuals, charities or community organisations who cannot afford to pay for that advice and where other forms of funding are not available.

// Secondment

This is where an employee is sent to another position or company for a short period of time. In the legal world, this is often to work for another law firm or for a client. International secondments, where lawyers are sent to different countries to work, are very popular.

// Postgraduate Diploma in Law

Sometimes known as the PGDL, this is the conversion course taken by those who have studied a degree subject other than law.



TYPES OF LAW

// Corporate

Corporate law is a broad area of law, covering the legal issues that impact businesses, including:

- advising businesses on the buying and selling of businesses and their property;
- advising and changing the structure and ownership of companies;
- drafting and negotiating business contracts;
- helping with the formation of strategic alliances; and
- ensuring companies act in accordance with their governing policies and in a way that promotes corporate social responsibility.

// Disputes

It is the role of a disputes lawyer, sometimes known as a litigation lawyer, to get involved when there is a disagreement.

Disputes lawyers help resolve disagreements in court or by alternative methods. This involves gathering evidence and witnesses, building case strategies, attending court hearings, trials, and other meetings to represent clients alongside barristers.

Disputes lawyers may also help clients with their internal investigations into a variety of criminal and civil issues, such as suspected fraud, corruption and other allegations of misconduct.

// Employment

Employment law covers everything related to the world of work. It is an area of law that affects us all on an everyday basis. Employment lawyers may act for individual employees, groups of employees, trade unions or the employer.

The work of an employment lawyer is varied and includes:

- advising on the process of hiring and firing employees, which includes writing employment contracts, negotiating employee benefits, dealing with promotions and terminating employment; and
- advising and representing parties who have grievances with their employer or employee, including in cases of discrimination, unfair dismissal or incorrect pay.

// Real Estate

Real estate law, also known as property law, covers all things relating to property – that could be land, houses, schools, football stadiums, shops and other business premises. The work of a real estate lawyer includes:

- advising on the sale, purchase and lease of land;
- the planning and construction of property;
- dealing with conflicts over land, including who owns the land, who can access the land and who is responsible for looking after the land; and
- investigating details relevant to a piece of land – such as who might have rights to access the property aside from the owner and if it is located in a conservation area.

// Finance

In simple terms, finance law (which is sometimes known as banking law) covers all things relating to money in commercial transactions. In reality, it is a huge sector of law, with a number of subsections including:

- loan finance where banks lend money to a borrower;
- acquisition finance where companies borrow money to purchase another business;
- asset finance where the purpose of raising money is for businesses to buy large pieces of property such as ships, aeroplanes and machines;
- restructuring, which involves changing the organisation of a business to avoid financial difficulty; and
- insolvency, which involves assisting with the process of closing down a business in financial difficulty.



// Intellectual Property

Intellectual property, or IP, means anything created by the mind, such as inventions, names, images, symbols, medicines, books and art. IP lawyers help their clients buy, protect and use intellectual property, such as through trade marks, copyright and patents. IP lawyers are also involved in disputes, whether that be a result of people copying another's intellectual property or doing something that might damage a brand.

Think Colin the Caterpillar and Cuthbert the Caterpillar!

// Family

A family lawyer is responsible for finding solutions to legal issues relating to family relationships. These include marriage, divorce, parenthood, surrogacy and adoption among others. A family lawyer will work with a wide range of clients, including children and elderly people, on some very personal areas of their lives.

// Criminal

When people think of lawyers, the common view is of lawyers in television or films defending or arguing against criminals. It is the role of a criminal lawyer either to defend someone accused of a criminal offence or argue the case against someone accused of a crime.

Criminal lawyers work with a diverse range of individuals and advise on a range of crimes, from financial crime to murder.

// Human Rights

Everyone has human rights which are the basic freedoms that a person should be entitled to throughout their life, regardless of who they are and how they choose to live. It is the job of a human rights lawyer to argue for these rights and give those whose human rights have been violated a voice.

Human rights law can be a lawyer's main area of practice or may be engaged with through pro bono work.

// Immigration

Immigration lawyers advise on all matters relating to immigration and nationality. Their work can range from issues relating to asylum and refugees, to work visas and assisting businesses employing foreign nationals.

// Environment

If you are eager to fight against climate change, environmental law might be for you. The work of an environmental lawyer is very broad, and can cover anything from health and safety, renewable energy sources, recycling, environmental disasters, and climate change. Sometimes environmental lawyers focus solely on the environment, and sometimes they work as part of a wider department such as within real estate.



PATHWAYS TO BECOMING A LAWYER

APPRENTICESHIPS

You can also do an apprenticeship to become a solicitor – there are two types.

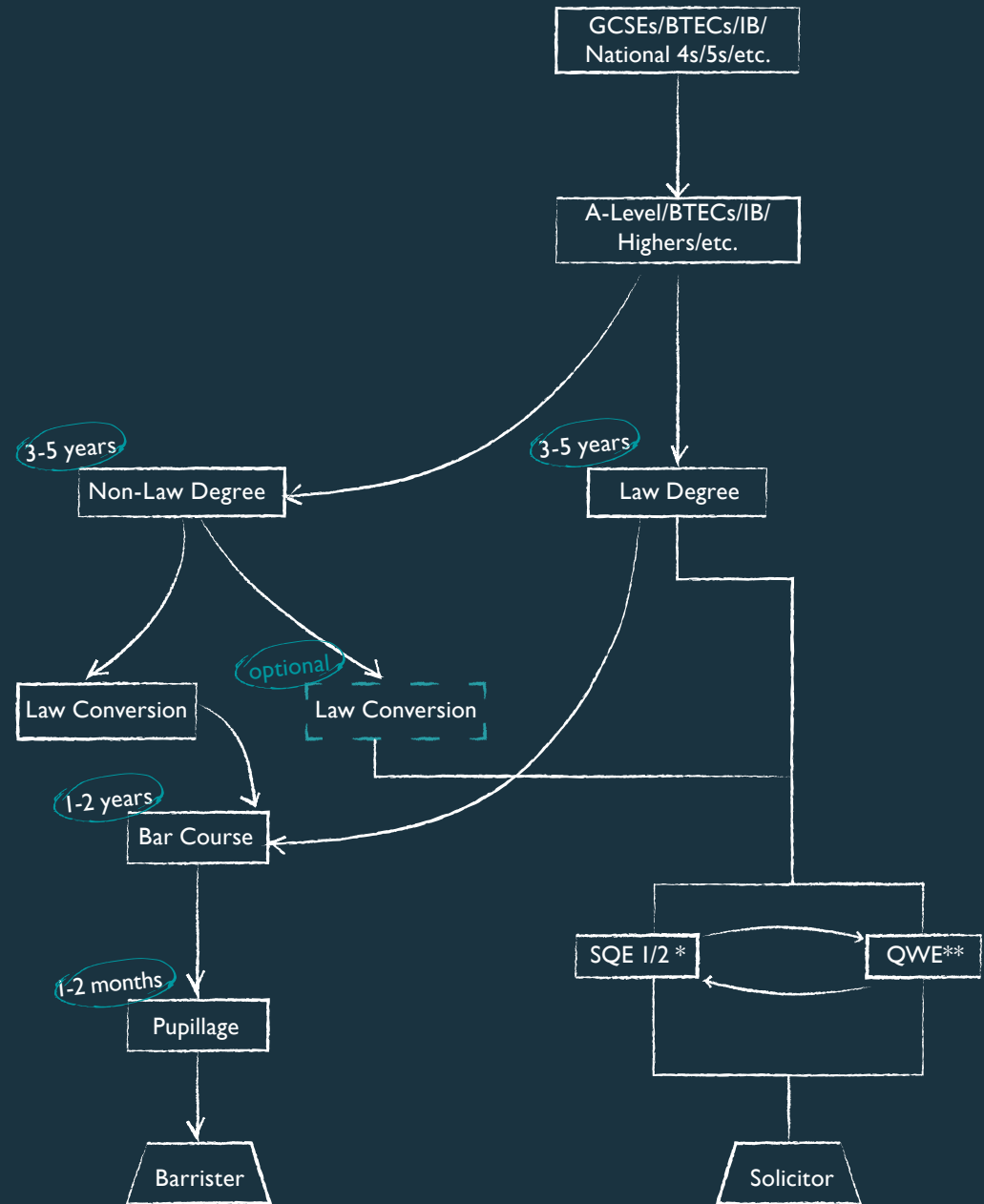
(1) The Level 7 Solicitor Apprenticeship is undertaken at a law firm after completing A-Levels, providing an opportunity to achieve a Bachelor of Law Degree, complete the SQE and accrue your QWE to become a solicitor.

(2) Or, you can undertake a Graduate Solicitor Apprenticeship after completing a law degree. If you have undertaken a non-law degree, you will need to complete a law conversion. This apprenticeship involves working whilst accruing your QWE and studying for your SQE.

See the back of this booklet for where to find out more.

* You must pass SQE 1 before sitting SQE 2 and most candidates are likely to plan to sit SQE 2 towards the end of their QWE.

** You will need to complete at least two years full-time (or equivalent) QWE which can be accrued at a maximum of four separate organisations (it does not matter how much time you spend at each organisation, as long as the accrued length of time is two years).



OTHER CAREERS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

Beyond being a barrister or solicitor, there are a wide range of jobs available in the legal industry, with a wide range of different expertise. There are many people that work behind-the-scenes, supporting lawyers and ensuring that a law firm runs as a successful business. Here are some of the roles and teams that make up a law firm.

// Paralegals

Paralegals work alongside barristers and solicitors, but the key difference is that they are not qualified lawyers. Nonetheless, paralegals undertake a wide variety of work, including legal research, negotiation, project management, drafting and client care. Like barristers and solicitors, paralegals can also specialise in particular areas of law. You do not necessarily need a degree to be a paralegal and can pursue an apprenticeship route.

The paralegal apprenticeship is a specialised training programme in a particular legal practice area. It's usually a 24- to 30-month long course. It can lead to further training to become a solicitor or a chartered legal executive.

// Business Development

The Business Development team's purpose is to support the development of valued client relationships, to champion the firm and enhance its market standing. In commercial law firms, where the clients can be some of the world's largest and most complex businesses, the business development team finds innovative ways to communicate and engage with these clients. Business Development is about bringing commercial acumen together with creative thinking.

There are six different areas of marketing and business development:

- > **Digital Marketing** – supports the firm's online channels
- > **Global Client Development Team** – helping the firm win work and grow client relationships on a global basis
- > **Communications and Public Relations** – shapes the firm's external messaging and manages its reputation in the press and other media
- > **Pitch Team** – on the frontline of winning work, responding to pitch opportunities
- > **Research and Insight** – provides information and data to support strategic decision making
- > **Events** – responsible for all internal and external firm events

// Compliance

This team ensures that the firm and its clients adhere to relevant laws, regulations and internal policies by providing guidance, conducting audits, and implementing controls to mitigate legal and regulatory risks.

// Facilities and Operations

The Facilities and Operations team manages the physical infrastructure and day-to-day administrative functions, including office maintenance, and securing, and dealing with suppliers. They create a smooth and efficient working environment for the firm.

// Finance

The Finance team is responsible for managing financial matters such as budgeting, financial reporting, billing, invoicing, and expense management to maintain financial stability and support the firm's financial goals.

// Human Resources

This team manages all employee-related matters, including recruiting, onboarding, performance review, training, and development as well as employee benefits. Their goal is to foster a positive work environment and manage the firm's people.

// Technology and Information Security

The Technology team oversees the firm's technology infrastructure, cybersecurity, and data privacy practices. They are responsible for managing IT systems, implementing and enforcing data privacy protocols and conducting risk assessments.

// Responsible Business

The Responsible Business team works to help the firm have a positive impact on society and the environment, such as initiatives related to diversity and inclusion, pro bono, community engagement, environmental sustainability and ethical business practices.





LEGAL OPERATIONS

Legal Operations is an exciting field that combines law and management to make sure legal work runs smoothly and efficiently. They help co-ordinate the different parts of a legal team, making sure everything runs as efficiently and smoothly as possible. Here are some of the different teams that may come under legal operations.



// Knowledge, Innovation and Legal Technology

Legal Technology

Also known as Lawtech or Legal Tech, the Legal Technology team identifies new legal tech tools and works towards making these available for the practice. This includes tools for contract reviews, legal document drafting and even chat bots offering basic legal advice.

Innovation

The Innovation team works hand-in-hand with the Legal Technology team. They focus on driving and implementing innovative solutions and practices within the organisation. They explore emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and automation, to identify opportunities for improving processes and enhancing efficiency. The team also works with lawyers and other staff to foster a culture of innovation, encouraging new ideas and implementing creative strategies to adapt to the changing legal landscape.

Knowledge

The Knowledge team is responsible for managing and organising the firm's legal knowledge and information. They ensure that lawyers have access to up-to-date legal research, precedents, case law and other relevant sources. Often, the team also looks after maintaining internal knowledge databases and systems.

// Legal Project Management

The Legal Project Management team applies project management principles to coordinate legal cases, collaborating with lawyers and clients to define objectives, allocate resources, manage budgets, and monitor progress, ensuring efficient and successful delivery of legal services.

// Business Intelligence and Pricing

This team provides data, analysis, and insight to support commercial decisions. The Business Intelligence and Pricing team utilises data analysis and market insight to optimise pricing strategies, drive profitability, and inform strategic decision-making in the firm. They support Partners through a case's life cycle, from setting agreed rates to structuring innovative alternative fee arrangements.



IS A CAREER IN THE LEGAL SECTOR FOR ME



BENEFITS OF A CAREER IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

- Opportunity to help others
- Always being challenged and learning
- Working with high profile clients
- Getting to travel to exciting places
- Opportunity to earn a high salary
- Opportunity for career progression
- Variety of career options and transferability of skills
- Being at the forefront of change – you often know what will be on the news before it is announced

SKILLS OF A LEGAL PROFESSIONAL

Legal professionals have a broad range of skills and each person brings their own unique skillset. Some of the skills that make a good legal professional are:

- Analytical
- Team player
- Logical
- Good communication
- Creative thinking

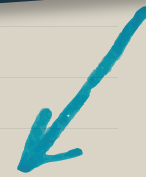
- Thorough
- Helping others
- Adaptable
- Hardworking
- Ability to listen

- Working under pressure
- Attention for detail
- Problem solving
- Organised
- Resilient

- Compassion
- Persuasive
- Initiative
- Reliable

Date ____ / ____ / ____

TOP TIPS!



- **Read and research!**
Start by reading books, articles and online resources about the legal sector. Explore different areas of law and research the different roles available at a law firm to discover what interests you the most.
- **Improve your writing**
For everyone working in a law firm, clear and effective writing is essential. Practice writing essays, stories, or opinion pieces. Consider entering writing competitions or starting a journal.
- **Start building work experience**
Look for opportunities to get work experience. You can look into open days, work experiences or vacation schemes if you want to become a lawyer. Keep an eye out for internships and placement years to get work experience in different roles. This will give you the chance to observe the work they do and learn about day-to-day work.

Whenever you go for a job interview, it is useful to answer inter view questions using the STAR technique to demonstrate how you may have the skills needed for the role.

For example, you may be asked to give an example of a time that you were adaptable:

- the situation may have been that you were giving a presentation to the rest of the class, but one of your classmates was unwell;
- the task may have been to cover your classmate's section of the presentation at short notice;
- your action may have been to learn your classmate's section to the best of your ability; and
- the result may have been that the presentation went well and your teacher was happy with your performance.



Situation



Task



Action



Result

IF I COULD GIVE A PIECE OF ADVICE ON THE LEGAL PROFESSION TO MY YOUNGER SELF...

The legal profession is really broad, and you will be surprised by what you enjoy! There are many routes into law, and it is not necessary to do a law degree.

Maddy

Don't be afraid of failures and setbacks - see every experience as an opportunity to grow and learn.

Xiwan

Be willing to introduce yourself to people at events and ask for advice - it is so helpful speaking with those with experience of the application process.

Shanuk

You do not have to be a lawyer to work in a law firm. If you are interested in the legal industry but do not want to become a practicing lawyer, take your time to explore other areas you can work in. Legal firms need many other business professionals to keep them running.

Khrystyna

Stay connected to the things that you're passionate about - being a lawyer doesn't mean that your only passion is the law. Having those outside interests keeps you grounded and also means you can connect with others around you who share the same passions.

Alex

Take an interest in legal issues early. Those interests will stay with you for the rest of your career, and help you to find the practice area that fits you best.

Patrick

There are more career options within the legal industry than you might think at first.

Emily

To have confidence in your abilities and not to be afraid to seek help in areas you require improvement.

Samiya

Keep an open mind, the profession is changing all the time and new opportunities arise when you least expect them to.

Emma

Research and understand what the day-to-day life of a lawyer in different areas looks like - it's quite hard to conceptualise that and when you start a career in law you very quickly have to make decisions about your future area of practice.

Jane

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?



Look out for any career insight days, work experience, essay competitions or talks that may interest you. Get in touch with anyone you meet at careers events and contact law firms local to you to enquire about any opportunities they may have.



Useful sites for things like news, updates, advice and opportunities across the sector:

- <https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/solicitor-apprenticeships/>
- www.legalcheek.com/
- www.lawgazette.co.uk/news
- www.lawsociety.org.uk/career-advice/
- www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/law-sector/
- www.thelawyerportal.com/free-guides
- www.libraeducation.co.uk/law-essay-prizes
- www.thelawyerportal.com/blog/earn-money-with-law-essays-and-upcoming-deadlines/
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2023