

Our People,
Your Team.

Lanyon Bowdler
SOLICITORS

Routes into Law.

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Shrewsbury • Conwy • Hereford • Ludlow • Oswestry • Telford

Solicitors Combine Expertise and People Skills to Provide Confidential Legal Guidance and Assistance.

They work in a range of settings, from private practice and in-house for commercial or industrial organisations, to government and the Court service.

Official figures from the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) show that, as of February 2024, there are 204,272 solicitors on the roll across England and Wales – of which, 163,658 are actively practising.

Entry Routes: Qualifying with a law degree after 2021

Law Degree	Qualifying Work Experience (QWE)	Solicitors Qualifying Exam	Qualified Solicitor
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Entry Routes: Qualifying with any other degree

Law Conversion course or pre Solicitor Qualifying Exam (SQE)	Solicitor Qualifying Exam (SQE)	Qualifying Work Experience (QWE)	Qualified Solicitor
One year full-time, two years part-time			

Entry Routes: Qualifying with a law degree if started before September 2021

Legal Practice Course (LPC)	Training Contract	Professional Skills Course	Qualified Solicitor
One year full-time, two years part-time	Two years full-time, up to four years part-time	Undertaken during training	

Timetable for Applications.

Law students (penultimate year) and non-law students (final year):

AUTUMN

- Research and apply for Christmas vacation placements.
- Attend careers fairs.
- Non-law students can start preparing their application for full-time GDL courses.

DECEMBER

- Apply for Easter or summer vacation placements.
- Non-law students can check early closing dates on applications for SQE and QWE.

SPRING

- Investigate alternative work experience.
- Attend careers events and fairs.

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

- Make use of this time through travel and work experience.

Law students (final year) and non-law students (conversion course year):

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

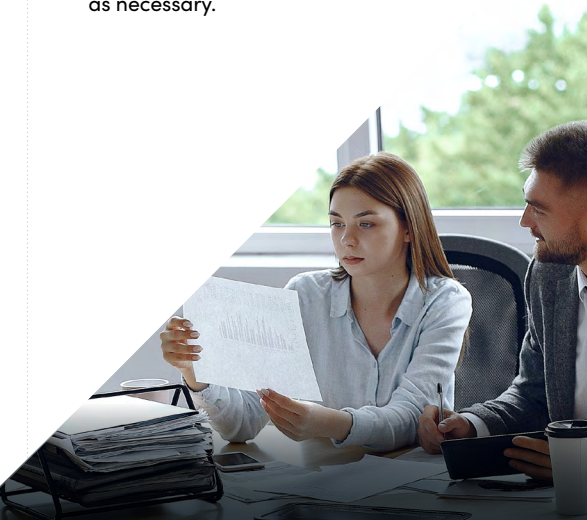
- Interviews held for SQE and QWE, especially with large commercial firms.
- Check your eligibility for completing the academic stage of training and the procedures for completion.

OCTOBER

- Plan your financial arrangements for the course.
- Research and apply for SQE and QWE, especially with small and medium-sized private practice firms.

AUTUMN

- Start the LPC.
- Continue with applications for SQE and QWE and interviews as necessary.



Appropriate Student Experience.

Work Shadowing

Allows you to gain an understanding of a lawyer's workload, while building relationships with legal professionals. Work shadowing at a law firm can be invaluable. It is not usually advertised, so speculative applications are encouraged.

Debates and Mooting

A moot is a mock trial based around a fictional case, where students assume the role of counsel and present legal arguments. It involves completing legal research and analysis, preparing written submissions, and delivering an oral presentation, testing a student's ability to construct and express an argument. Most universities offer debating and mooting competitions. Moots are also held nationally.

Law Societies

Student law societies offer the chance to participate in moots, court visits and employer networking sessions. Join yours as soon as possible, and sign up to The Law Society in your second year of undergraduate study.

Pro Bono Work

Volunteering to deliver free legal advice to those who do not qualify for legal aid is a great way to gain experience. Pro bono work allows you to develop the practical legal skills required for a successful career, while contributing to those in need.

Court Visits

Witnessing the Court provides essential experience. Sitting in on genuine cases allows you to see professionals in action and provides useful insight into the justice system. Find scheduled cases on the Crown Court or County Court website, or by contacting its staff.

Valuable Extra-Curricular Activities

- **Part Time Jobs** – Juggling university with a part-time job demonstrates excellent time management.
- **Student Journalism** – Many legal blogs, journals and websites want to hear law students' experiences. Alternatively, contributing to your student newspaper can develop communication skills and knowledge of current affairs and commercial awareness.
- **Student Politics** – Involvement in student politics develops skills such as leadership and organisation.

Qualifying as a Solicitor.

The Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) is a single, rigorous assessment for all aspiring solicitors. From 1 September 2021 to qualify you will need to:

- Have a degree in any subject or a qualification or experience that is equivalent to a degree, such as a solicitor apprenticeship, which combines on the job experience and training.
- Pass both stages of the SQE assessment – SQE1 focuses on legal knowledge and SQE2 on practical legal skills and knowledge.
- Two years' full-time (or equivalent) Qualifying Work Experience.
- Pass SRA character and suitability requirements.

Aspiring solicitors can qualify through the solicitor apprenticeship. This provides an alternative to the traditional qualification route through university and may suit candidates who want to 'earn as they learn'. As an apprentice, your training and assessments are paid for through the apprenticeship levy fund.

As with all aspiring solicitors from September 2021, solicitor apprentices must pass the SQE assessment to qualify as a solicitor. The apprenticeship includes SQE training, as well as the assessments, and typically takes five – six years to complete. At the end, providing apprentices pass the assessment and meet character and suitability requirements, they can qualify as a solicitor.

What about if you already have a Law degree?

If you started your law degree, LPC or GDL before September 2021 you have 11 years (until 2032 – transitional arrangements) to qualify under the traditional route with a training contract.

If you began studying law after September 2021 the LPC and GDL as qualification routes are no longer available and you will need to study the SQE and have QWE.

For non-law graduates, qualifying may look something like this:

- A three-year non-law degree.
- SQE1 preparation course.
- SQE stage 1.
- SQE stage 2.
- Two-year period of qualifying legal work experience.
- Satisfy the SRA's suitability and character requirements.
- Qualify as a solicitor.



Solicitor Apprenticeship.

What is it?

Up to six year
'earn as you learn'
programme

Aimed at post
A-level students*

You don't pay
for training or
taking exams

Doing an apprenticeship



Apply for
a solicitor
apprenticeship

Start work
& training –
80% on the job
+ 20% study

Pass SQE1
during
apprenticeship

Take SQE2
at the end



Qualifying as a solicitor

Once you've completed your apprenticeship and passed SQE2:

Register your
QWE** –
confirmed
by a solicitor

Check your suitability
on the SRA website –
<https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/character-and-suitability/>

Apply for
admission

Other Law Careers.

Paralegal

A paralegal offers legal services, but is not qualified as a solicitor, barrister or chartered legal executive. Law firms are becoming far more reliant on their paralegal staff, but the pay is lower and there is not the same career progression on offer as with qualified legal roles.

The Paralegal Register (PPR) is a voluntary scheme to promote professional paralegals as a recognised fourth arm of the legal profession. It also aims to enhance consumer choice and protection. Through the PPR, a paralegal can apply for a PPR Practising Certificate.

Traditionally, there was no need for formal qualifications to use the title of paralegal, but employers now demand some form of training or qualification, such as good GCSEs and A-levels or a law degree, Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) or Legal Practice Course (LPC). Alternatively, to earn while you learn, consider a paralegal apprenticeship.

Legal Executive

The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) offers a flexible route to a law career, CILEx qualifications enable you to become a chartered legal executive lawyer, paralegal or legal secretary in England and Wales

Unlike the solicitor route, becoming a chartered legal executive lawyer does not require a training contract. Instead, you must complete three years' qualifying employment – defined as 20 or more hours of legal work per week supervised by a qualified lawyer. You can study during two of these years, but they must be consecutive. Once qualified, you can practise independently or become a coroner, partner in a firm, owner of a law firm or an advocate in open court. You can also enter the judiciary.

The Apprenticeship Route

CILEx offers three law apprenticeships:

- **Paralegal CILEx Foundation (Level 3)**
You can achieve the CILEx Level 3 Certificate in Law and Practice within 24 to 40 months.
- **Paralegal Advanced**
For those with a CILEx Level 3 Professional Diploma in Law & Practice, you can become a qualified chartered legal executive lawyer within five years.

Qualifying Work Experience

After the LPC, a training contract is the final step before becoming a qualified solicitor. This two-year placement is your opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to real-life cases. You will work a number of 'seats' – typically six-month stints in four departments of the firm, in a range of contentious (working on disputes and court cases) and non-contentious (behind the scenes) roles. Competition for training contracts is fierce, so you will need relevant experience to stand out. There is no minimum salary for trainee lawyers. However, The Law Society usually recommends a minimum salary for those on training contracts. Although you may work in your preferred seat for longer, you may also share your QWE in up to four firms.

Choosing a Firm.

Deciding on your preferred practice area should be your first step. Are you interested in working with businesses on commercial matters, or with individuals on matters relating to their personal situations? Your university studies, work experience and speaking to established lawyers can help with this choice. Take into consideration:

- **Size of Firm** – This affects the clients you deal with, the work you do and the number of trainees taken on. Larger firms tend to be commercial city practices, while high street firms are among the smallest.
- **Location** – Many firms have offices across the UK and your base could affect the types of firms you can apply to.
- **Training Programme** – Find out about the structure of training contracts and whether they offer extras such as client secondments or overseas work.
- **Company Ethos** – Discover how a firm operates, its reputation within the community and what the working culture is like to find out if it suits you.

The prestigious nature of large firms makes them an attractive prospect for graduates. However, there are several benefits to working for a small firm, including closer client contact and enhanced promotion prospects. Flexible working hours and a friendlier, less competitive working environment are other advantages of opting for a small firm.

To cap it all, you are likely to receive more hands-on experience and will be trusted to perform important tasks without supervision, something that you would not expect at a larger firm. You will also enjoy a more varied workload, as you'll work across different practice areas.

More information about working at Lanyon Bowdler, along with current job opportunities, can be found here: www.lblaw.co.uk/careers



or you can email:

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