

BRIGHT SPARKS

Careers guide

How to become a solicitor

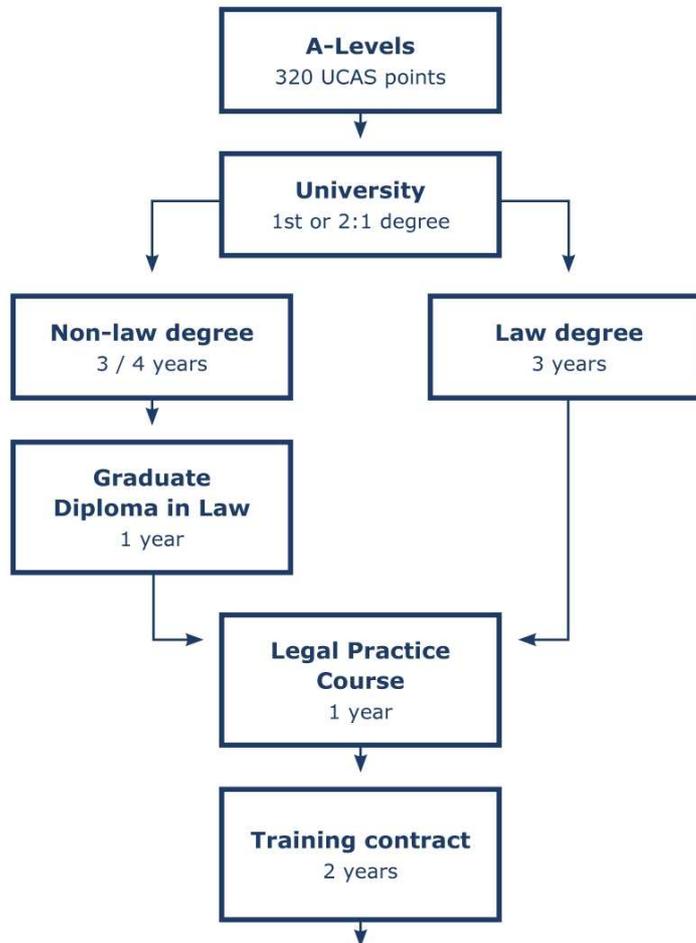


STEPHENSON
HARWOOD

Careers guide for students

This is a guide for those looking for a career as a solicitor including information relating to applying for a role at Stephenson Harwood.

Career progression diagram



Newly qualified solicitor and beyond

At school

Whilst you're still studying at school keep in mind that you'll need to achieve a minimum of 320 UCAS points at A-Level or equivalent.

You can get a head start on researching your potential future career: speak to those in the profession; use the internet and other sources to find out more about the areas of law you might be interested in; and take up work experience opportunities where possible, both legal and non-legal (non-legal work experience can give you insights into the commercial world and business environment), paid or unpaid (e.g. volunteering at local law centres can give you valuable transferable skills).

At university

A degree (minimum 2:1) is an essential requirement for all of our trainees. You can have studied a law or non-law-degree - our trainee intake is made up approximately of 50% law graduates and 50% non-law graduates.

- First year undergraduate students

First year students can find out more about us by attending one of our open days taking place throughout the year.

- Penultimate year law undergraduate students

Penultimate year law students can apply for open days, placement schemes and training contracts.

- Final year undergraduate students

Final year law and non-law students can apply for our open days, placement schemes and training contracts.

Also, by this stage, law students should be thinking about applying for places on the Legal Practice Course, and non-law students should be thinking about applying for places on the Graduate Diploma in Law.

The Graduate Diploma in Law (for non-law students only)

If your degree isn't in law, the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) is your first step towards a career with us.

This course will provide you with the foundations of legal knowledge. It takes one year to complete full time. Part time courses are also available.

The Legal Practice Course

Whether you're fresh out of your law degree or have passed the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL), you need to pass the Legal Practice Course (LPC) before starting your career with us.

The vocational part of your training, the LPC equips you with the invaluable practical skills that you'll use from day one of your time with us.

This takes one year to complete full time. Part time courses are also available.

Postgraduate studies / other careers

If you've had a career in another industry or completed other post graduate studies, the skills you'll have picked up can stand you in good stead for a legal career with us. It is never too late to consider a career in law.

Training contract

The first step in your career with us is a two-year training contract where you'll get to know our business inside out. You'll develop your legal knowledge and complete four six-month seats - one of which could be in our international offices in Singapore or Hong Kong.

As a trainee solicitor, the first thing you can expect is a comprehensive trainee induction program which takes place in your first week at the firm. This will provide you with overview of the firm, our management and our approach to career development. What's more, you'll receive IT and dictation training, be filled in on resources and benefits and get a comprehensive introduction to legal research and client care.

You'll also participate in our post induction training programme, including courses on business writing and commercial drafting. We'll also familiarise you with business research and sources and provide you with an overview of each practice group. In addition, you'll attend sessions on anti-money laundering and effective time recording, all of which will give you a solid foundation to your legal career.

You will also complete the Professional Skills Course (PSC) during your training contract. This is something the SRA requires every trainee to complete before qualification as a solicitor. The PSC consists of three core modules in advocacy & communication skills, professional standards & client care and financial & business skills. We also provide you with a wide selection of tailored elective courses.

Together with your everyday workload, it can be challenging. However, we won't expect you to do it on your own. For each seat, you will be allocated a designated supervisor, a partner or senior associate, who will provide encouragement, support and stretch for you. You'll receive plenty of support from the graduate recruitment team in HR, and other partners, associates, trainees and other members of the support staff throughout your training contract.

Qualification – and beyond

After two years of training and the successful completion of the PSC, you'll be a qualified lawyer, ready to practice in your chosen field. But we won't stop developing your abilities just because your training contract has come to an end. Become an associate and you can look forward to comprehensive training and development programmes, designed for associates to partners for every stage of your career.

Suggested online sources for further research:

www.allaboutlaw.co.uk

www.chambersstudent.co.uk

www.l2b.thelawyer.com

www.lex100.com

www.legal500.com

www.rollonfriday.com

www.targetjobs.co.uk/law