

SOLICITOR APPRENTICESHIPS 2021

What is a solicitor apprenticeship?

A solicitor apprenticeship is a 5.5 - 6 year period of legal work and training. Apprentices spend four days each week at work, and one day a week is set aside for study, also called 'off-the-job' training. On successful completion of the programme and all assessments, apprentices qualify as solicitors.

Apprentices gain an LLB degree as part of their apprenticeship study and are supported to gain all the skills, experience and knowledge they will need as a qualified solicitor. Course fees are funded through the government's apprenticeship training programme so this is an excellent alternative way to qualify as a solicitor without attending university in the traditional way.

Who can apply?

We are looking for a good academic record with at least 120 UCAS points (equivalent to 'B-B-B' at A level). We are able to consider applicants with slightly lower grades if there are extenuating circumstances – please include these in your application. If you would like to discuss this in advance of applying, please contact us.

We are also looking for a clear commitment to completion of the apprenticeship programme and to becoming a solicitor, as well as a passion for human rights and social justice and an interest in the legal aid sector.

You will need to have permission to work in the UK and to have been resident in the UK or another EEA country for the last three years up to the start of the apprenticeship (this is a requirement of apprenticeship funding). There are exceptions for some people who have recently been granted leave to remain in the UK, including those with refugee status. The rules are complex and should be read in full [here](#) (Annex A, p77) if this applies to you. A 'No Recourse to Public Funds' condition on a grant of leave to remain is not in itself a barrier to apprenticeship funding.

You should be available to start the apprenticeship full time on 6 September 2021. Please see the full Person Specification in the application pack for further details of who we are looking for.

Can I apply if I already have a law degree or Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL)?

Unfortunately not, because this will make you ineligible for apprenticeship funding. We offer a separate shorter apprenticeship programme for law degree/GDL graduates who have already completed one year's casework with us – so please keep an eye on our vacancies. If you have completed part of a law degree previously please include full details in the application form as this will be relevant to your eligibility for apprenticeship funding.

Can I apply if I already have a non-law degree?

Yes. If any part of your course included law then please include full details of this in the application form.

Is there an age limit?

There is no upper age limit and we welcome applications from eligible candidates of all ages. Applicants should however be over 18 by the start date.

How can I apply?

Please complete the application form and equality and diversity monitoring form in the application pack and email it to jobs@wilsonllp.co.uk. The deadline for applications is **4pm on Friday 11 June 2021**.

We will send out shortlist decisions within two weeks of this date. We will be unable to provide feedback on applications which do not proceed to the assessment stage.

How can I find out more before I apply?

You can read more about solicitor apprenticeships online [here](#) and more about the University of Law's solicitor apprenticeship study [here](#).

We're also hosting an online information event on:

Date: Tuesday 25 May 2021

Time: 5pm – 6:30pm

This is an opportunity to hear more about the role, hear from some of our current staff members and ask questions about the role and about applying. If you would like to attend please sign up in advance [here](#). Places are limited! After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

How will the assessment process work?

Assessments will take place in the weeks beginning 28 June and 5 July 2021.

The assessment will include an interview and a written ability test, and will last up to three hours. More information will be provided to those selected to attend in due course. We will then aim to offer positions within two weeks of the assessments.

What's it like to work at Wilsons?

It's great! It will be interesting, challenging and rewarding, and you will be supported all the way. Read more about what it's like to work with us in the document 'A Lawyer's Life at Wilsons', available in the application pack.

What kind of work will I do?

We have three departments at Wilsons: Immigration, Family, and Civil Liberties and Human Rights. You can see more about what each department does on our [website](#). You may have the opportunity to work in all three departments during your apprenticeship although this cannot be guaranteed and will be subject to the requirements of the firm at the time.

In the first two years of the apprenticeship you will largely be assisting and shadowing existing fee earners, as an initial introduction to legal casework. You will also undertake your own legal work under close supervision and will have some client contact, court attendance and legal drafting work, as well as considering documents and evidence. You will spend some time in our billing team, learning legal aid requirements and procedures. See a full list of likely tasks for your first two years in the Job Description.

In Years 3 and 4 we envisage you will be able to conduct legal casework more independently while still under your supervisor's close guidance. We consider your role and responsibility at that point to be likely to be comparable to those of our existing caseworkers. In Years 5 and 6 we aim for you to be progressing alongside our trainee solicitors, ready to qualify at the end of Year 6.

How does the study part work?

One day each week is dedicated to 'off-the-job' apprenticeship study, for which we partner with the University of Law. This provides you with all the legal knowledge you will need as a qualified solicitor, and allows you to develop your skills portfolio as you progress.

In Years 1 and 2 the course at present includes the foundation modules: Common Law Method and Ethics; Public Law; Contract; Tort; Crime; EU Law. In Years 3 and 4 you progress into Land Law; Criminal Litigation and Evidence; Real Estate; Law of Organisations; Access to Justice and Legal Services; and Equity and Trusts. Years 5 and 6 cover additional topics including Wills and Company Law, and prepare you fully for the [Solicitors Qualifying Examination \(SQE\) stages 1 and 2](#).

The course is currently taught online but is ordinarily delivered through blended learning, with face-to-face classes, live online seminars and independent study. Apprentices also benefit from a dedicated 'Skills Coach' and a personal tutor provided by the University of Law and will have access to all of the university's campus facilities.

Study fees, including the costs of the SQE exams, are covered by the government's apprenticeship funding. You will have study leave to prepare for these exams.

What qualifications will I get?

As a Solicitor Apprentice you will study everything you need to become a qualified solicitor at the end of the programme, as above. This will include an LLB degree in Legal Practice and Skills, and the SQE stages 1 and 2.

What happens at the end of the apprenticeship?

As long as you meet all of the apprenticeship requirements and pass the assessments, you will be admitted to the roll of solicitors, subject to the SRA's [Character and Suitability assessment](#). The availability of positions for newly qualified solicitors will be discussed as the apprenticeship nears completion, depending on the needs of the firm at the time, but we very much hope to retain our apprentices as newly qualified lawyers.

Can I still apply if I have a criminal conviction, conditional discharge or a caution?

We recognise the over-policing and over-criminalisation of some communities in the UK, and in particular of young Black men. We wish to play our part to ensure that this in itself is not a barrier to a legal career. Some minor convictions and cautions will not in themselves rule out the possibility of qualifying as a solicitor, and we would not discourage eligible applicants from applying on that basis. Other more serious matters are very likely prevent admission to the roll of solicitors, however – see the SRA's suitability guidance [here](#). Any criminal convictions and cautions must be disclosed in full in your application and to the SRA in due course. Please contact us if you have any concerns about this and would like to discuss them in confidence before applying.

What if I have more questions?

Any further questions about the application process can be directed to jobs@wilsonllp.co.uk.

Thank you for your interest and good luck!