Alternative Careers for Law Graduates

Career options, within and outside the legal sector, for law graduates not planning to qualify as a solicitor or barrister

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Introduction

This booklet is for law students who:

- do not plan to go on to qualification as a solicitor or barrister
- or plan to take some time out to gain useful experience before continuing into professional legal study
- or just want to know all the options open to law graduates before making a career decision

It aims to help you develop your awareness of career options and provide ideas for, and information about, career areas outside and beyond the legal profession. It can only offer a brief overview of these and you should use the information sources given for each career for further details.

You may also find it useful to discuss your career options with a careers adviser.

"Why spend three years studying law if you don’t become a lawyer at the end of it?"

This is the sort of question that Law graduates seeking a career outside the legal profession may face from well-meaning relatives and friends - but there are many good reasons for looking at alternative careers.

A number of Law students do not have and never did have any plans to become lawyers, but are simply studying out of interest in the subject. After all, Philosophy graduates are not expected to become philosophers!

Others may have begun their degree with plans to become a lawyer but have lost interest in the subject, or been forced to reconsider for other reasons.

These are most likely to include finance (fees for the Legal Practice Course in 2017-18 are typically between £7700 - £15740; those for the Bar Professional Training Course range from £12500 to £19000) and competition for training contracts, pupillages and, especially in the case of the BPTC, places on the course itself.

Or you may want to take some time out to try something different, or to travel, or to gain relevant experience, leaving the option of becoming a lawyer still open at the end of this time (there is no limit on how long you can delay beginning the LPC or BPTC after you graduate).

All of these are perfectly good reasons for considering alternatives to law, and nobody should feel that a law graduate who does not become a lawyer has "wasted their degree". It takes more strength of character and initiative to consider all the options than it does to continue on the conveyor belt to the professional courses because "everybody else is".

Jenny Keaveney
Careers Adviser
It is not just law firms who like law graduates!

Graduate employers in all kinds of career areas value the skills that you have gained through studying law, even when a knowledge of law itself may not be directly relevant to the job.

These skills are likely to include:

- Communication, both written and verbal
- Analysing and problem solving
- Using information from different sources
- Time management
- Researching
- Presentation
- Negotiation
- Attention to detail
- Logical reasoning
- Critical thinking

"I think Law is regarded as a 'Rolls-Royce degree' which carries weight in any graduate job environment"

(Law graduate, now fund manager in an investment bank)

Short-term alternatives

If you are planning to take some time out before starting a professional course, you may want to use this time to gain relevant experience. "Relevant" may mean:

- work with an employer in the legal field
- work with a related organisation, e.g. Citizens Advice
- work with the type of organisation that may be a client of the area of legal practice you hope to enter in future
- work which helps you develop the skills which a lawyer will need

Some of the opportunities outlined in this booklet (e.g. Research Assistantships at the Law Commission) are invariably short-term; others may offer either short or long-term prospects. It often happens that a law graduate enters a field of work which they view initially as temporary but then finds that it offers an interesting and rewarding career path in its own right.

"I enrolled with a temping agency which found me a position as documentation controller for a European telecoms company. I did this for 9 months which helped me to find out about the graduate training scheme and gave me an insight into the company which helped me to be selected for my present post"

(Law graduate, now Business Analyst)

For further information, see the graduate internship sites linked from www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/findajob.html
Opportunities in the legal field or making direct use of a law degree:

Chartered Legal Executive Lawyer

Many law graduates want to gain a professional qualification and work in the legal field but find this difficult due to the costs of undertaking the LPC. The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) qualification can help find a way round this problem.

CILEx is a recognised professional legal qualification alongside the solicitor and barrister qualifications. The work of Chartered Legal Executives is similar to that of solicitors and they can work in private practice, the public sector, industry and commerce. They are qualified lawyers who usually specialise in one area of law, some of the most common being property, family, employment, personal injury, civil and criminal litigation, wills and probate, and public law (such as welfare benefits or immigration).

The CILEx qualification is achieved through a combination of examinations and legal employment. In the past, most legal executives began their training as school-leavers but the number of law graduates entering this field is increasing dramatically. The CILEx Graduate Fast-Track Diploma route gives law graduates exemption from two-thirds of the Institute's exams.

For many graduates, the main advantage of this route into the legal profession is being able to train through part-time study while in paid legal employment. This employment is broadly defined as "work of a legal nature under the supervision of a solicitor or Chartered Legal Executive, barrister or licensed conveyancer" and includes paralegal or legal secretarial work (see below). Another benefit is the cost savings: the Graduate Fast-Track Diploma costs under £3000, which is less than half the cost of the cheapest LPC courses.

Chartered Legal Executives can qualify as a solicitor by completing the Legal Practice and Professional Skills Courses, without needing to undergo a training contract. However, this is quite a long route to qualification as a solicitor and is not a requirement for career development. Chartered Legal Executives can take on considerable responsibility as their career develops - it is quite common for in-house legal departments and local authorities to advertise positions as being open to solicitors, barristers and legal executives. It is possible for a Chartered Legal Executive to become a partner in a law firm or even a judge.

After graduating I started working in property law and then moved to consumer contract litigation. My employer agreed to fund the CILEx Graduate Fast-Track Diploma and, having completed my qualifying employment, I qualified as a Chartered Legal Executive lawyer. I went on to supervise a busy Contract Litigation team, dealing with consumer and commercial disputes including domestic building projects, holiday claims and dodgy car deals. In 2013 I was able to make the move to a senior role at DAS Law, where I have the opportunity to help business development as well as my Commercial and Consumer disputes. (Stuart Henry, Consumer and Commercial Senior Litigator at DAS Law)

For another case study, see
www.prospects.ac.uk/chartered_legal_executive_job_description.htm
Paralegal

“Paralegal” is a job title that is difficult to define. It covers a very wide range of tasks and responsibilities, which vary from firm to firm. In some firms, particularly large commercial firms, paralegals chiefly carry out administrative and support work such as organising, preparing and recording documents. In a smaller firm, paralegal responsibilities are likely to be more wide-ranging and often overlap with those of a trainee solicitor. Paralegals in these firms may be involved in tasks such as drafting, client interviewing, casework and research.

It is important to read the job description carefully before applying for any paralegal position to find out what the work will involve and whether the firm will expect you to offer any particular experience and/or qualifications. Many employers will look for similar qualities in paralegals to those they would seek in trainees, in particular a 2.1 degree, relevant work experience or even to have completed the LPC. Good IT skills are also important.

Working in a paralegal role may be a route into a training contract: some firms require all their prospective trainees to join the firm as a paralegal and to work in this role for six months before moving on to a training contract. These firms will expect graduates to have completed their LPC before joining, and the six months paralegal work will count towards the period of recognised training. Paralegal work can also count as qualifying employment for CILEx (see above).

Even if the firm you work in as a paralegal does not offer training contracts, this experience will help you with your training contract applications to other firms by demonstrating your motivation, skills and commitment to a legal career.

Paralegals may also work in the in-house legal departments of organisations that are not specifically providers of legal services, as the following shows:

Example Vacancy

This role is based at the headquarters of an international construction and engineering group in Dartford, providing paralegal support to the UK business and legal functions. Working as part of the legal team in a fast moving commercial environment, your work will be varied and flexible including:

- involvement in, and project management of, business initiatives including those initiatives to update and modernise core business and legal procedures;
- supporting the legal team in the management of disputes, transactions and contractual matters;
- responsibility for ensuring that legislative and case law research papers are updated and modified to reflect the changing commercial and legal world.

You will be a diligent and proactive law graduate with good interpersonal skills, comfortable with working autonomously where required and able to think innovatively to solve problems.

Paralegal vacancies may be advertised in the legal press, on websites and jobs boards such as www.lawcareers.net/jobs or through legal recruitment agencies, but many firms do not recruit paralegals on a regular basis.
**Barristers’ Clerk**
The role of a barristers’ clerk is that of a practice manager, organising the work of barristers in a set of chambers. This includes diary management, allocating barristers to cases, negotiating fees and billing clients. The role is key to the smooth running of chambers and requires a knowledge of court procedures and etiquette as well as an understanding of the areas of practice covered in the set. Good communication, organisation and business skills are essential. For more information, see [www.prospects.ac.uk/barristers_clerk_job_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/barristers_clerk_job_description.htm)

**The Law Commission**
The Law Commission is an independent body with the primary task of making recommendations for the reform of the law of England and Wales. It recruits around 15 law graduates each year to work as research assistants on law reform project teams - these are one-year contracts which are normally advertised in January for entry the following September. There is a great deal of competition for these posts and evidence of outstanding ability in a variety of legal fields will be sought, including a proven aptitude for written expression (e.g. a dissertation). A minimum of a 2.1 law degree is required and many Research Assistants have postgraduate qualifications or have completed the LPC or BPTC. The work provides experience in the formulation of legal policy and preparation of legislation and is valuable experience for the legal profession, law teaching and careers in the Government Legal Service.

**The Crown Prosecution Service**
As well as its Legal Trainee Scheme for trainee solicitors and pupil barristers, the CPS recruits caseworkers, who assist with planning cases, ensuring that any evidence required is available for the hearing and dealing with all relevant correspondence. They manage case notes, costs and staff and liaise closely with counsel, court staff and police and provide care and support to witnesses and victims. The CPS also recruits administrators and managers.

**Licensed Conveyancer**
Licensed Conveyancers specialise in the legal aspects of buying and selling property in England and Wales. They give legal advice to clients, handle and prepare contracts and leases, research cases, ensure that contracts are signed and exchanged and liaise with other professionals such as banks, estate agents and other lawyers. They may also provide some probate, litigation and advisory services.

Licensed Conveyancers can work anywhere that deals with the transfer of a title to property or land in a legal department headed by a qualified person. They are therefore not limited to working in law firms: their workplaces include housing associations, local authorities, banks, building societies, property development companies and even railways and airports. Law graduates and LPC/BPTC-qualified entrants will be exempted from some of the stages of the Council of Licensed Conveyancers’ exams. Students must complete two years of supervised full-time practical training before obtaining their first licence.

[www.prospects.ac.uk/licensed_conveyancer_job_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/licensed_conveyancer_job_description.htm)
**Costs Lawyer**

Costs lawyers (previously known as law costs draftsmen/women) are concerned with all aspects of solicitors’ costs which are controlled by statute: mainly solicitors’ and clients’ costs; publicly funded (legal aid) costs and costs payable between parties. Whilst not concerned with law primarily, a knowledge of law and legal procedures are needed to enable you to deal with the files passing through your hands. Training is through distance learning and a qualified and experienced costs lawyer may command a salary on a par with that of a solicitor or legal executive.

*Example Vacancy:*

We are looking for a trainee costs lawyer to work out of our offices near High Wycombe. In the first year the role will primarily entail drawing bills of costs and claims for payment by the Legal Aid Agency but would evolve over time into one dealing with all aspects of legal costs including, ultimately, negotiation and advocacy in the courts. The ideal candidate will have a Law Degree, exceptional written and spoken English skills, be an effective and confident communicator and have an ability to work unsupervised and to deadlines. Enrolment on the Association of Costs Lawyers’ study course would be offered once an ability and enthusiasm for the role has been shown.

**Legal Secretary/PA**

Legal secretaries give administrative support to lawyers and assist in the day-to-day tasks involved in running a legal firm. In a smaller firm, you would develop experience in a wide range of legal matters, whilst in larger firms you would normally specialise in just one or two areas of law.

A legal secretary may progress to a personal assistant (PA) role, giving responsibility for a range of senior administrative matters and client liaison, and requiring greater use of technology and a wide range of skills. In some firms it may also be possible to progress into paralegal or legal executive work, or even into a training contract.

A law degree is not normally a requirement for this role and secretarial qualifications, such as the Diploma offered by the Institute of Legal Secretaries and PAs, and experience will be more important. However, some employers may value law graduates, as the advertisement below shows:

*Example Vacancy:*

“The ideal candidate will have good communication and interpersonal skills and demonstrate excellent client care. A professional telephone manner and attention to detail is essential and a typing qualification and good IT skills will be advantageous. Duties will include audio transcription, copy typing and filing. You will need to be organised, accurate, proactive and able to meet deadlines while remaining calm under pressure. We would be pleased to hear from graduates seeking to progress a career in law as this position has historically been a stepping stone for progression”
**Legal Publishing**

Specialist legal publishers such as LexisNexis and Sweet & Maxwell have occasional openings for graduates in editorial, marketing and sales roles. A law degree is generally required in order to understand the complexities of the published material (for editorial work) or to communicate effectively with authors and (in sales and marketing) customers. At some levels, a professional law qualification or experience will be preferred.

Generalist publishers may also have opportunities in their rights departments, where a legal background can be useful in negotiating and drawing up contracts. However, law is not a prerequisite for this work and excellent persuasive skills and strong attention to detail are the most important factors. A knowledge of other languages is also valuable.

Vacancies may be advertised in the legal press, or on the Guardian’s media jobs page [http://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/media](http://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/media), but recruitment is often through speculative applications. Internships or temporary work can also offer a way in, as in the example below.

**Example Vacancy:**

A legal publisher is looking for a temp (full time, for six months) to assist with a content migration project. You will be researching legal topics and devising Boolean searches to retrieve relevant content. This is a fantastic role for a newly qualified law graduate with a passion for research. This is a home working role with occasional visits to our London office for training and meetings.

**Key duties:**

- Create classification rules to categorise legal content
- Understanding the scope of legal topics, identifying language indicative of particular topics
- Create complex Boolean searches to retrieve relevant content

**Experience / skills required:**

- Good technical ability and a genuine enthusiasm for categorising legal information accurately will be essential
- Strong Research skills and attention to detail
- Strong academic record with a good degree in law
- Autonomous self-starter with an ability to work remotely

For general information on publishing careers, see [www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin/publishing.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin/publishing.htm)
Legal Information Work

There are opportunities for law graduates with a qualification in librarianship to work in the law libraries of large solicitors' firms, in academic libraries or in specialist libraries and information centres. A number of these organisations offer one-year training placements which provide paid work experience before library school: these are normally advertised in autumn through CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals).

Legal information professionals (LIPs) deal with more than just books and legal databases. Although their key duties are legal research, managing resources and training users, the role has begun to overlap with other sectors as legal information technology has developed. For example, in commercial firms, LIP roles can include 'Knowledge Managers' who work with practice support lawyers to manage internal know-how. In other roles, LIPs may have responsibility for the content and even the design of their firm's web pages and intranet sites, or for managing social media.

"As well as providing books, we keep staff informed about developments in their areas of interest. This might be tracking the passage of a piece of legislation through Parliament or monitoring an important case as it goes to appeal.

"In fact, we do not have a central library area. Nor do we have an issues desk. All the books are in the team areas or partners’ offices where they can be accessed constantly.

"Some teams have a trainee solicitor who researches cases. More difficult questions are referred to our team which includes a professional support lawyer. We might be asked to find cases or citations on particular topics. We use online legal databases such as PLC or LexisNexis.

"Most of our reference books are in loose leaf format so amendments can be added as needed. We have over 60, most in multiple volumes, so there’s a lot of updating to do. This is a tedious, clerical job, but it has to be done. I know the importance of legal information being up to date – a case could stand or fall on the accuracy of the information."

(Helen Marshall, Harvey Ingram LLP)
http://ccskills.org.uk/careers/advice/article/working-as-a-legal-librarian

"I like the variety of tasks and responsibilities. I can be building a web page in the morning and teaching students how to research for a moot problem in the afternoon."

"It’s a ‘people’ job - you need to have a good relationship with your users, so it’s not a role for shy people who like wearing cardigans."

Katharine Jackson, Legal Research Librarian at Oxford University, and Natasha Choolhun, Library Co-ordinator at the College of Law

Tax Work

This may lack instant appeal - tax work is often stereotyped as dreary number-crunching - but is a field well worth considering for law graduates. Employers such as tax consultants and accounting firms are very keen to recruit law graduates into tax work where their legal skills will be used to advise clients on their tax liabilities and to create the best tax strategies for them. The work involves explaining the complexities of the tax system to individuals and companies (from the UK or abroad); advising on financial planning and on business transactions such as mergers and acquisitions. All this involves a great deal of client contact.

A law graduate working in taxation is less likely to be calculating the amount of tax for which their client is liable than working out knotty problems such as the Jaffa Cakes case - are they cakes or biscuits? One is subject to VAT, the other is not: the cost of VAT at 20% is more than three times greater than the average retailer's profit margin. The tax adviser’s role is to attempt to persuade HMRC of the answer of greatest benefit to the client.

“Our team here offers advice to both employers and employees and my legal background has proved invaluable with things like employment contracts, tax legislation and social security issues”

(Law graduate, now a trainee chartered accountant in the tax and legal services department of a large firm)

A law degree also offers exemptions from some of the professional accountancy exams, while passing the Legal Practice Course makes you eligible to sit for the exams of the Chartered Institute of Taxation.

Example Vacancy:

"Croner Taxwise are the market leaders in tax fee protection insurance to firms of accountants. We run a Graduate Training Programme which will give you great exposure to the Tax industry. The ability to work at pace against challenging targets is a must, as is an exceptional focus on customer service, with the ability to talk to and engage with people. The ideal candidate will have a 2.1 degree in Accountancy, Law or Business“

It is also, of course, possible for graduates to enter tax work by training with HM Revenue & Customs: applications to their Tax Professional Development Programme normally open in mid-September and close at the end of November. This is not an 'easy option' - the programme involves four years of intensive training with exams every 3-4 months - but the minimum degree requirement is a 2.2. Strong analytical thinking, problem-solving, communication and team-working skills are also essential.

For further information, see the Tax Adviser and Tax Inspector profiles at www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles
Company Secretary

Don’t let the job title put you off! The company secretary's role is closely related to law and offers a high level of responsibility. The company secretary provides advice and guidance to the board of directors and is responsible for ensuring that the company complies with all its statutory duties and obligations. They may also handle company administration, insurance, employee benefits and marketing. The work is at a senior level, on a par with that of accountants and lawyers and not office secretaries and PAs.

Many company secretaries enter this field after obtaining a professional qualification in law or accountancy, but some organisations recruit graduates to train as members of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators. Some of these (e.g. Deloitte) provide company secretarial services to other companies on a consultancy basis.

For further information, see the Occupational Profile for a company secretary at www.prospects.ac.uk/company_secretary_job_description.htm

Example Vacancy:

A major law firm is looking for a Trainee to work within the Company Secretarial Unit. There is a variety of work - no two days are the same and this role can provide a wealth of different skills and experience.

Key responsibilities:

- Providing support to both external clients of the firm and legal advisors working on different types of transactional work.
- Assisting with the transactional support being provided by the Firm’s legal advisors;
- Preparation and electronic filing of forms with the Registrar of Companies and reviewing and updating statutory books;
- Assisting with the Team’s compliance matters including drafting documents;
- Assisting with the co-ordination of the Department’s marketing events, including Company Secretaries’ Group Meeting.
- We are looking to employ someone with a Law/Business Studies based degree and with excellent attention to detail.
- Candidates should be able to work on their own initiative and be confident in dealing with and communicating effectively key stakeholders of all levels.
Trade Mark Attorney

Trade mark attorneys advise clients on a wide range of trade mark related issues, and act on their behalf in dealing with the registration authorities in the UK and overseas, as well as with third parties. They must therefore have a thorough grounding in UK and foreign trade mark law and practice, and a working knowledge of related issues such as copyright, industrial designs, passing off at common law and unfair competition.

The attorney will play a central role in the selection of new trade marks and will be responsible for advising on and achieving appropriate registrations. Once registration is obtained, the attorney will advise on the correct way to use trade marks in such areas as advertising and product literature, and on portfolio management in the light of the client's current needs, including expansion of protection, transfers of ownership, licences, and other developments affecting the client's trade marks.

A vital aspect of the attorney's job is to advise on matters of trade mark infringement, whether it is his or her client who is accused of infringing another's rights, or where it is the client's rights which are being infringed. If litigation cannot be avoided, it is the attorney's job to provide back-up to the solicitors and barristers conducting the case.

The profession offers a good career to those who wish to combine work of a specialised nature with a broad commercial background. Law graduates may be eligible for exemption in some Foundation Papers of the qualifying examination and many firms specify law degrees when recruiting trainees.

For further information, see the Occupational Profile for a trade mark attorney at www.prospects.ac.uk/trade_mark_attorney_job_description.htm

Example job description:

We have an exciting opportunity for a trainee trade mark attorney to join the team in our London office. Candidates should have a good honours degree, preferably in law with an IP module. A postgraduate qualification relating to IP law would be an advantage as would a working knowledge of other European languages.

On the job training and support will be given to enable the successful candidate to qualify as a registered trade mark attorney. There will be a requirement to participate in the QMW Certificate in Trade Mark Law and Practice and the Nottingham Law School Professional Certificate in Trade Mark Practice, paid for by the company, subject to a training agreement.

The successful candidate will have a logical approach, analytical ability, excellent communication skills, meticulous attention to detail and the ability to write clearly and accurately. They will join a growing team where there is scope to work for large and small clients on all aspects of trade mark and related IP matters.
Teaching

While a number of schools offer law as an A-level subject, there are few teachers who teach only law at this level and most will teach additional National Curriculum subjects such as Citizenship.

Law graduates could face difficulties in applying for teacher training in primary schools, as the content of your first degree needs to be related to the National Curriculum for primary teaching. However, a determined candidate with good teaching-related experience may be able to overcome this hurdle:

“In the application you were asked to give the percentage of your degree that covered National Curriculum subjects. I put that English was approximately 30%, as law students need to have a good grasp of the English language, and that 20% was history as a lot of law is based on past events. I also mentioned ICT as I used this a lot during my studies. You should also mention your A-levels. They will probably be more interested in your enthusiasm, passion and school experience.”

If you are studying for a joint honours degree or have studied other related subjects (e.g. through an Access course) it may be easier to demonstrate the required level of relevant knowledge, but this should be discussed with teacher training institutions before applying.

A teaching qualification is not a formal requirement to teach in private schools, academies or free schools but many of these schools are likely to give preference to qualified candidates.

“I teach law at AS & A2 (Sixth Form). At this stage of their academic career, pupils are gaining an understanding of the fundamentals of law and learning about their rights. It is rewarding to see students make a connection, for example when a complex piece of information sinks in and falls into place. I enjoy teaching when pupils ask challenging questions.”

For more information about teaching in schools, and routes into teaching, see www.kent.ac.uk/careers/siteach.htm

The teaching of law is most widespread in further and higher education. While teachers in the further education sector are not required to have a postgraduate teaching qualification, this is nonetheless important for gaining entry and there are several specialised FE certificates on offer. Much work in FE institutions is part-time.

A PhD is normally required to teach in higher education and some academics also have a professional law qualification. It is possible to gain teaching experience while studying for a higher degree and many universities actively encourage this.

Teaching on LPC/BPTC courses and in continuing professional education is normally carried out by professional qualified staff, many of whom teach part-time while continuing in practice, or by law lecturers in higher education institutions.
Community and Advisory Work

This covers areas such as social work, welfare advice, housing management, consumer advice and equal opportunities work, some of which overlap with the work of law firms and law centres. At a professional level, these careers require relevant experience and further training and qualifications. Considerable work experience, usually on a voluntary basis, is normally necessary for entry.

"I am responsible for the day-to-day running of a women's refuge, working alone most of the time. I do everything from advice on law, housing, benefits, admissions, liaising, representing the refuge at meetings, publicity, training volunteers, counselling, mediating between residents, outreach work and have even been known to do some ironing. My law degree has helped in being able to communicate with lawyers in finding out residents' rights, which I feel I can research comfortably, and agencies take me seriously because of the letters after my name."

(Kent Law graduate, who obtained this post of Project Worker after voluntary work with a Citizens' Advice Bureau)

Citizens Advice is the largest advice-giving network in the UK, providing advice in over 400 Citizens Advice Bureaux and 3000 community locations in England and Wales. They recruit and train volunteers to advise clients on issues such as law, debt, housing, benefits and employment. Law graduates who train as a CAB adviser can get up to six months off their solicitor training contract.

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

Graduates in any subject can become police officers, but law is one of the subjects which trainees must study successfully in order to obtain promotion. However, due to budget cuts, the number of police officers has fallen by 19000 in the last seven years. Civilian roles in police forces, such as coroner's liaison and crime scene officers, communications staff and criminal intelligence analysts, have also been reduced. As a result, recruitment into police forces is extremely limited and highly competitive when it does occur. Many forces will give priority to their volunteer Special Constables when recruiting police officers so, if you are seriously interested in this career, you should apply for these roles first. For more information, see www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin/Police.htm

Recruitment into other bodies in this area, including the Probation Service, the Ministry of Justice and local authorities, has been similarly affected by public sector funding cuts. The Prison Service, however, does still run a graduate programme: recruitment begins in September each year.
Careers where a legal knowledge is useful

Human Resource Management and Recruitment

Although human resource management (also known as personnel management) is normally open to graduates in any subject, a legal background can help in understanding complex legislation relating to personnel matters such as recruitment, working conditions, equal opportunities, health & safety and industrial relations.

"I rely strongly on my law degree, especially my knowledge of case law and employment law. I find that new developments in law are easy to understand and follow and I am confident in giving advice. My law degree has given me a strong position compared to other HR specialists in the company who are not law graduates" (Human Resources Officer in a manufacturing company)

Law graduates enter training in human resource management within a wide variety of organisations, which may include solicitors’ firms. A number of the large firms recruit graduates into their personnel department on a short-term basis to deal with the flood of training contract applications over the summer, and this experience may prove useful in deciding on a career in HR.

A related area is that of recruitment consultancy. A number of consultancies specialise in recruitment into legal posts and employ law graduates and lawyers with professional experience for this work, which may involve liaising between candidates and employers, carrying out research in order to find suitable candidates, screening applications and conducting initial interviews.

Public Sector Management

This work involves planning, implementing and managing policies of organisations such as the Civil Service, local authorities, health authorities and universities. These are all large employers which offer a range of opportunities for graduates.

The Civil Service Fast Stream recruitment scheme is well-known but many graduates also enter government departments or agencies as Junior Managers.

Local authorities may recruit new graduates into graduate training programmes, into generalist roles such as Committee Administrator or into specialist departments such as housing, personnel or planning. Many of these will offer the chance to use your law background.

Higher Education administrators may be responsible for student recruitment, for the provision of facilities and services or for the day-to-day running of a department. Similar posts may occasionally be available at other educational institutions such as the University of Law.

The NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme is usually advertised in the autumn, but there are many other routes for graduates to enter health service administration directly. See www.nhsgraduates.co.uk for graduate schemes and www.nhscareers.nhs.uk for other career paths.
The European Institutions. Graduates are regularly recruited onto five-month traineeships (also known by the French term "stages" - pronounced to rhyme with barge) at the European Commission, European Parliament and Court of Justice. Most traineeships are for generalist administrators, but a legal background is highly valued within all European institutions and is a requirement for the Court of Justice. There are also some traineeships for lawyer-linguists. These placements offer invaluable practical experience of EU law, including drafting, consultation and negotiation, and may count towards a training contract. Applications are taken in March and September of each year to begin six months later, but you cannot apply for a traineeship until you have actually graduated. The programme is not restricted to EU citizens. For more information, see [http://ec.europa.eu/stages/index_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/stages/index_en.htm)

Insurance

The insurance industry offers a wide range of jobs including specialist areas such as claims handling and investigation, underwriting and risk management, and general management functions such as accountancy, marketing, management services and human resources. Law graduates are often particularly suited to the specialist roles, as these make use of the analytical skills developed through studying law. Law is also a compulsory subject at each stage of the Chartered Insurance Institute qualification.

Underwriting involves assessing risks (the likelihood of a claim being made) and deciding if applications for insurance cover should be accepted and, if so, on what terms. Underwriters gather and assess information related to insurance proposals and use this to calculate the risk and the appropriate premium, liaising with brokers and specialists such as medical or property professionals.

Claims specialists investigate complex or contentious claims on behalf of insurance companies to establish the causes of 'losses' such as damage or destruction of property and whether they are covered by the insurance policy. They then write reports for the insurer, assessing the validity of the claim and recommending appropriate payment.

Many large insurance companies run graduate training schemes - a list of many of these is at [www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin/insurance.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin/insurance.htm)

"I currently deal with injury claims made against large clients. This means that I handle notifications of new losses, in addition to managing my current caseload towards settlement. In practice this means that I discuss and negotiate with underwriters, brokers, policyholders, loss adjusters and solicitors on a daily basis. I also attend court trials, meet with solicitors/counsel, make site visits and undertake other investigations relevant to claims investigation."

Claims Graduate Trainee, Allianz

It is also possible to enter the insurance industry through “one-off” jobs such as the following example:

"We have an opportunity for a law graduate with an interest in shipping law to join our claims team, providing administrative support for the claims and finance departments. Responsibilities will include: assisting with routine claims handling, including personal injury matters; monitoring progress and setting up claims on our in-house system; logging all safety & loss enquiries dealt with by the claims team and carrying out research”
Compliance

Insurance involves assessing risk and minimising the losses that may result from these risks: compliance involves ensuring that organisations do not risk legal action by failing (knowingly or unknowingly) to act in accordance with laws and regulations.

The financial services industry employs the largest number of compliance staff, but other areas, including insurance, manufacturing, the media, law firms, telecommunications, recruitment agencies, and even universities all require staff in this role. Graduates may be recruited to specific jobs or to graduate training schemes such as the one from Santander outlined below:

*During your two-year training programme you’ll cover compliance in retail, wholesale and corporate banking, exploring everything from monitoring, data protection and financial promotions, to anti-money laundering, anti-bribery & corruption, and quality assurance. We’re looking for people who have a 2:1 degree in business, law or economics. Compliance is fast-paced and often demanding, so you’ll also need the ability to keep up with challenging targets and ever-evolving regulations. You should also be organised and adaptable with an analytical mind and a keen eye for detail.*

Contracts Management and Procurement

The work of a contracts manager has been described as a mixture of commerce, markets, finance, law, technology and statistics, together with the ability to relate to various people from many backgrounds and functions. Contracts managers are responsible for the buying, leasing and renting of facilities, services and products or materials. In many companies, contracts management is part of the work of the purchasing department, while in larger organisations it may be a separate function. Graduates are most likely to enter this field through a graduate training scheme, either general commercial or with a specialisation in procurement/purchasing.

**Example job vacancy: Commercial Contract Executive**

*Xerox Corporation is a $22 billion, leading global enterprise for business process and document management. This role is part of our structured three-year Graduate Training Programme. You will be responsible for supporting the contract approval process for non-standard contracts and contract modifications as well as assisting in drafting and negotiating contracts. You will handle contract negotiations across each of the business areas and with customers, to ensure compliance with internal and external controls. You will also be responsible for ensuring compliance with internal & external controls; that operational requirements can be delivered; that an appropriate level of risk is taken by the company and that revenue and cost can be recognised in line with business case expectations.*

*To be successful you will need a 2:1 (or above) Bachelor’s Degree or equivalent, ideally in Business or Law, and demonstrate confidence in dealing with internal and external customers, excellent communication skills, be persuasive and results focused.*
Journalism

Journalists work within a number of legal constraints, particularly those related to defamation and contempt of court, and all journalism courses therefore include the study of law. Law graduates may also find that the analytical and information-handling skills developed through their studies will be useful in selecting the essential elements of a story. Journalism is one of the most popular career choices for graduates, of any discipline, and entry is therefore highly competitive. The ideal candidate will have gained experience through student media or through internships with professional media organisations.

"Journalists probably deal with more law than anyone else. A reporter’s day can involve negotiating the intricacies of libel, contempt of court, magistrates’ court reporting restrictions, sexual offence anonymity, anonymity for juveniles, freedom of information, copyright, privacy and confidentiality, regulation of investigatory powers, bribery laws and ethical codes as well. And that is just for the general jobbing reporter. If you work in more specialised areas, such as business, a whole new world of legal threats looms“.

David Banks, journalist, media law trainer and consultant

Voluntary Organisations

These recruit paid staff and volunteers into a variety of roles. Administration, marketing and fundraising are the most common but a few offer opportunities for legal advice work or research. For paid posts, relevant experience is usually required, which often needs to be gained as a volunteer or in the commercial sector.

To search for voluntary opportunities in a wide range of sectors (including Legal Aid and Justice), see www.do-it.org

During my time studying law I became interested in preventing crime rather than punishing it reactively. I wanted to work with children and young people experiencing the types of things that may lead to crime in order to help them as individuals to follow a better path and lead more productive and happier lives. Working for a UK children’s charity offered me the opportunity I was looking for.

My role involves organising large street collections for university RAG groups, recruiting and supporting student event fundraisers and raising awareness of the charity’s work among students. The best things about the job include attending the fundraising events: after all the hard work planning and organising them, seeing lots of guests there learning more about us and donating generously is brilliant. Feeling I’ve helped those in need at the end of a work day is always good, as is getting to go out and meet people rather than being purely office based – it provides variety and interest. The main requirements for my job are good communication skills (written and verbal) and the ability to build and maintain good relationships with people.

Rachel, Student Programme Officer
Other career options

So far, this booklet has focused on career areas where the content of your law degree, as well as the skills gained through studying this subject, are likely to be useful even if not a requirement.

Many careers are open to graduates regardless of their degree subject and, as mentioned earlier, employers value the skills gained through studying law and the intellectual ability required for this subject. Some career areas not mentioned so far include:

Advertising, Marketing, Public Relations, Sales Management, Banking, Accountancy, Retailing, IT, Logistics, Transport Management, Careers Advice, Conference Organising, Management Consultancy, Property Management.

Further information about these and many other careers can be found in the "I Want to Work In …" pages of our website www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin.htm

While many Kent law graduates go into the legal profession, others are working, or have worked, in career areas as diverse as:

- Adjudicator, Financial Ombudsman Service
- Advisor, Save the Children
- Agent’s Assistant, actors’ talent agency
- Analyst, HSBC
- Audit Supervisor, Grant Thornton Australia
- Celebrity stylist, presenter and blogger
- Coach of national volleyball teams (and practising solicitor)
- Copywriter/Editor, TUI Travel Group
- Fundraising consultant
- Global Customer Service Manager, software company
- Management Accountant, Property group
- Managing Director, Advertising Agency
- Marketing and Design Officer, Australia
- Marketing Specialist, Thomson Reuters
- Mental Health Recovery Worker
- Motivational writer and life coach
- Products Commercial Global Planning & Appraisal Manager, Shell Trading
- Programme Office Manager, London borough
- Project Manager, Network Rail
- Researcher, energy research group
- Senior Campaigns Officer, Age UK
- Trades Union Negotiating Officer
Postgraduate Study

You may be considering postgraduate study in law - that is, further academic study as opposed to the vocational training offered by the LPC and BPTC. This may be a one-year taught Master's degree, combining teaching, coursework and exams with a dissertation, or a degree carried out solely by research.

Funding for further study can be difficult to obtain so, if you are planning to continue on to the LPC or BPTC after a postgraduate degree, you should consider carefully how you will fund both qualifications. It is also important to think about why you want to do postgraduate study, what you hope to gain from it and whether it will improve your career prospects. For example, within the legal field, the majority of firms and chambers are not as impressed as you might expect by postgraduate degrees, valuing work experience and practical skills, such as advocacy, more highly. And, if you anticipate a 2.2 degree and hope that firms will look on a Master's as bringing you up to the 2.1 standard that many require, they probably won't!

In general, postgraduate study in law is best embarked upon by those who hope for an academic career or those who simply want to continue the academic study of the subject a little longer out of pure interest.

There are many other subjects, both academic and vocational, that you can study at postgraduate level without having a first degree in that subject. These include IT, business, international relations, psychology, history and even Chinese! How "helpful" these will be in careers terms depends on the subject studied and on your own career plans - you should discuss these with academic staff and careers advisers before enrolling on the course.

Postgraduate study abroad is another possibility. Many students are interested in studying in the USA but you need to plan ahead early for this - ideally about 18 months before you would begin your studies. The Fulbright Commission is an essential source of information on courses, application procedures and funding possibilities.

The College of Europe runs a postgraduate programme in law at its sites in Belgium and Poland, taught bilingually through English and French, which is of interest to many students hoping for a career in the European institutions (see page 15). In Florence, the European University Institute offers research-based degrees in European and international law, at Master's and PhD level. Teaching is through a variety of languages but principally English and French. If you are keen to study in another European country but do not have good language skills, a number of European universities, particularly in the Netherlands, Belgium and Scandinavia, offer postgraduate law degrees taught in English. LLM Study www.llmstudy.com is a good place to find such courses.

For further advice and links to many postgraduate resources, see www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/furtherstudy.html
Some frequently-asked questions:

If I decide not to take the LPC/BPTC now, can I change my mind and take it later?
Yes - you can begin the LPC or BPTC at any time after you graduate: there is no longer a time limit on this.

If I do take the LPC/BPTC and then can't get a training contract/pupillage, will the course help me in other areas of work?
Many of the skills developed on these courses, such as problem-solving, analysis, negotiation, interviewing and making presentations are valuable in a wide range of employment sectors outside the law. The enhanced legal knowledge may also be useful, especially for paralegal work where many firms now give preference to LPC graduates.

On the downside, the longer you continue with your law studies, the greater the likelihood that employers in other areas of work will view you as someone who really wants to be a lawyer, rather than as a graduate who happens to have studied law. The cost of the professional courses will also increase the amount of debt that you begin your working life with and make it more difficult to afford further vocational study in other areas later.

Do I need the LPC/BPTC to work as an in-house lawyer?
Legal departments in industry, commerce and the public sector may recruit law graduates into paralegal-type positions but, to develop your career and achieve real responsibility in these organisations, you will need a professional qualification - as a solicitor, barrister or legal executive. Many of these departments are small, with only a few qualified staff and very limited possibilities of promotion.

I went to an interview for a job outside the legal field and one of the first questions they asked me was why I wasn't going to be a lawyer - are other employers really interested in law graduates?
If they weren't interested, they wouldn't have asked you for interview - but any organisation will want to assess your motivation for the job you are applying for and, unless it is a very short-term position, reassure themselves that you are not a frustrated lawyer who will leave as soon as they get the chance of a training contract. Don't get worried or irritated if you are asked this question at future interviews but prepare a reply concentrating on why your main interest is in the career area you are now applying for and how your study of law may be helpful to this. Concentrate on the positive aspects of the job in question rather than any negative aspects of being a lawyer.
What Next?
This booklet has presented just a few ideas for alternative options for law graduates. To decide the best choice for you, you should now:

- Use the Careers and Employability Service and the resources listed at the end of this booklet to research careers of interest to you in more detail
- Use computer-assisted guidance systems such as Prospects Planner www.prospects.ac.uk/planner to relate your personal interests, skills and values to careers
- Discuss your options with a careers adviser

You should ideally start your career planning no later than your penultimate year of study: this will help relieve some of the pressure during your final year and ensure that you do not miss important deadlines and closing dates.

THE CAREERS & EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE (CES)
For full information about the Careers and Employability Service and the services we offer, see our website www.kent.ac.uk/ces

Careers advisers can advise on the full range of options open to you, within or outside the legal profession. We are available to help you with all aspects of your career planning and decision-making, such as:

- Making decisions about your future career
- Planning your job search strategy
- Getting relevant work experience
- Making applications and preparing for interviews
- Looking at postgraduate study options
- Changing or leaving your course of study

These are some of the issues that we deal with most frequently, but you can ask us absolutely any questions related to your future after University so don't hesitate to come and see us!

If you have a quick query, you can drop in and speak to an adviser on the Canterbury campus during the following times: Monday-Friday 10.30am-12.30pm and 2.00pm-4.00pm. Please note that you may have to wait a while during peak times.

For a longer guidance interview you can make an appointment in person at the CES building, by phoning 01227 823299 or online at https://careers.kent.ac.uk/student/home.html

For further details, including services at the Medway campus, see www.kent.ac.uk/ces/locations/index.html
FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Association of Costs Lawyers [www.associationofcostslawyers.co.uk](http://www.associationofcostslawyers.co.uk)
- British & Irish Association of Law Librarians [www.biall.org.uk](http://www.biall.org.uk)
- Chambers & Partners [www.chambersstudent.co.uk/where-to-start/alternative-careers-in-the-law](http://www.chambersstudent.co.uk/where-to-start/alternative-careers-in-the-law)
- The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives [www.cilex.org.uk](http://www.cilex.org.uk)
- The Chartered Institute of Taxation [www.tax.org.uk](http://www.tax.org.uk)
- Chartered Insurance Institute careers site [www.discoverrisk.co.uk](http://www.discoverrisk.co.uk)
- CILIP: the Library and Information Association [www.cilip.org.uk](http://www.cilip.org.uk)
- Citizens’ Advice [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- Civil Service Fast-Stream [www.faststream.gov.uk](http://www.faststream.gov.uk)
- College of Europe [www.coleurop.eu](http://www.coleurop.eu)
- CLC (Council for Licensed Conveyancers) [www.conveyancer.org.uk](http://www.conveyancer.org.uk)
- Do-It [www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org)
- European University Institute [www.eui.eu](http://www.eui.eu)
- Fulbright Commission [www.fulbright.org.uk Going to the USA/Postgraduate/EducationUSA Advice](http://www.fulbright.org.uk Going to the USA/Postgraduate/EducationUSA Advice)
- HM Revenue & Customs [www.facebook.com/HmrcGraduates](http://www.facebook.com/HmrcGraduates)
- The Institute of Barristers’ Clerks [www.ibc.org.uk](http://www.ibc.org.uk)
- Institute of Legal Secretaries and PAs [www.institutelegalsecretaries.com](http://www.institutelegalsecretaries.com)
- Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys [www.citma.org.uk](http://www.citma.org.uk)
- International Compliance Association [www.int-comp.org](http://www.int-comp.org)
- Kent Law School Employability [http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/klsemployability](http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/klsemployability)
- Law Centres Network [www.lawcentres.org.uk](http://www.lawcentres.org.uk)
- LexisNexis [www.lexisnexis.co.uk/en-uk/career-resources/careers.page](http://www.lexisnexis.co.uk/en-uk/career-resources/careers.page)
- Prospects [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)
- Sweet & Maxwell [www.sweetandmaxwell.co.uk/about-us/careers.aspx](http://www.sweetandmaxwell.co.uk/about-us/careers.aspx)
- TARGET Jobs [http://targetjobs.co.uk/](http://targetjobs.co.uk/)
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