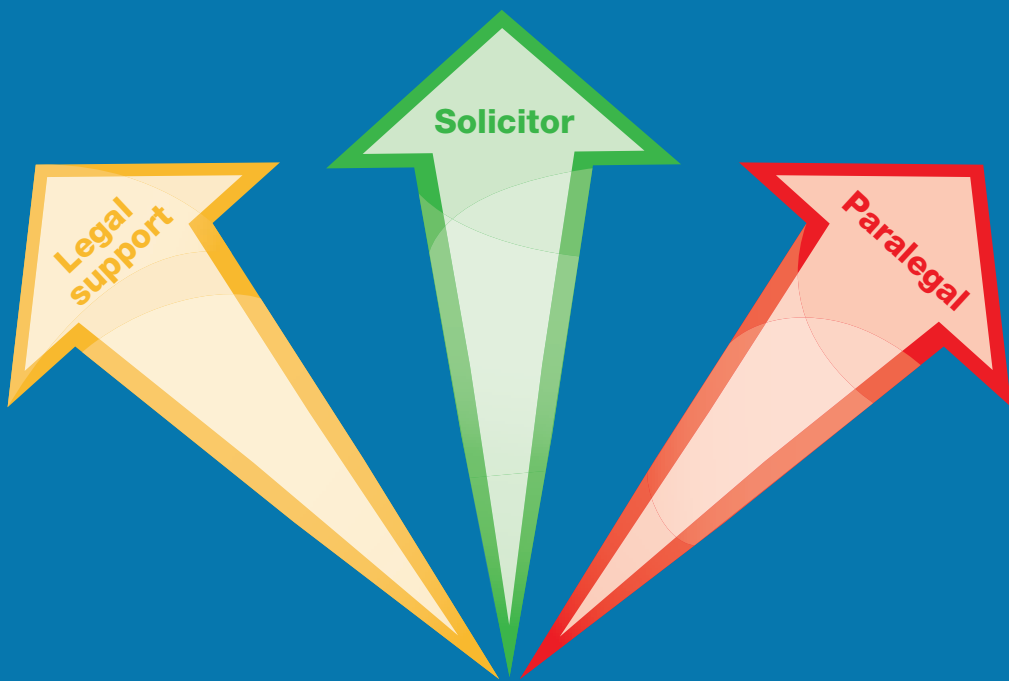


The Law 2018 Apprenticeships Guide



Earn and learn
your way to a career in law

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Five key things to know about a legal apprenticeship

1

You don't need a university degree: you progress straight from your GCSEs or A levels to your apprenticeship.



You earn while you learn: you receive a salary while working as an apprentice, at the same time as studying.

2

3

You can apply for an apprenticeship via LawCareers.Net: we have a comprehensive and searchable jobs board in 'The Law Apprenticeships Guide' section of www.lawcareers.net.



You can work in a law firm, private company or local government: many different types of organisation take on legal apprentices.

4

5

You will qualify as a legal executive, paralegal or solicitor: having completed the necessary requirements in terms of study and work, you will qualify as one of the above.

Learn more about all of the above in the rest of the guide.

If you are weighing up whether to go to university or move straight into your career with an apprenticeship after finishing your GCSEs or A levels, *The Law Apprenticeships Guide 2018* is here to help. Don't worry if you have no prior knowledge of law or apprenticeships – we have assumed that you have questions which need answering before you decide your next step.

What is a law apprenticeship?

A law apprenticeship combines paid work and training at a law firm with part-time study for professional qualifications. It is an alternative path to going to university which offers the same career destinations, but avoids the expensive fees.

How do I decide whether a law apprenticeship is for me?

This guide helps you to:

- compare university and apprenticeship paths to enable you to easily appreciate what each has to offer;
- consider the different types of apprenticeship and where they lead;
- gain an understanding of what it's like to work as a legal apprentice;
- check that you have the key skills needed to become a legal apprentice; and
- find out about current vacancies via the LawCareers.Net legal apprenticeships jobs board.

Where can I find out more?

Go to www.lawcareers.net - you will find a thriving jobs board where apprenticeship vacancies are frequently posted, as well as detailed information on apprenticeships and every other possible career path offered by the UK legal profession.



Law apprenticeships enable young people to get onto a fulfilling and rewarding career path without the cost of going to university. The Gowling WLG apprentices are valued members of the firm, applying what they learn to real, practical work as they increase in confidence, responsibility and independence on the path to becoming fully qualified lawyers.

Lucy Dolan, Early Talent Resourcing Manager, Gowling WLG (UK) LLP

Apprenticeship v university


University is the right path for some people because it offers the chance to study an interesting subject in detail and gain a valuable qualification which opens up career options. University can also be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, filled with opportunities to get involved in new things and meet life-long friends. On the other hand, an apprenticeship offers a more direct path to those same career options, without the costs of going to university or the same intense competition for places. Apprenticeships are also perfect for people who are not keen on more full-time study after finishing their A levels and are eager to get out there and kick-start their careers.

legal profession, you can have the same career whether you choose university or an apprenticeship, which means that your choice is not so much about where you end up, but how you get there – some apprenticeships even involve gaining a university degree.

Law apprenticeships provide a pathway to three possible careers – solicitor, legal executive or paralegal, all three of which are also available if you choose to go to university. The key differences between these three roles are discussed in more detail on pages 4 and 5 in “Career paths”, while the table below explains some of the key differences between the apprenticeship and university routes themselves.

It is important to remember that in the

	Apprenticeship	University
Qualifications 	Professional qualifications to become a paralegal, legal executive or solicitor. Completing the solicitor apprenticeship also involves gaining a law degree.	A university degree in one of hundreds of possible subjects which is widely recognised but does not include professional qualifications. For law, a university degree in any subject makes you eligible for the postgraduate professional courses you need to complete to become a solicitor, legal executive or paralegal.

	Apprenticeship	University
Cost	None to the apprentice – the costs of apprenticeships are covered by the government and employers, while apprentices themselves are paid at least the apprentices’ National Minimum Wage.	With tuition fees standing at over £9,000 a year and living costs on top of that, many students leave university in tens of thousands of pounds’ worth of debt. 

	Apprenticeship	University
Duration	Eighteen months for the intermediate apprenticeship, 24-30 months for the paralegal apprenticeship and six years for the solicitor apprenticeship.	Undergraduate university degrees usually last three to four years.



	Apprenticeship	University
Work experience	Full-time work in a law firm or the legal department of another company or organisation.	Optional work placements and internships – students interested in law should apply for work experience at law firms.



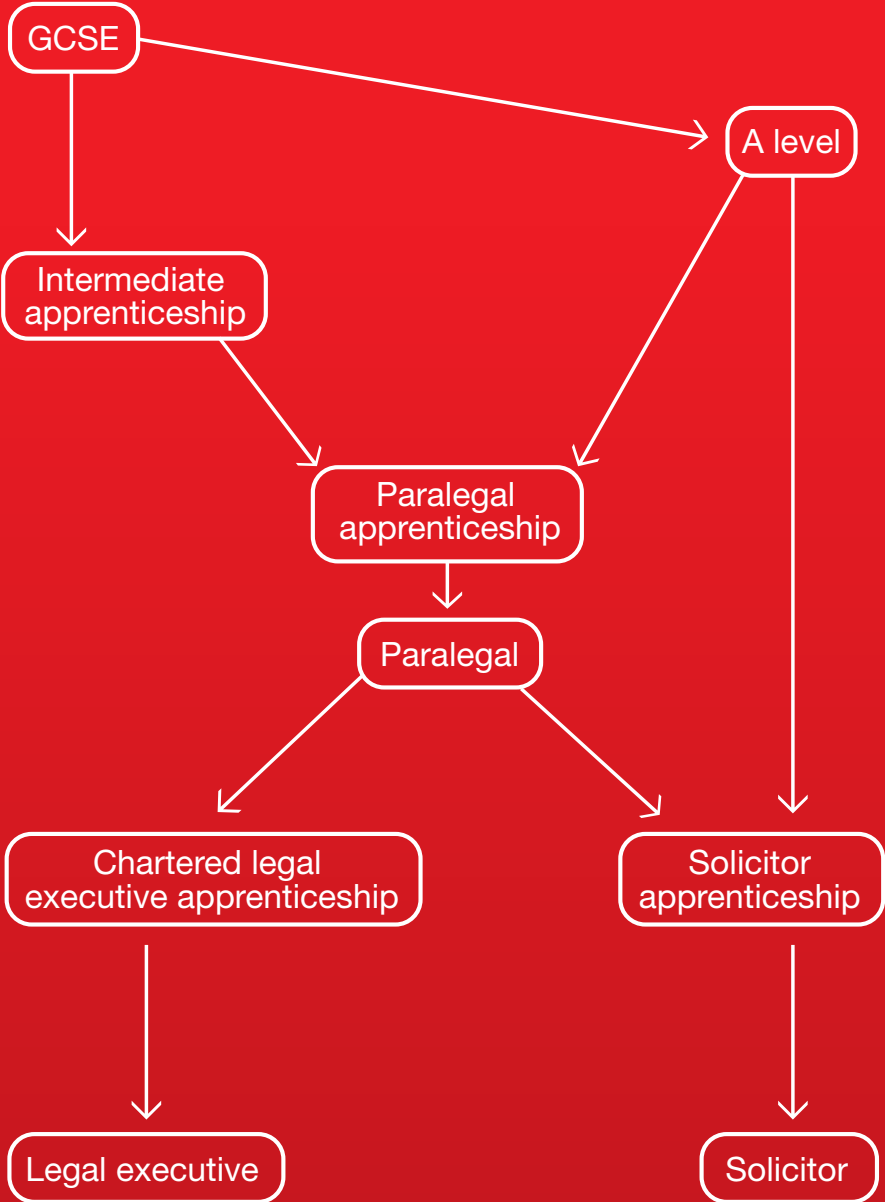
	Apprenticeship	University
Social life	As an apprentice working and studying full time, you may miss out on some of the social opportunities that come with going to university, such as the chance to meet new friends among students your age from all over the world. However, offices often have great socialising cultures too, with plenty of activities to get involved with, and you are bound to make new friends as you meet people at the firm.	The opportunities for socialising at university are fantastic. From the societies covering everything from political debating to cheerleading, to inexpensive union nights and house parties, to the thriving music and arts scenes at most universities, there is something for everyone to enjoy.



	Apprenticeship	University
Career prospects	The ultimate destination for law apprentices and university graduates is the same – a career as a solicitor, legal executive or paralegal.	



Career paths



GCSE

The foundation of your career and the essential first step – good grades are vital if you want to progress in your legal career.

A level

The academic stage between GCSE and university or the beginning of a paralegal/solicitor apprenticeship. Again, good grades are essential.

Intermediate apprenticeship

The intermediate apprenticeship is aimed at school leavers who have not done A levels. Entry requirements are five GCSEs graded A* to C (or equivalent). Apprentices will develop skills to assist in the progression of cases on an administrative level. It is an 18-21 month course.

Paralegal apprenticeship

The paralegal apprenticeship delivers paralegal training in a particular legal practice area.

Entry requirements are five GCSEs graded A* to C and three A levels graded C or above (or equivalent). It is a 24-30 month course. It can lead on to further training via the solicitor apprenticeship route to qualify as a solicitor, although there are only minimal exemptions available. It is also possible to go on to qualify as a chartered legal executive, although smaller numbers of paralegals take up this option when compared to the solicitor apprenticeship option.

Chartered legal executive apprenticeship

The chartered legal executive apprenticeship is a five-year programme, leading to qualification as a chartered legal executive. It is aimed at those progressing from either the intermediate or paralegal apprenticeship.

Solicitor apprenticeship

The solicitor apprenticeship is a six-year programme of paid, on-the-job training which

ends in qualification as a solicitor. The entry requirements are five GCSEs graded A*-C and three A levels graded C or above (or equivalent work experience). The apprenticeship also integrates a law degree, which is obtained at the end of the fourth year. Apprentices learn law and legal practice alongside gaining competence in legal skills, commercial skills and professional conduct.

Paralegal

Paralegals have traditionally worked alongside solicitors in law firms as support staff, although in practice many paralegals do the same work as their trainee or newly-qualified solicitor counterparts – although this is almost always for lower pay. Whether you become a paralegal through an apprenticeship or secure a job as a paralegal after graduating from university, it is possible to progress onto qualifying as a solicitor, legal executive or a more senior paralegal role.

CILEx chartered legal executive

A legal executive is another type of lawyer who is trained to specialise as an expert in one particular area of law. Within that area of law, the job of a legal executive is very similar to that of a solicitor – legal executives advise clients, draft documents and conduct research to find solutions to problems.

Solicitor

Solicitors provide advice and assistance on legal matters. They are the first point of contact for people and organisations (eg, companies and charities) seeking legal advice and representation. Solicitors may work in very different areas of law, but the fundamentals of the job remain largely the same. These include meeting and advising clients on their legal problems, doing legal research to find solutions, drafting important documents such as contracts or wills, and occasionally representing clients at tribunals or in court.

Meet the apprentice



Laura Birks

Kennedys

Laura Birks, 22, is a legal apprentice at law firm Kennedys. She is currently completing the solicitor apprenticeship.

How did you find out about the legal apprenticeship route?

I never really intended to go to university, partly due to the costs involved. When I left school I joined a law firm which happened to be opposite Kennedys. I was considering doing some kind of apprenticeship, but always thought how great it would be if I could do an apprenticeship in law, as I was really enjoying working in the profession. I was in luck, as Kennedys was an early adopter of legal apprenticeships and I duly applied. I joined the firm as an apprentice in 2014 and have since progressed onto the solicitor apprenticeship along with my fellow apprentices.

What appealed to you about doing a law apprenticeship?

The chance to learn 'on the job'. As an apprentice, I often learn about something one day and then actually apply it in the office the next, in contrast to university students who must study for a number of years before they can apply their skills. I've been working since I was 15 and an apprenticeship appealed to me more than going to university – I didn't like the thought of not having money and getting into debt.

Six years is a big commitment, but no more so than the university route. A three-year degree, then a postgraduate course, then a two-year training contract also adds up to six years, the same as an apprenticeship – and that is if everything falls straight into place straightaway. I was a little concerned that I would miss out on the social aspect of university, but the social side of the firm is great.

What do you do day to day?

The work I do is highly varied. I spend one day a week at university studying and four days a week working in the office. I started off doing admin, but I have progressed on to the equivalent of what a trainee or junior solicitor does – handling files, participating in conference calls, drafting documents and so on, all in collaboration with a partner.

What do you most enjoy – and find the most challenging – about your apprenticeship?

I'm happy that my career is already underway and that I get to apply what I learn in practice soon after I learn it, which I think is a great way of learning and developing skills. Plus I'll be a qualified solicitor within a few years.

The most challenging aspect is fitting in all the study time. We get one day a week to attend university and study, but it is not enough to get everything done, so I often find myself leaving the office at 5:00pm and going home to study. It's hard work!

What is your best piece of advice for people considering applying for a legal apprenticeship?

It's important to appreciate that you will be doing a university degree while working at the same time. This means that you have to be committed and hard-working, but the rewards make the work well worthwhile.

Meet the apprentice



Holly Moore

ITV

Holly Moore, 19, is a solicitor apprentice, currently in the commercial and marketing legal affairs team at ITV. She will move around the business, involving three one-year seats (ie, a seat is a period of training in a particular department), four six-month seats, and two six-month seats at law firms Arnold Porter Kaye Scholar (litigation) and Slaughter and May (property).

How did you find out about the legal apprenticeship route?

I always knew that I wanted to be a lawyer, but I didn't want to go to university full time and I did want to gain some practical work experience. I searched everywhere for alternative routes – I relied heavily on the government website, CILEx and LawCareers.Net for info. I first read about paralegal apprenticeships, but then discovered the solicitor apprenticeship. It was the ideal combination of going to uni to gain a qualification and six years of work experience.

What about the route appealed?

I get to transfer what I'm studying at uni in a very immediate way. For example, I'm learning contract law at the moment, and every day at work I'm involved with writing contracts. I'm using my knowledge as I learn it, rather than having to wait for five years to apply it! Plus, being at ITV has been perfect for me – it offers everything at once, including both in-house and private practice experience.

What do you do day to day?

I'm in the commercial marketing and legal team, working mainly on airtime and sponsorship contracts, confidentiality agreements and with the rights renewal team. I help to draw up contracts, supporting the more senior lawyers. Much of what I do is the same level of work as the trainees, which feels great. I'm also involved with the Legal Social Mobility Programme (LSMP), helping to organise events and getting information together.

What do you most enjoy – and find the most challenging – about your apprenticeship?

The best bit is working in this environment – everyone is so friendly, it is fast-paced and challenging, and there is so much variety; every day is different. There's always a new contract or new discussion, and I'm involved with all of that. I also really love studying at uni!

The challenge is taking on a lot of responsibility at a young age; I'm only 19 and having left college last summer, I went straight into this, my first full-time job. It has made me mature; you have to manage your own workload and study, and ensure that you balance that with your life outside work. It doesn't undermine how much I love it though – I would choose the exact same route if given the choice again. I am very lucky to have a supportive team around me.

What is your best piece of advice for those considering applying for a legal apprenticeship?

Do lots of research into the different routes. There are new apprenticeships becoming available all the time, so you need to seek that information out. And if you think that it might be right for you, then you have to engage fully; you can't go into it in a half-hearted way. It requires a lot of commitment and sacrifice of time – it's very different to full-time uni! It can be tough, because of the amount that you're juggling, but it's worth it and also has the advantage of being paid! Talk to careers advisers, email firms, talk to your teachers; the more research you do, the more you'll be certain that it's something you want to pursue.

Key questions

Below are some commonly asked questions about legal apprenticeships. However, if you want to ask something not covered here, email your query to LawCareers.Net's Oracle at oracle@lawcareers.net for a personalised response.

Q How do I know if law is the right career for me?

At this early stage, it can be hard to be sure, but you can ask yourself some key questions as a start. Do you find legal issues interesting? Are you intrigued by the ways in which the law is part of everyday life? Is there a particular practice area (eg, crime, the environment or human rights) that has caught your attention? Are you the kind of person who would thrive in a fast-paced legal environment? The best way to really find out whether law is for you is by talking to lawyers and doing some quality work experience within the legal profession.

Q Haven't all lawyers been to private schools and Oxbridge?

No. Most firms understand the benefits of a representative workforce, which means recruiting the best candidates regardless of background. These days, most have their own diversity policies to ensure that they provide a welcoming and supportive environment for people whatever their gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age or socioeconomic background. In fact, legal apprentice schemes are one of the ways that firms are trying to attract and recruit a more diverse group of employees.

Q What skills and strengths do you need to be a good lawyer?

There are a number of important skills that are needed if you are to be a good lawyer. Many of them are developed during your academic studies, while others become apparent in your working life – the advantage of developing them as an apprentice is that you will be doing both simultaneously. The attributes that most recruiters look for include: intellectual ability; motivation; resilience; accuracy; teamwork; leadership; commercial awareness; and communication skills. If you have the majority of these, law could be a good option for you!

Q Who can become an apprentice?

Legal apprenticeships are aimed at students who leave education after completing their GCSEs or A levels, wanting to go straight into a career rather than progress on to university. Most legal apprentices are young people aged 16-24 who have recently finished secondary education. While there is no age limit on who can start an apprenticeship, there is no government funding available for apprentices over the age of 24, meaning fewer opportunities for this age group. Apprenticeships are not open to university graduates.

Q Do I have to study A-level law to be an apprentice?

In short, no. People do much better in subjects that they are actually interested in, so pursue A levels (and GCSEs) which you think you will enjoy. A level is about studying interesting subjects and developing key skills – specialist legal training comes later. Also, very few universities list A-level law as a requirement, even for those wanting to start a law degree, so it is by no means essential. In fact, you can become a lawyer without ever having done a law degree, by choosing a non-law undergraduate degree subject and then doing the one-year conversion course (the Graduate Diploma in Law).

Another point here is the importance of achieving good grades. Try to opt for subjects that you enjoy and excel in to give yourself the best possible chance of passing with flying colours. It is far preferable to get As and Bs in three subjects than it is to get Bs and Cs in four, so don't give yourself too much to handle.

Q What do I need to know about my first day in an office?

Your first day in any job can be intimidating; doubly so in a law firm environment, where you may feel totally out of your depth. But don't worry – most firms will have comprehensive induction programmes for new joiners, introducing you to some of the basics of office life (eg, the IT system and how to work the photocopier!). You may also find yourself starting on the same day as other apprentices, so you can share your concerns and questions within the group. Some firms will also give you a trainee buddy or mentor to help you adjust. Be yourself, ask questions, demonstrate enthusiasm, and pretty soon, you'll feel right at home.

One note on dress code: lawyers are business people and their clients expect them to look the part. While some firms are more relaxed than others, your best bet is to arrive looking very well presented. That doesn't mean spending a fortune on tailor-made suits, but it does mean arriving on your first day dressed smartly and ready to do the job.

Got a question not answered here?

Email it to the LawCareers.Net Oracle at oracle@lawcareers.net.

Key questions

Q Where can I find details of apprenticeship vacancies?

There is more information out there about legal apprenticeships than ever before. LawCareers.Net (www.lawcareers.net) should be your first stop – there is a comprehensive list of vacancies at a variety of firms and organisations. This is updated often, so it is worth making regular visits to the site to see if new vacancies have been added. In terms of more general information about apprenticeships, again, LawCareers.Net is a great first stop, but both the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (www.cilex.org.uk/study/apprenticeships) and the government apprenticeship pages (www.gov.uk) are valuable resources.

Q Should I go to my careers service?

Your school careers service is a brilliant resource and should be utilised. They will be able to help you with application and interview techniques, suggest places to look for information, and maybe even help you to secure informal work experience or shadowing with a law firm.

Q What if I might prefer the traditional route?

If you're reading this guide, you obviously have more than a passing interest in becoming a legal apprentice. However, it may be that you're also considering the more traditional pathway into the profession. If so, *The Beginner's Guide to a Career in Law* – the companion guide to this one – is your first stop for information about the university route to becoming a solicitor or barrister. In addition, LawCareers.Net is also a great place for information about this career path, including news, advice, features and interviews.





Your legal apprenticeship skills checklist

A law apprenticeship combines an interesting job and training at a law firm with part-time study. This means hard work, but the rewards are well worth it. Here is a checklist of the skills you will need and what you need to do to get off to a flying start as a legal apprentice.

Good written and verbal communication skills. Solicitors, paralegals and legal executives advise people in person, over the phone and in emails and letters, so writing and speaking with confidence is important.

Attention to detail. This is one of the cornerstones of the legal profession, so it is essential that you take a careful and meticulous approach to all the work that you produce as an apprentice, checking and rechecking as you go.

Good interpersonal and customer service skills. As an apprentice you will meet a wide range of different people, including colleagues at your law firm and clients who need one of your firm's services. You will need to be friendly, enthusiastic and professional, even with difficult clients.

The ability to work well as part of a team. Solicitors and the other types of lawyer found in law firms rarely work alone. A law firm is one big team divided into smaller teams with different areas of expertise who help each other out, while as an apprentice you will constantly be working closely with others. Being a team player is essential.

Strong organisational skills. Apprentices need to stay on top of multiple tasks and be able to prioritise and meet deadlines. They also need to balance their law firm role with studying part time, so it is important to work hard and be organised.

A strong academic track record. Law is an intellectually rigorous and demanding profession. Employers will be looking for evidence of both a good brain and a strong work ethic, so work hard at getting the best results you possibly can during your GCSEs and A levels.

A desire to learn. Although a law apprenticeship offers a great opportunity to get straight onto a fulfilling career path after leaving school, the learning has only just begun once you join a law firm as an apprentice. You will be training and studying to become an expert legal professional, so enthusiasm to learn more is a must.

Looking for a career in law without the cost of university?

A legal apprenticeship is a new option for getting into a career in law.

“I like the idea of earning a salary whilst gaining qualifications that would cost thousands if I were to go to university.”

- Legal apprenticeships incorporate training in law alongside workplace skills.
- You will need to apply for apprenticeship vacancies in a legal organisation. We have client firms who are recruiting apprentices now.
- You will have an assessor from CILEx Law School to support you in your studies.
- Depending on the programme you follow, you will be a qualified paralegal, Chartered Legal Executive or solicitor after your apprenticeship.



See our website for current vacancies: www.cilexlawschool.ac.uk

Please email apprentice.recruitment@cilexlawschool.ac.uk for further advice.