

The Legal Profession - Information for 2nd Year LLBs

Careers & Employability Service

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**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

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ENTRY TO THE SOLICITORS' BRANCH OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Before the end of your second year LLB studies at Manchester Metropolitan University, you need to be aware of several important factors regarding entry into the solicitors' branch of the legal profession.

Probably the most significant of these is that **most of the larger firms of solicitors in the City of London and in other city centres recruit two years ahead – in other words, you will need to apply to these firms by 31 July 2012 at the very latest, for inclusion in the first round of interviews.** These firms also offer paid vacation schemes in the Easter and/or Summer holidays and often run the first or final stage of assessment for a training contract on these schemes. If you wish to apply for a place on the vacation scheme, then the closing dates are earlier i.e. between January-April 2012. Second stage interviews tend to take place in August or September 2012 and offers of training contracts will be made in September or October in order to commence in September 2014.

This forward recruitment has advantages:

- (i) If successful, you are free to concentrate on your studies, which are going to be intensive and demanding;
- (ii) The firms concerned usually offer good conditions of service, which include a systematic and carefully monitored training scheme;
- (iii) Some of the firms give grants or interest free loans to cover course and examination fees for the Legal Practice Course (LPC). This has obvious benefits at a time when local authorities do not normally provide major discretionary awards towards meeting the cost of the LPC.

However, there is a disadvantage:

- (i) You will have to choose specific areas of law in which you will practise for at least the first two years of your career. In the main, the areas of law that you train in during your training contract will determine the type of lawyer that you will become upon specialization. Not every student feels prepared to make such a commitment at the end of the second year of legal studies. **In particular, students should be aware that the larger city centre firms tend to specialize in corporate/commercial areas of law, including company law, commercial litigation & commercial property. Many of them do no non-corporate/commercial work at all e.g. criminal or family law.**

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Whilst 4, 874 training contracts were on offer in 2009-10, the number of places available on the full-time LPC has now risen to over 12,000. Applicants may also be competing with LPC graduates from previous years who are still trying to gain a training contract.

Many firms set their entry requirement at a minimum of an upper second degree and/or 320 UCAS points, but this does vary. In addition, firms want evidence of your commitment, and often expect applicants to have undertaken a vacation placement in a firm of solicitors or other legally relevant work experience during the summer. Many of the larger, city centre firms run specific vacation placement schemes, you should apply during your second year but check with individual firms for closing dates. Closing dates tend to be between late January & April, but it does vary according to the individual firm. Gaining a place on one of these schemes is often more competitive than getting a training contract!

It is extremely difficult to predict the situation which will face students who decide to apply for training contracts closer to the end of their studies. Usually, vacancies with a range of other firms are available, including medium-sized city centre firms, high street “general practice” firms, local firms which specialize in Legal Aid work, as well as with local authorities. The larger, city centre firms may also have late vacancies.

DECIDING TO APPLY IN 2012

If you would like to apply to the larger firms this year, in order to commence a training contract in 2014, careful preparation is essential. The following booklets will provide much of the information that you will require about the work and training of solicitors.

Prospects Focus on Law- www.prospects.ac.uk/p/sectors/law_sector.jsp

Target Law www.targetjobs.co.uk/law

These booklets are available on reference in the Careers & Employability Service at All Saints and in the Quick Reference section of the Law Library.

The larger, city centre firms produce their own brochures outlining the work of the practice and describing the application, recruitment and training procedures. Most of these firms now accept on-line applications only- all of these firms will make the recruitment information available on their website. Go to the section headed “Training Contracts”, “Recruitment”, “Careers”, “Working For Us”, or something similar.

SOURCES OF VACANCY INFORMATION

Prospects Focus on Law – www.prospects.ac.uk/p/sectors/law_sector.jsp

This is available to all second year students, free of charge, and will be distributed through the School of Law. Copies will also be available in the Careers & Employability Service.

The Training Contract & Pupillage Handbook - www.lawcareers.net

Free copies can be picked up via the School of Law. Copies will also be available in the Careers & Employability Service.

The Legal 500 – www.legal500.com

Chambers & Partners Directory and The Chambers Student Guide – www.chambersandpartners.com & www.chambersstudent.co.uk

Reference copies are kept in the Careers & Employability Service at All Saints and in the Quick Reference section of the Law Library.

In addition, the Law Society's database of all solicitors in England and Wales at <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/choosingandusing/findasolicitor.law> is very useful for making speculative applications. This can also be accessed by simply clicking "Find A Solicitor" on the homepage of the Law Society's website: www.lawsociety.org.uk

Useful information about recruitment and training in the profession may also be viewed at: www.juniorlawyers.lawsociety.org.uk
www.lawcareers.net
www.thelawyer.com/l2b/

APPLICATIONS FOR THE LEGAL PRACTICE COURSE FOR ENTRY IN 2013

1. Applications for the **full-time** Legal Practice Course will open in **October 2012**. Applications are now accepted on a rolling basis right up until the start date of courses, subject to places being available. However, applying by **December 2012** is advisable. Applications are made via the Central Applications Board- www.lawcabs.ac.uk.

Tel: 01483 301282.

2. Applications for the part-time course at MMU School of Law are made direct to the School of Law.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY

1 August 2013: The Solicitors Regulation Authority advises that applications for student membership be made by this date for courses commencing in September 2013. Bear in mind that if registration is not completed in good time, you will not be permitted to enrol on the Legal Practice Course in September. You **MUST** have enrolled for student membership at least 1 MONTH before the start of the LPC.

1 March 2013: Students who need to declare issues concerning their character or suitability to become a solicitor are advised to meet the earlier closing date of March 1 2013 and MUST have enrolled at least 6 months before commencing the course.

All student enrolment is now done online at www.sra.org.uk/enrol/.

LAW SOCIETY AWARDS SCHEMES

March 2013: Likely closing date for applications for Law Society Diversity Access & Bursary schemes to cover the costs of the Legal Practice Course. Students should keep an eye on the Junior Lawyers' Division section of the Law Society's website at www.juniorlawyers.lawsociety.org.uk, where these competitions will be announced.

ENTRY TO THE BARRISTERS' BRANCH OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Although application for pupillage is not normally made until 12 months before the start of the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), you are **strongly advised** to start your research early in your second year. Related experience is looked for by Chambers and other organizations employing pupil barristers. Ideally, you should have completed at least one mini-pupillage in Chambers during the summer vacation at the end of your second year.

Details of the chambers accepting applications for mini-pupillage are to be found in the "**Pupillages Handbook**". This information is also available at www.pupillages.com, the definitive website for pupillage-related information, or for reference only in the Careers & Employability Service and in the Law Library. Hard copies can be obtained from the General Council of the Bar, Education & Training Department, 3rd Floor, 289-293 High Holborn, London WV1V 7HZ, Tel: 0207 242 0082.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Useful texts include:

Bar Council's specialist careers website www.become-a-barrister.com

It's Your Call - General Council of the Bar www.barcouncil.org.uk

Prospects Focus on Law www.prospects.ac.uk/p/sectors/law_sector.jsp

Target Law www.targetjobs.co.uk/law

The Student Officers of the Inns of Court are particularly helpful and should be approached in writing or by telephone whenever you have a specific enquiry. They can advise on applying for mini-pupillages, awards and scholarships available to help finance your professional studies, and obtaining pupillage. **You must join an Inn of Court by May 31 in the year that you will commence the BPTC.**

They can be contacted as follows:

Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5EU. Tel: 0207 458 7900
Student Officer: Ms Quinn Clarke

www.graysinn.org.uk

Lincoln's Inn, London WC2A 3TL. Tel: 0207 405 1393
Student Officer: Miss Judith Fox

www.lincolnsinn.org.uk

Inner Temple, London EC4Y 7HL. Tel: 0207 797 8210
Student Officer: Mr Eamonn O'Reilly

www.innertemple.org.uk

Middle Temple, Treasury Office, London EC4Y 9AT. Tel: 0207 427 4800
Student Officer: Miss Marian Howard

www.middletemple.org.uk

APPLICATIONS TO THE BAR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING COURSE FOR ENTRY IN 2013

The Bar Professional Training Course is offered in Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Bristol Leeds and Cardiff alongside 4 institutions in London, including the Inns of Court School of Law. To apply, you must go through the **BPTC Online System** (www.barprofessionaltraining.org.uk). The likely closing date will be in mid- January 2012. Applications for an Inn of Court Scholarship normally have to be made **by the first Friday in November preceding the year of entry.**

Applicants for the BPTC commencing in September 2013 will also need to successfully complete the BPTC Aptitude Test. It is anticipated that the test will be available at a variety of test centres around the country. However, the test is still being piloted and exact information about dates & test centres is not yet available. Further information will be made available to LLB students nearer the time.

APPLICATIONS FOR PUPILLAGE TO COMMENCE IN 2014

Applications for many pupillages are made through **Pupillage Portal**, at www.pupillages.co.uk. This provides a common timetable for applications, interviews and offers of places by pupillage providers, whether they are in independent or employed practice. (You should note that some pupillage providers recruit independently of Pupillage Portal – however, full details about them are listed on www.pupillages.com.)

The Pupillage Portal system will open in **March 2013** with a closing date of **late April** or **early May 2013**- please check carefully at www.pupillages.com as exact closing dates vary from year to year.

NB. Pupillages at chambers which do not use the Pupillage Portal system to recruit will have their own, individual closing dates. These pupillages must still be listed on www.pupillages.com.

ENTRY TO CAREERS OUTSIDE THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Each year, about a third of law students from universities enter non-legal employment and training. Law graduates, by virtue of their academic training, are considered very positively in a range of graduate occupations including finance and accountancy, industrial and commercial management (particularly the functions of personnel, purchasing and contracts procurement), retail management and public administration. The Prospects web site, www.prospects.ac.uk, contains comprehensive information about the options for and destinations of graduates from all disciplines. The MMU Careers & Employability Service handout "Alternative Career Options For Law Students" aims to give MMU LLB students a range of career ideas outside of practice as a barrister or solicitor.

Manchester Metropolitan University School of Law Careers Fair

MMU School of Law will be holding a Law Careers Fair.

Date: Wednesday October 26

Time: 2-5.30 pm

Venue: Rooms 2.05 & 2.10, Sandra Burslem Building, MMU School of Law.

THE CAREERS & EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE AT MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

We offer:

One to one appointments - if you would like to discuss your career plans within or outside of the legal profession or the content of your applications before proceeding further, then you can see the School of Law's dedicated Careers & Employability Advisor. Appointments can be booked in the Careers Appointments Diary, kept at the main School of Law office.

Nick Touati- n.touati@mmu.ac.uk.

You may also use the MMU Careers & Employability Service- They are open from 8.45 am-4.20 pm, Monday-Friday excepting public holidays. They offer a same day booking service.

www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/

(0161) 247 3483

The Careers Information Room houses all of the reference books referred to in this leaflet. Free PC access to professional and company web sites is also available.

A programme of careers information and recruitment fairs are held during the year.

The Manchester Law Fair will be held at Manchester Central (formerly the G-Mex Centre) on Tuesday 22nd November 2011, 12.30-4 pm.

For information on other fairs which may be of interest, see www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/events.

Updated by Nick Touati, MMU School of Law Careers & Employability Adviser
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