

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE
TO YOUR

CAREER IN LAW

IT TAKES
ALL SORTS

Why law is a career
for everyone

LAW ISN'T JUST
BEING A LAWYER

Where else can a law degree
take you?

TRANSFERABLE
SKILLS

Law opens up
so many doors

THINKING ABOUT LAW?

GREAT - IT'S A REALLY GOOD CAREER MOVE. THE LAW IMPACTS EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE - AND YOU'LL RARELY SEE A NEWS STORY THAT DOESN'T INCLUDE SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT.

Studying law is not only the start of a wide, varied and exciting legal career, but it can also prepare you for almost any, thanks to its transferable skills.

Read on to find out about the different routes into law, how to impress prospective employers and the key skills needed to succeed.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF LAW

We are the UK's longest-established law school, with more than 100 years' experience. We're pioneers of professionally focused law degrees designed to teach you to think and act like a lawyer from day one. Over 90% of our tutors are qualified lawyers with real life experience in practice, and we're very proud to have been ranked first amongst universities for 'teaching on my course' in England in the 2021 National Student Survey.

We have seven campuses across the UK, where you can complete your law degree in either two, three or four years, plus online study options over 3, 4 and 6 years.

To find out more, please visit
law.ac.uk/undergraduate

“
I HAVE THE FREEDOM
TO BE MY TRUE SELF,
WEAR LEOPARD PRINT,
CHAMPION MENTAL
HEALTH ISSUES AND
HELP AMAZING
CONTENT MAKE
IT TO AIR.
”

Amelia Wilson
Graduated from
The University of Law
Programme lawyer
at Channel 4



WHO CAN BE A LAWYER?

LAWYERS COME FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE, AND FROM DIVERSE CULTURAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS. IN FACT, LEGAL PROFESSIONALS ARE AMONG THE MOST DYNAMIC, VARIED AND INTERESTING PEOPLE YOU COULD HOPE TO SPEND A WORKING DAY WITH.



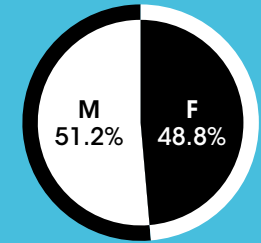
ETHNIC DIVERSITY

1 in 5 lawyers are from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

The BAME population of England and Wales as a whole is around 13%, so it is well represented in the solicitors' profession.

More than 11% of barristers come from ethnic minority backgrounds.

36.5% of new registrations with the SRA are from ethnic minorities, while 27.5% of training contracts went to those from ethnic minority backgrounds.



GENDER DIVERSITY

The gender gap has also narrowed in recent years. The SRA reports that 49% of lawyers in firms are now women, which has increased by 1% since 2017.

34% of partners in law firms are now female, which has increased steadily by 3% since 2014. There are now more female solicitors than ever before.

SOCIAL MOBILITY

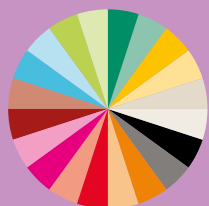
The most recent statistics show that the socio-economic profile of lawyers is also changing.

Only 21% of practising lawyers attended British independent or fee-paying schools. This figure is reducing, but is still 3x the UK average.

Source: Solicitors Regulation Authority, March 2020.

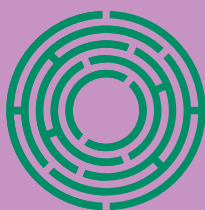
WHY CHOOSE LAW?

A CAREER IN LAW OFFERS MORE DIVERSITY THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER PROFESSION. WHETHER YOU WANT TO BE A COMPANY SECRETARY, PARALEGAL OR HIGH COURT JUDGE, A LEGAL EDUCATION IS AN EXCELLENT STARTING POINT.



CHOICES

After finishing legal training, there are almost as many different jobs in law to choose from as there are different types of people. Confident speakers may favour roles with regular public speaking, whereas those with a niche interest may spend more time researching technical material. A legal qualification is also highly sought-after by non-legal employers.



CHALLENGES

A lawyer helps get results. Whether you're a barrister advising a multinational corporate client, a paralegal helping abuse victims obtain restraining orders, or a solicitor researching a tax issue for a new business, the challenge of problem-solving can be highly rewarding.



BENEFITS

The legal profession is one of the highest earning professions in today's job market, with some top barristers and solicitors earning more than £1 million per year. Even newly qualified solicitors can command attractive pay packets.



CAREER PROGRESSION

Solicitors can become partners in the business and take a share of the profits. The career path to becoming a partner is very well defined, rewarding those who work hard and stand out.

Similarly, barristers can work towards attaining the rank of Queen's Counsel. Experienced solicitors and barristers can also go on to become judges. Some have also progressed to become very successful business leaders.



WORKING STYLES

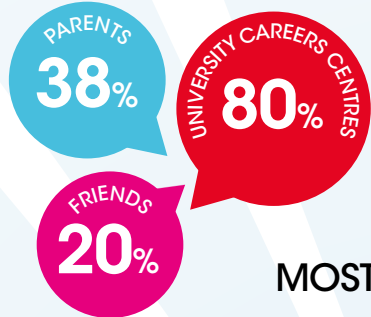
Lawyers, especially barristers, have plenty of career freedom. The fluidity of the legal profession means there are many opportunities to move between firms, chambers and even branches of the law, and to set up on your own.



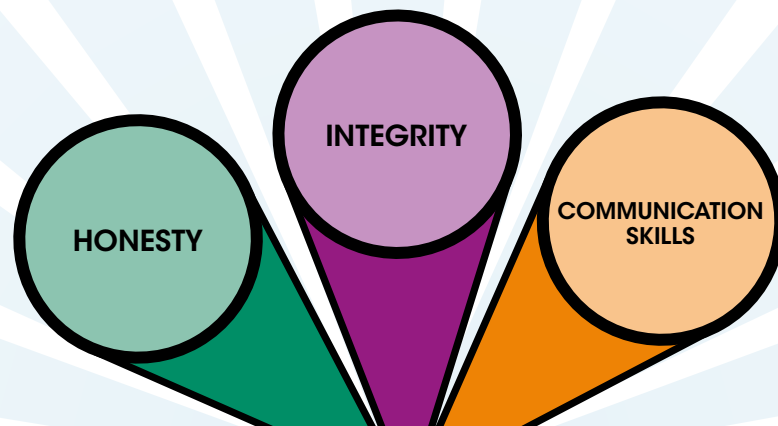
WHAT DO CURRENT STUDENTS THINK?

HIGHLIGHTS FROM A SURVEY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LAW STUDENTS.

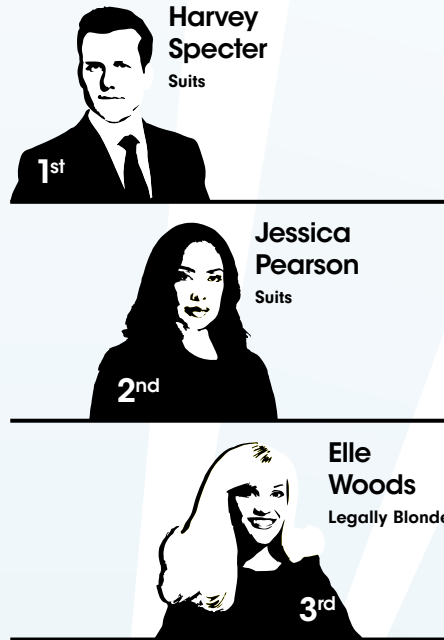
BEST PLACE FOR ADVICE



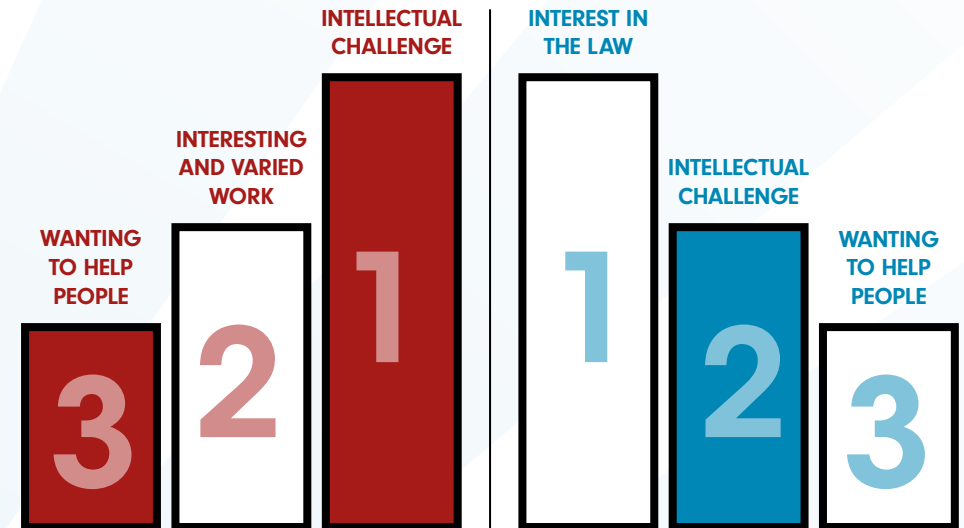
MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES IN A LAWYER



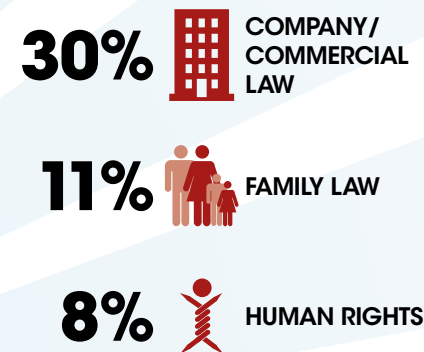
FAVOURITE FICTIONAL LEGAL CHARACTER



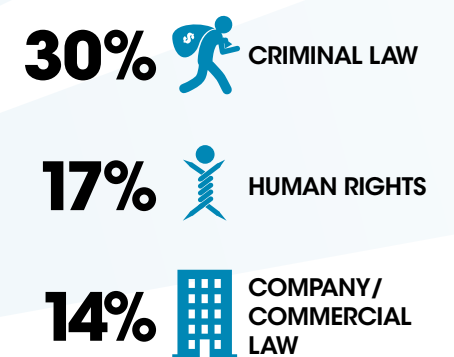
TOP REASONS STUDENTS WANT TO BECOME A SOLICITOR OR BARRISTER?



ASPIRING SOLICITORS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN



ASPIRING BARRISTERS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN



WHAT TYPE OF LAWYER CAN I BE?

LAWYER IS THE COLLECTIVE NAME GIVEN TO SOLICITORS AND BARRISTERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES. HERE ARE SOME OF THE KEY DIFFERENCES.

SOLICITORS

- Work closely with clients and are usually their first point of contact.
- Regularly undertake fundamental legal transactions on behalf of clients.
- Represent clients in police stations.
- Work in practice, in-house, in companies or local central government.

Solicitors form the largest part of the legal profession, with around 144,000 on the roll. They deal directly with clients, who may be private individuals, companies or public bodies.

The vast majority of solicitors work in 'private practice', meaning a law firm employs them. The remainder work 'in-house', advising within a range of organisations including companies, charities, local and central government.

BARRISTERS

- Go to court to argue cases on behalf of clients.
- Give specialised legal advice on specific and detailed points of law.
- Draft and research the law and assist with government policies.
- Are mainly self-employed and based in chambers.

In contrast, there are just 16,000 practising barristers in England and Wales. Most barristers are self-employed and operate from a set of chambers, which are offices where costs are shared between the members, who are known as tenants.

However, some barristers do work alongside solicitors in companies or public organisations.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN TYPES OF LAW?

THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS THREE SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT LEGAL SYSTEMS - ENGLAND AND WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND. THE BIGGEST IS ENGLAND AND WALES, WHERE THERE ARE THREE MAIN FIELDS OF LAW:



1. CRIMINAL

Offences (sometimes violent) involving people or property. People accused of a crime are tried in magistrates' courts and crown courts.



2. CIVIL

Conflicts between individuals within the community, decided by a judge in the county courts and the High Court. Most laws we know are civil laws.



3. NON-CONTENTIOUS

Commercial contracts, finance agreements, wills, conveyancing and many other areas where there is no dispute, which are also ruled over by a judge in the county courts and the High Court.



WHERE DOES THE LAW OF ENGLAND AND WALES COME FROM?



STATUTES

Legislation from the UK parliament and the devolved parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



COMMON LAW

Laws and precedents established through cases dating back as far as the Norman invasion.



EU AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Treaties signed by the British government, giving force to laws from outside the UK.



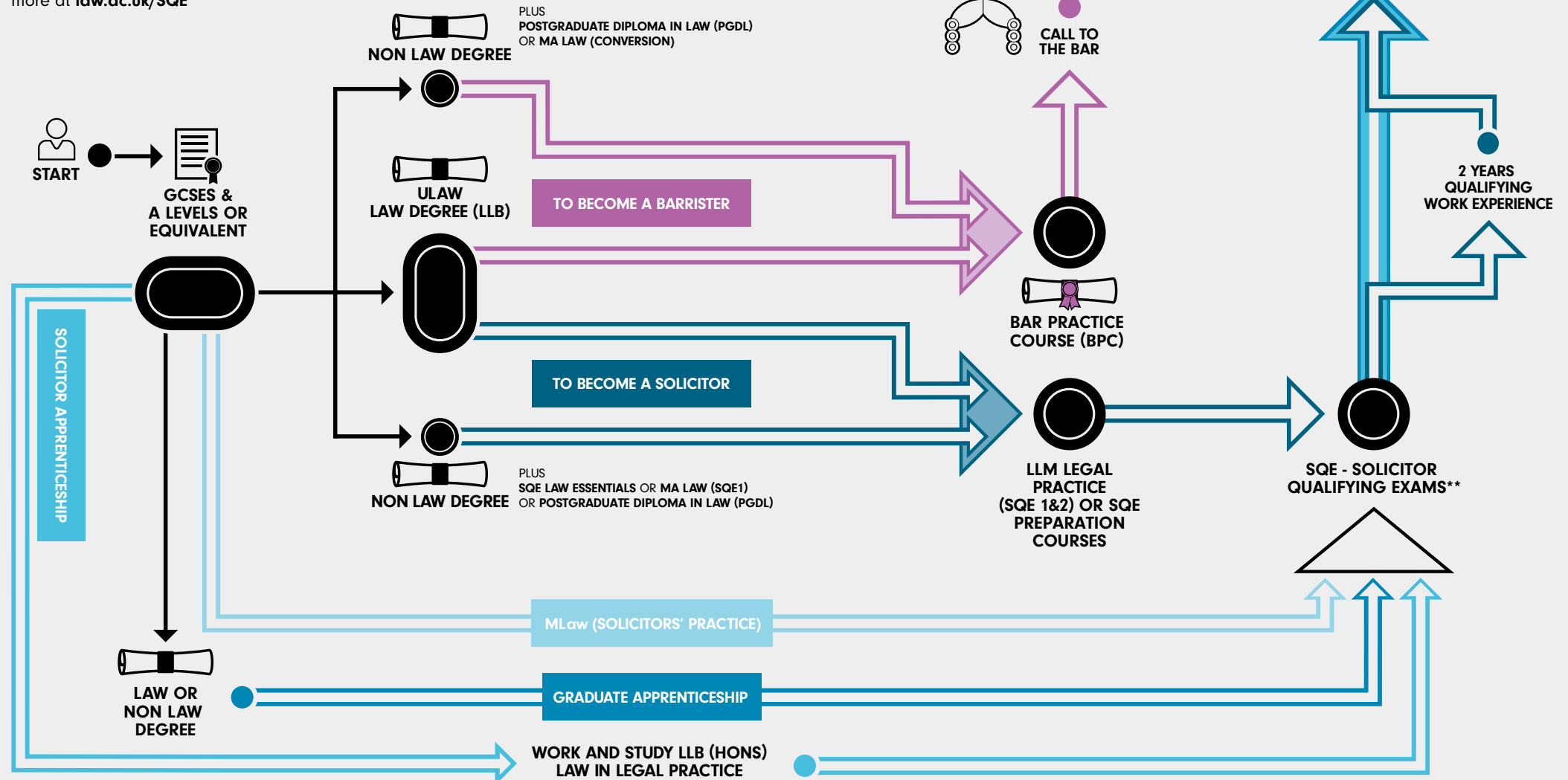
YOUR RECOMMENDED ROUTES TO LEGAL PRACTICE

WANT TO BE A SOLICITOR?

There are now several routes to become a solicitor. In each case you will need to successfully complete the new Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE). Find out more at law.ac.uk/SQE

APPRENTICESHIPS

There are now two different apprenticeship routes to become a solicitor. Find out more at law.ac.uk/apprenticeships



TRAINING: THE FIRST STEPS

1. Law graduates are not confined to working in law firms and barristers' chambers. Studying law creates an impressive set of skills - such as analytical problem-solving, precise written and oral communication, honed research abilities - that are all easily transferred to other careers.
2. This means students studying law are ideally placed to work in all sorts of organisations ranging from charities, regulators or multi-national corporations. Whatever career path you choose you will inevitably pursue further training.
3. To become a solicitor or barrister you will need further academic qualifications, as well as relevant work experience.

4. The traditional training route for a solicitor is to complete two years' recognised work experience (known as Qualifying Work Experience); however, qualification is possible through alternatives, such as becoming a legal executive or completing a law firm apprenticeship, as well as completing the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE).

8. Solicitors can also work in-house for a range of public bodies, such as local government authorities or other arms of government, such as the NHS or the Crown Prosecution Service - the organisation that brings all criminal trials to court.
9. Humanitarian solicitors can be employed directly by law centres or other community legal advice bodies. They will be very much on the front line of social welfare issues, dealing with employment, housing, benefits and human rights law.
10. Barristers complete a 12-month 'pupillage' in chambers. Their work is just as diverse as that of solicitors and, as with law firms, there are bigger and smaller chambers.

5. Most solicitors end up practising at law firms owned and operated by private partnerships.
6. These firms can vary in size from a sole partner, who either works alone or employs junior solicitors, to global firms comprising of more than 500 partners and up to 4,000 lawyers in total.
7. Solicitors can work in-house for a small/medium sized business or a large global corporation. Some businesses employ large teams of lawyers.

WHAT AREAS OF LAW ARE THERE?

LAWYERS INCREASINGLY SPECIALISE IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF LAW. HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES, ALONG WITH SOME IDEAS OF WHAT YOU COULD BE WORKING ON.



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Protecting ideas and creative work.



ENVIRONMENT

Ensuring businesses understand environmental laws.



CONSTRUCTION

Doing deals on skyscrapers and other buildings from Manhattan to Dubai.



COMPETITION & EU LAW

Keeping companies on the right side of regulators.



IMMIGRATION & ASYLUM

Assisting international business people and upholding rights.



TAX

Making sure the taxman gets his fair share and no more.



FAMILY

Dealing with the trauma of break-up and protecting children.



BANKING & FINANCE

Arranging multi-million pound deals.



CONSUMER

Making sure that 'buyer beware' is not unfair.



CIVIL LITIGATION

Suing when business deals go wrong.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Fighting the powerful state on behalf of individuals.



PERSONAL INJURY & CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE

Fighting for victims of catastrophic accidents.



PROPERTY

Helping people buy their dream home or office.



EMPLOYMENT

Drafting contracts that are fair to workers and staff alike.



SHIPPING & AVIATION

Acting for clients on the high seas and at 39,000 feet.



DATA PROTECTION

Protecting the data of individuals and businesses



CHARITY

Advising a whole range of charitable organisations.



HOUSING

Looking after landlords and tenants.

SOLICITOR SPEAK

CONVERSION COURSE

A course you can take to give you the basic legal knowledge to get started on the SQE route.

SQE

Solicitors Qualifying Examination.

LAW FIRM

A private partnership of mostly solicitors.

PARTNER

A senior lawyer at the law firm, who usually has a financial stake in the practice.

ASSOCIATE

Anything from a junior to senior solicitor, who is not a partner.

TRAINEE SOLICITOR

The first step on the rung to qualification; a period lasting two years.

SEAT

A period of training in a specific department.



SEE YOU
THERE,
PARTNER!

BARRISTER BANTER

BPC

Bar Practice Course.

SILK/QUEEN'S COUNSEL

The most senior members of the profession, who have been awarded the title by an impartial appointments panel.

JUNIOR

Any barrister that is not a QC; there are senior juniors and junior juniors.

TENANT

A barrister that is a full member of a set of chambers.

CHAMBERS

A group of self-employed barristers sharing overhead costs.

PUPIL

The first step on the rung to qualification as a barrister; period lasts one year.

PUPIL SUPERVISOR

A qualified barrister who supervises the work of pupils.

CLERK

Administers the barristers diaries and manages instructions from solicitors.

MOOT

A mock appeal.



GREAT
MOOT!

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SOLICITOR

OUR SOLICITOR GOT A 2:1 IN ENGLISH AT UNIVERSITY BEFORE DOING WELL ON THE PGDL AND SQE, WHICH WAS SPONSORED BY A LEADING FIRM IN THE CITY.

THEY'RE NOW DOING THE SECOND SEAT OF THEIR TRAINING CONTRACT IN THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT.

8.30am

Begin work by running through overnight emails from several overseas clients with a senior associate and draft some responses.

9.30am

Review the newspapers and news websites. I'm looking for any reports involving the department's clients.

10.30am

Daily morning catch-up. We're assessing overnight activity on client files and we run through my assessment of the overnight and morning media reports.

1.30pm

A quick sandwich at my desk while I scan news websites.

2.15pm

I write up notes of the client meeting and pass them to the associate working on the matter.

4.00pm:

The departmental head is involved in a court hearing tomorrow. She's acting on behalf of a client suing a newspaper for defamation. The paper has applied to ask the judge to strike out (throw out) the claim. The partner's asked me to familiarise myself with the file.

6.00pm

Media specialist barristers keep in close contact with their instructing solicitors. This evening a chambers is holding a seminar to update on privacy law followed by a drinks party.

8.30pm

It was an interesting lecture – we had an update on the implications of the phone hacking trial. And I made good contacts with several pupil barristers.

9.15pm

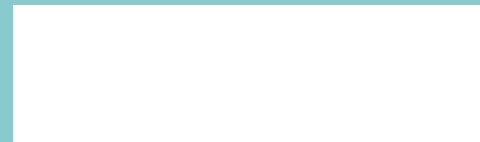
Arrive home.



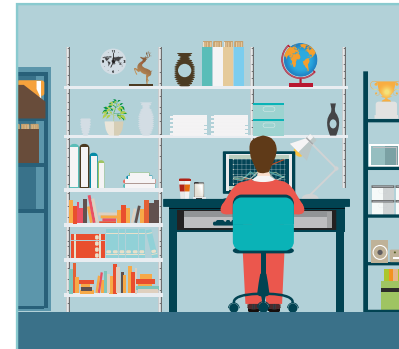
Checking media for client news



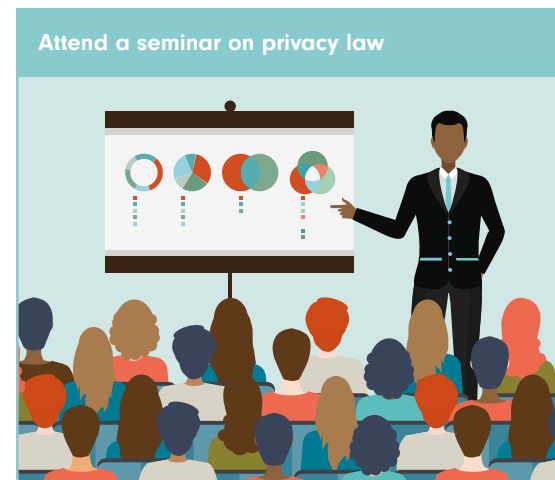
Daily morning catch-up on client file activity



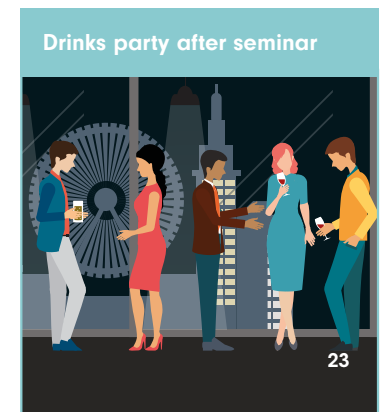
Discussing client meeting with associate



Reviewing the client's file



Attend a seminar on privacy law



Drinks party after seminar

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BARRISTER

OUR BARRISTER GOT A 2:1 IN LAW AT UNIVERSITY BEFORE DOING WELL ON THE BPC AND OBTAINING A PUPILLAGE AT A REPUTABLE CHAMBERS IN BIRMINGHAM. THEY ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON A RANGE OF COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT LAW CASES.

8.30am

Start work at chambers on an on-going dispute between two multinational companies. I do a lot of the research and today I'm looking into shipping law and how contractual liability is different when ships are in international waters.

9.30am

Asked to draft a defence on behalf of a senior junior for use in a much smaller case. I regularly meet with the senior barristers to discuss my work and they often give feedback.

11.00am

We meet with a client to discuss their legal problem and advise on what the outcome may be at court. Most of what we discuss is based on my research so I have to get it right first time.

1.00pm

Time for a quick sandwich at my desk and the chance to keep abreast of legal news online. Up-to-date knowledge is crucial at the Bar.

1.20pm

As a pupil, I must do five extremely challenging assessments throughout the year to be considered for tenancy. Today I am taking part in a mooting competition against another pupil.

3.00pm:

Attend a meeting concerning an intellectual property dispute between two leading high street retailers. I take notes and summarise concisely what needs to be achieved.

5.00pm

To get on at the Bar you need to be a good networker. I attend the annual chambers garden party, where solicitors and clients can meet up with the barristers in a more relaxed environment.

7.30pm

I leave the party for 20 minutes to check with one of the clerks about a document I was expecting for tomorrow's meeting.

9.00pm

Arrive home.

Research into shipping laws



Draft a defence for senior barrister



Meeting with client to discuss and advise their upcoming day at court



Mooting competition against another pupil

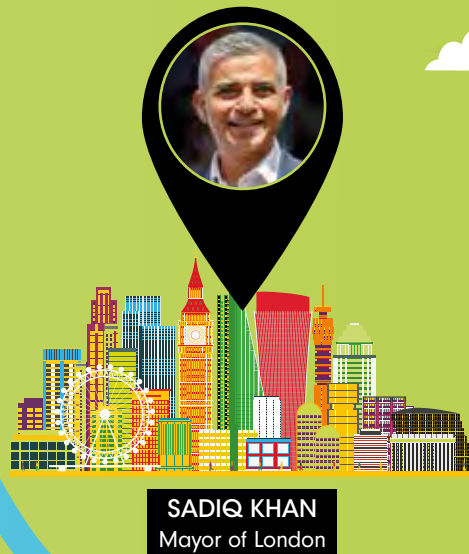


WHERE ELSE CAN A LAW DEGREE TAKE YOU?

WHAT IF YOU HAVE A LAW DEGREE AND YOU DON'T WANT TO BE A LAWYER? A LAW DEGREE IS STILL ONE OF THE BEST QUALIFICATIONS FOR GOING ON TO SUCCEED IN OTHER CAREERS.

John Cleese, Roman Abramovich and Nelson Mandela all took law degrees before pursuing successful non-law careers.

Of course, few law graduates will end up as top comedians, billionaires or leaders of the free world, but an education in law is universally regarded as a stepping-stone to a wide variety of interesting and well-paid jobs. And because the law touches so many parts of public life, more and more employers value what law graduates can bring to their businesses and organisations.



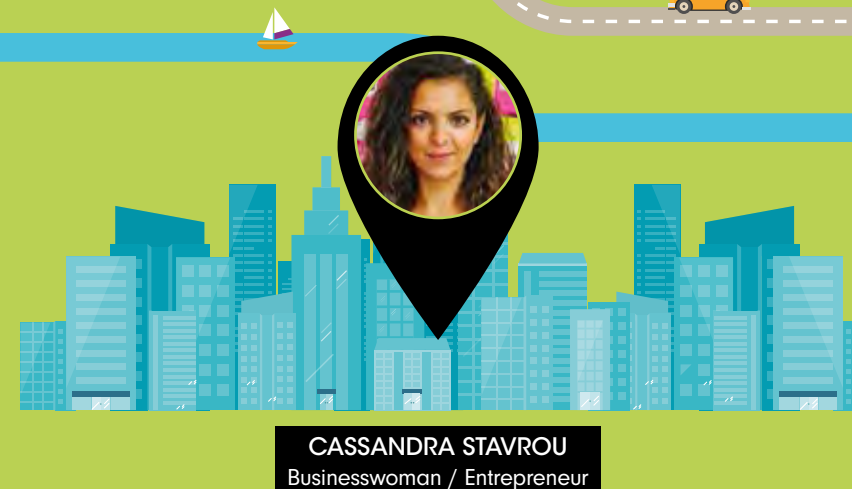
SADIQ KHAN
Mayor of London



MAHATMA GANDHI
Civil rights leader



BARACK OBAMA
44th President of the
United States of America



CASSANDRA STAVROU
Businesswoman / Entrepreneur



JOSHUA ROSENBERG
Journalist

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO WITH A LAW DEGREE?

A LAW DEGREE IS ONE OF THE BEST QUALIFICATIONS FOR GOING ON TO SUCCEED IN OTHER CAREERS - YOU DON'T HAVE TO BECOME A LAWYER TO REAP THE BENEFITS. IN FACT, AN EDUCATION IN LAW IS UNIVERSALLY REGARDED AS A STEPPING-STONE TO A WIDE VARIETY OF INTERESTING AND WELL-PAID JOBS.

PORTABLE SKILLS

PROBLEM-SOLVING

People hire lawyers because they have a problem, or are trying to avoid one. Creative thinking and finding solutions that aren't immediately obvious are sought-after skills in many careers.

ANALYTICAL ABILITY

A legal education teaches you to think critically; you'll be taught to see information differently, and bring a deeper perspective to arguments.

COMMUNICATION

Effective writing, conversation and articulation are all skills that are valued by every employer. These skills are a pivotal part of the development of any legal student.

DIPLOMACY

When to speak, and when not to. What to say to different kinds of people - and how to read a tricky situation. Trainee lawyers learn these life skills early - and use them whatever career they have.



POLICE



JOURNALISM



POLITICS



FINANCE



TEACHING



HR

**LAW
OPENS UP
SO MANY
DOORS**

RESEARCH SKILLS

Investigating a subject with speed and accuracy, and knowing where to look for information is a key skill in many careers.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Noticing subtle differences can make the difference between winning and losing a case. A mind for detail is highly prized among employers.

PERSUASIVENESS

Being able to put across your point and back up your argument is a skill that will set you up for life, no matter where you work.

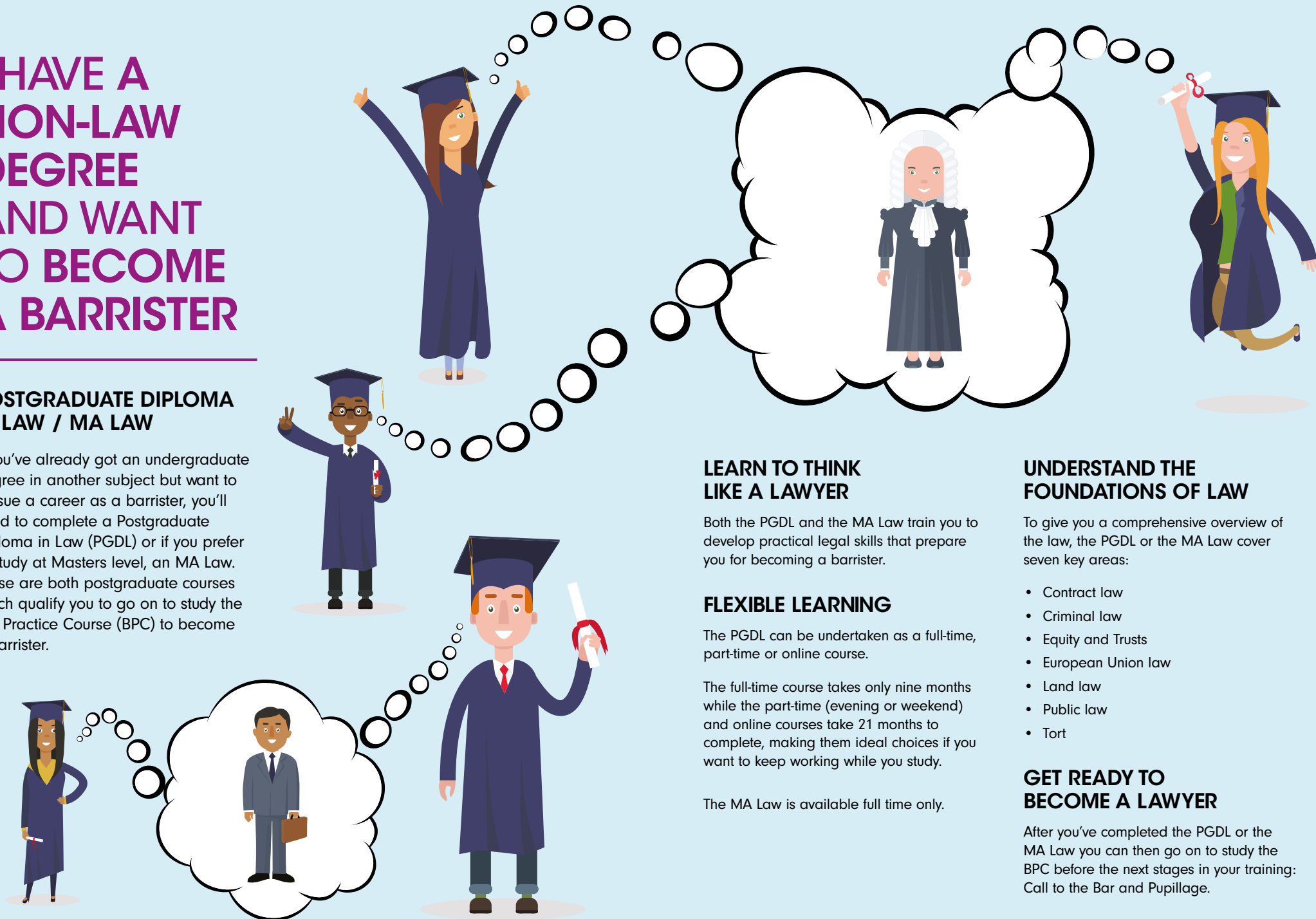
MANAGEMENT SKILLS

From time and project management, to working with people from many different backgrounds, learning how to manage will put you ahead of the competition - right from the start.

I HAVE A NON-LAW DEGREE AND WANT TO BECOME A BARRISTER

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN LAW / MA LAW

If you've already got an undergraduate degree in another subject but want to pursue a career as a barrister, you'll need to complete a Postgraduate Diploma in Law (PGDL) or if you prefer to study at Masters level, an MA Law. These are both postgraduate courses which qualify you to go on to study the Bar Practice Course (BPC) to become a barrister.



LEARN TO THINK LIKE A LAWYER

Both the PGDL and the MA Law train you to develop practical legal skills that prepare you for becoming a barrister.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING

The PGDL can be undertaken as a full-time, part-time or online course.

The full-time course takes only nine months while the part-time (evening or weekend) and online courses take 21 months to complete, making them ideal choices if you want to keep working while you study.

The MA Law is available full time only.

UNDERSTAND THE FOUNDATIONS OF LAW

To give you a comprehensive overview of the law, the PGDL or the MA Law cover seven key areas:

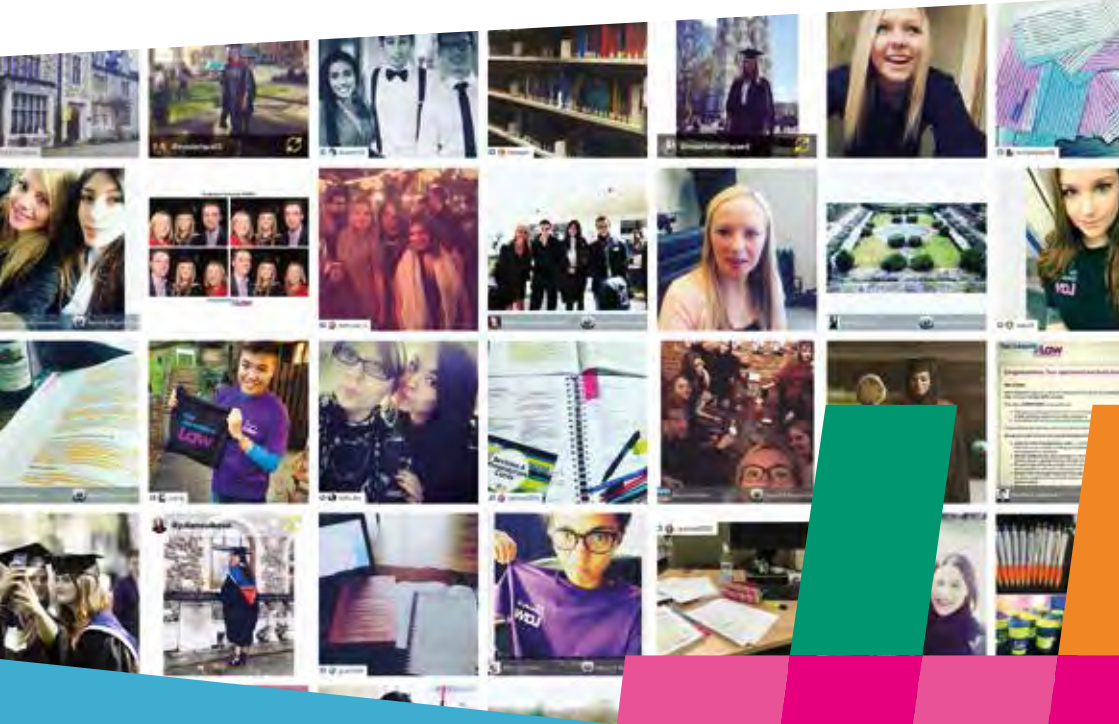
- Contract law
- Criminal law
- Equity and Trusts
- European Union law
- Land law
- Public law
- Tort

GET READY TO BECOME A LAWYER

After you've completed the PGDL or the MA Law you can then go on to study the BPC before the next stages in your training: Call to the Bar and Pupillage.

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by the people who know
us best, our students



because
there's more to
**The University
of Law**

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