

Law: Applying for Legal Careers and Courses

Lawyer is a general term referring to anyone who is qualified to give legal advice as a licensed legal practitioner. This includes solicitors, barristers and chartered legal executives. Lawyers:

- Provide guidance
- Support businesses and financial transactions/deals
- Protect the rights of individuals
- Support the community.

Routes into Law

If you wish to qualify as a solicitor (England and Wales), the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) requirements are that you:

- have a degree-level qualification or equivalent (a 3-year law degree includes SQE1 preparation)
- pass two solicitor qualification examinations (SQE1 and SQE2)
- complete 2 years of qualifying work experience (QWE)
- meet character and suitability requirements.

For non-law graduates, the process is the as above with an added SQE preparation course before sitting the SQE stage 1 exam.

Law Degrees

Law degree courses typically involve studying a range of topics that equip you with the core knowledge and skills needed to pursue a legal career. Different universities offer different types of Law degree, most commonly a BA or an LLB. Typically, a BA (Bachelor of Arts) is an academic degree with a Law focus that does not necessarily qualify you to become a solicitor or barrister. This means you will likely still have to take the Graduate Diploma in Law to qualify. An LLB (Bachelor of Laws) [LLB Law Degree: What is LLB? | The Lawyer Portal](#) is a qualifying degree; the course follows a more set structure and usually provides the initial SQE1 qualification needed to become a solicitor or barrister. It's important to note that post-graduate training is required to qualify as a barrister or solicitor, and not all those who opt for the Law LLB become solicitors.

Competition for a place on a Law degree can be high therefore some universities use the [LNAT](#) admissions test to further distinguish between candidates.

While it may be practically helpful to study a Law degree, it is not essential. Graduates of any subject can take the SQE and to ensure non-law graduates are ready for the exams, law conversion courses and SQE preparation programmes are available. Following the SQE route, law graduates will qualify as a solicitor in **5-6 years**, while it will take apprentices and non-law graduates **5-7 years**.

If you wish to subsequently qualify as a barrister, the first stage is to meet the academic requirements of the Bar Standards Board (BSB). An LLB Law degree usually includes the seven foundations of legal knowledge required by the BSB for the academic component of barrister training.

Application Advice

Your CV/personal statement should refer to your **Motivation** for studying Law and should focus on the critical evaluation of what you have done to learn about law through wider reading and work experience. Virtual opportunities can also provide valuable insights into law. Look for online courses and virtual work experience opportunities. Examples include [Free Online Law Courses | Alison](#), [Study Law Online - Free Courses - FutureLearn](#). You can also visit the [Work Experience](#) section of the school website for current opportunities.

Examples of relevant activities could include:

- A placement with a law firm or within the legal department on a large firm
- Visiting Courts of Law
- Participating in an extracurricular activity such as a debating club

For all types of experience, it is important to focus and reflect on:

- An awareness of current topics and issues
- Commercial Awareness
- Information analysis and research

Law Apprenticeships

Law apprenticeships exist in three broad levels: legal administration/support, paralegal or solicitor. There is also a specialist pathway to qualify as a chartered legal executive.

- Set at GCSE level, **CILEx L2 Diploma for Legal Secretaries** teaches you about secretarial work in a legal environment. An advanced, L3 Certificate/Diploma for Legal Secretaries is also available.
- The **L3 Paralegal Apprenticeship** takes 2 years to complete. It provides an introduction to law and practice, legal research and client care skills and upon completion, the opportunity to progress onto the L3 Diploma in Law and Practice (with exemptions) or the Chartered Legal Executive Apprenticeship.
- The **L6 Chartered Legal Executive Apprenticeship** takes 5 years to complete and is only available for apprentices who have completed the Paralegal pathway or those that have completed CILEx Level 3 qualifications. The scheme qualifies participants to work as chartered legal executives and provides exemptions from some units of the Solicitor Apprenticeship pathway.
- The **L7 Solicitor Apprenticeship** is a 6-year programme aimed at post A-level students, paralegals and chartered legal executives. The period of study is reduced for those who progress from other legal apprenticeships. The scheme covers all the content in a law degree and enables apprentices to gain a law degree and LLM (Masters). Once you have completed the apprenticeship and passed the centralised SQE you will qualify as solicitor.

Examples of Firms who may offer Apprenticeships:

[Law Apprenticeship Leeds - Gordons LLP](#)

[Legal apprenticeship | Clarion Solicitors, Leeds](#)

[Apprenticeships - Blacks Solicitors LLP](#)

[Apprenticeships | Ison Harrison Solicitors - The Yorkshire Law Firm](#)

Essential Reading

[Law and legal | Explore careers | National Carers Service](#)

[The Lawyer Portal | The Resource for Aspiring Legal Professionals](#)

[Home | The Law Society](#)

[Prospects - How to become a Lawyer](#)

[Step-by-Step Guide: Becoming a Solicitor in the UK - Law Mind](#)

[Thinking of a career in law? | Central Applications Board](#)