

Options with law

Your skills

Over the course of your degree you develop a good mix of subject specific and technical skills as well as transferable core skills. Consider these alongside your other activities, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you *really* are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile.

As a law student, as well as gaining knowledge of law, you develop the following skills:

- problem-solving;
- research;
- analytical skills;
- writing concisely;
- drafting formal documents with precision;
- confident oral communication;
- ability to pay close attention to detail.

If you want to enter the legal profession, it is important to participate in extracurricular activities at university, such as those organised by your university's law society, and to gain legal work experience.

Some universities arrange for law undergraduates to offer supervised advice sessions to other students or members of the public - seize this opportunity if it arises! Beyond university, try to arrange vacation placements or mini pupillages. Informal work experience can often be organised with smaller solicitors' firms, law centres, citizens advice bureaux, in the courts and with legal departments in central/local government. Intending city lawyers should also think of obtaining experience in a business or financial environment.

Remember that employers from beyond the legal profession seek skills acquired through the study of law. Employers, both inside and outside the profession, will also look for evidence that you have learnt from experiences beyond your course.

Job options

Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Look at [your degree... what next?](#) for informed advice on career planning and graduate employment, or take a look at [what jobs would suit me?](#) a helpful starting point for self-analysis.

You can choose between jobs that are degree-related or those that appeal because they use other interests or elements of your degree.

Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Solicitor, commercial](#), [Solicitor, non-commercial](#), [Solicitor, Scotland](#), [Solicitor, private practice \(Northern Ireland\)](#) - the main duties of a solicitor are advising clients (individual and corporate) on legal aspects of their personal and business affairs and conducting legal business and negotiations on their behalf.
- [Barrister](#), [Advocate \(Scotland\)](#) - has rights of advocacy, presenting cases in court under instruction from a solicitor or another designated professional, and may specialise in different areas of law, such as: criminal law; common law including family, housing and personal injury law; chancery law; and commercial law.
- [Legal executive \(England and Wales\)](#) - works under the supervision of a solicitor or senior legal executive.

Common areas of specialism are conveyancing, civil and criminal litigation, family law and probate.

- [Licensed conveyancer](#) - specialises in all aspects of the law dealing with property. Handles contracts for sales and draws up legal documents for sellers and purchasers.
- [Paralegal \(England and Wales\)](#) - undertakes a wide scope of work in law firms and legal departments ranging from basic administrative tasks to high-level, fee-earning, legal transactions. This is a growing profession and the majority of paralegals are looking to train as lawyers. Some, however, decide to become 'career paralegals' and may earn more than qualified lawyers.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Advice worker](#) - responds to requests for help and assists clients by providing information and confidential advice on a range of issues.
- [Trading standards officer](#) - enforces a wide range of consumer legislation to promote fair, safe and equitable trading.
- [Chartered accountant](#) - provides professional services to a wide range of fee-paying clients, including audit/assurance, tax, business advisory and management consultancy.
- [Patent attorney](#) - works to establish the originality of an invention. Offers advice on legal and technical issues, and drafts detailed technical definitions and descriptions.
- [Police officer](#) - works in partnership with the public and organisations to reduce crime and fear of crime.
- [Human resources officer](#) - develops, advises on and implements policies relating to the effective use of personnel within an organisation.
- [Civil Service fast streamer](#), [Civil Service administrator, main stream](#) - works with and for agencies and departments of government.

Other options

Law affects every aspect of our lives and you could therefore argue that any job would be enhanced by knowledge of the law, an understanding of how to research it and how to apply it. As a restaurant manager, for example, it is helpful to understand health and safety and employment legislation.

Although some of the jobs listed here might not be first jobs for many graduates, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. It's also worth noting that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines, so don't restrict your thinking to the jobs listed here.

[Explore types of jobs](#) to find out more about the above options and related jobs.

Career areas

Every year statistics are collected to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, with the data being collected within just six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out [what do graduates do?](#) and [your degree...what next?](#)

Over half of all law graduates eventually progress into the legal profession after undertaking the necessary further study and training. That means that almost half eventually go into other

fields, many of which require either postgraduate study or relevant work experience. Law graduates are particularly sought after by employers in the business and finance sector and also by employers in public advisory bodies such as Citizens Advice Bureaux and local authorities. Nevertheless, 2007 statistics show that, six months after graduation, more law graduates were on the road into the legal profession than were finding employment in any other sector.

Where are the jobs?

If you qualify as a solicitor, there are openings in many different types of legal practices. High street solicitors' practices offer the widest range of caseloads, from criminal and family to probate and business law. Local government also provides diverse opportunities. Corporate law firms encourage early specialisation, often, but not exclusively, in commercial applications of the law. If you qualify as a barrister, you can practise in a similarly large number of diverse areas of law, but as an expert advocate. You could also train as a legal executive, paralegal or licensed conveyancer. For more information see [legal services](#).

However, the legal profession is just the tip of the iceberg and you might want to investigate opportunities in sectors such as:

- [Local, regional and national government](#) - not only in legal departments but in a range of roles;
- [Financial services](#) - many roles require the mix of skills law graduates have;
- [Voluntary](#) - advice work is just one aspect of the sector, which appeals to many law graduates.

Career management is an ongoing process; one that you'll no doubt develop throughout your working life. [Explore job sectors](#) for further information on all the above employment areas.

Further study

Law graduates who intend to practise law must go on to further study and vocational training. Intending solicitors in England and Wales must complete the legal practice course (LPC), succeeded by a paid training contract with a law firm. Slightly different patterns prevail in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Barristers in England and Wales undertake the bar vocational course (BVC) followed by one year as a pupil barrister. There are variations in Scotland, where advocates normally qualify as solicitors before specialising, and in Northern Ireland.

Legal executives (England and Wales) normally obtain a trainee post and study for The Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) (<http://www.ilex.org.uk>) exams. Eventually, they may do the LPC and qualify as solicitors.

In 2007, six months after graduation, over 40% of law graduates had gone on to further study. Most of them did indeed progress to relevant professional training courses, but others went on to study subjects such as criminology, business, human resources, international relations, journalism and education.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part time or full time. If further study interests you, start by thinking [about postgrad study](#). [Find courses and research](#) to identify your options; you can also [apply for courses online](#).

Look at [funding my further study](#) for more details relating to finance and the application process.

What next?

Don't forget there are alternatives to entering employment or postgraduate study, such as taking time out, volunteering or travelling. Longer term, you may want to consider starting your own business. For something different, check out [self-employment](#) and [flexible working](#) or explore [working and studying abroad](#).

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whether you are in the early stages of career planning, or you have definite ideas about what you want to do, you will find further information to help you in the following sections:

- Analyse your skills, interests and motivations to find out [what jobs would suit me?](#)
- [Explore types of jobs](#) to find out about entry requirements, salaries and working conditions.
- [Explore job sectors](#) for hints on breaking into various industries.
- [Find graduate employers](#) and see what they have to offer.
- Look at the advice on [applications, CVs and interviews](#).
- Get [work experience](#) through vacation work or a work placement.
- [Find courses and research](#) and investigate postgraduate study opportunities.
- If you have already graduated, get online [interactive advice](#).
- Visit [your university careers service](#) for a wealth of advice and resources to help with your career planning.

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