

The Ultimate Guide to Studying Law





WHAT'S INSIDE

A legal career can be incredibly rewarding, offering the opportunity to have a positive impact on both an individual and a wider societal level. Leading to one of the most future-proof career paths, law degrees are incredibly competitive and require a strong application.

Over the past decade, we've been running [residential Law summer schools in Oxford](#), as well as [online courses](#) and [internships](#).

There isn't a magic formula to getting into law school, but we can help you to understand each step of the application process and give you some tips to maximise your chances of success.

Although it's a long journey, getting into law school is a fairly uniform process, with most of the top law schools in the UK expecting applicants to follow the same steps. In this guide, you'll find:

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Let's take a look at each of these steps in detail so you can feel a little more confident about getting into the law school of your choice.





About the Authors

Oxford Scholastica collaborates closely with university students and recent graduates to offer first-hand insights into what it's really like to study your subject at degree level.

We've worked with a current law student at the University of Oxford and a law graduate to bring you the all the information they wish they'd known before they applied.

Allow us to introduce you to...



Jamie

Law graduate of the University of Oxford

Jamie is a recent law graduate of Trinity College, University of Oxford and currently works at a MedTech firm as an IP law assistant, helping to manage the company's IP portfolio. He has worked as a writer with Oxford Scholastica for over a year, and is passionate about drawing on his own experiences to offer personal and actionable advice to prospective law students.

Rhys

Final-year law undergraduate at the University of Oxford

Rhys is a final-year student reading for a BA degree in Jurisprudence at Trinity College, University of Oxford. He is particularly interested in the relationship between individuals and the state, including the position of taxation within societies, the law of trusts and the development of charitable trusts, and personal and real property law.





UK vs US Law Degrees

The first thing to decide when you're considering applying to a law degree course is where you'd like to study it. This guide is primarily aimed at the UK admissions process, but we're aware that the US is also a popular destination for law. The structure of the degrees is very different, so we've put this section together to help you decide which would best suit your interests and goals.

It's a common misconception that becoming a solicitor in both the UK and the US follows the same process. However, most UK universities offer a law degree as a three-year undergraduate course, whereas the law degree in the US can only be completed at a postgraduate level.

Here, you'll find a comprehensive comparison of each of the two routes to becoming a qualified lawyer in the UK and the US.



UK Law Degrees



Stage 1: Applying to University

Most universities in the UK offer a few different law degree courses, often combined with additional years abroad or a separate honours subject. It's important to research the universities you're looking to apply to as the range of modules on offer can differ significantly between each one.

The majority of universities offer a Qualifying Law Degree (QLD), where you are assessed in a number of compulsory core modules, like EU law and contract law. Having a QLD allows you to go on to study for the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE), which then enables you to qualify as a solicitor after an additional two years of work experience.

Stage 2: Completing Your Degree

Depending on your university, the core modules will be arranged differently across the three years and you'll be assessed at different stages in your degree. For example, at the University of Oxford, the BA in Jurisprudence course is non-modular and is divided

into three phases. In contrast, the University of Bristol gives a wide range of options to choose from for examination across the three years.

When choosing a law school, it's a good idea to consider the type of legal content you're most interested in outside of the core modules. The additional modules you study won't affect your overall degree or your ability to qualify as a solicitor, but they can be especially helpful in deciding which area of law you might want to work in.

Stage 3: Qualifying as a Solicitor

Thanks to the new SQE qualification which replaces the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) and the Legal Practice Course (LPC), there are now more ways to qualify as a solicitor after completing your degree. Everyone must complete the two exams which make up the SQE, but you no longer have to complete two years of training in a traditional 'Training Contract' (TC) scenario.

Previously, you were expected to work for two years in a TC at a law firm before you were qualified as a solicitor. However, the SQE offers alternative routes into the profession, requiring two years of any qualifying work experience. This could still be the traditional TC, but now also includes paralegal and pro bono (voluntary) work.

Upon qualification in England or Wales, you can practise law in either of these countries. You'll also become eligible to train for qualification abroad. For example, being a qualified solicitor in England and Wales will not allow you to practise law in the US. It can, however, enable you to take the bar exam, which is the final step to becoming a qualified lawyer in the US. Depending on the state, you may also be required to have completed a Master of Laws (LLM) degree before you take the bar exam.

It should also be noted that studying for a Scottish law degree will not qualify you to practise in the rest of the UK without doing a conversion course under the SQE. Scots law comprises a different legal system with its own unique jurisdiction.



US Law Degrees

Stage 1: Your Bachelor's Degree

Studying a law degree in the US requires you to have already gained an undergraduate degree; law is only available as a postgraduate option at a designated law school. In theory, any undergraduate degree should enable you to study law, but completing an essay-based degree, such as history, politics or economics, can give you an advantage in your law school applications and these subjects in particular have a significant overlap with different areas of law.

Stage 2: Applying for Law School

In order to qualify as a lawyer in the US, you must earn a Juris Doctor (JD) degree from a law school. Your acceptance into law school will be based on a number of considerations including your Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) results, your GPA or equivalent high-school record, your performance during your Bachelor's degree, your academic references and your personal attitude towards becoming a lawyer.

Law school will take you three years to complete on a full-time course, or four to five years on a part-time course. Much like in the UK, you'll be assessed on core modules to ensure you can practise law across a diverse range of subject matters. Again, when deciding on your choice of law school, consider which additional modules are available. This can help you narrow down the areas of law you may wish to pursue after qualifying.



Stage 3: Taking the Bar Exam

The bar exam represents the final stage before qualification as a lawyer in the US. Each state has a bar exam, although they are standardised across the US to ensure that no one is at a disadvantage geographically. The bar exam is famously challenging, but there are numerous options available to help you prepare, including practise centres, personal tutors and group workshops. Many students secure jobs at law firms prior to completing the bar and many top law firms will pay for you to sit the exam.

Successfully passing the bar exam will enable you to practise law in the US. You'll also become eligible to train overseas. You'll still need to complete the relevant qualifications if you wish to work abroad, but being a qualified lawyer in the US is excellent preparation for training to be a lawyer elsewhere.

Ultimately, the decision to study at either a UK or US law school is down to your individual circumstances and career goals. Consider where you hope to work in the future and what appeals to you about the degree structure in each country. Would you be happy studying a degree in something other than law before you train in the US? Would you prefer to start your legal education as soon as you leave school, as is the case in the UK?





Choosing Your University

There are many factors to consider when choosing a university for your law degree and it's important to bear in mind that the student experience can vary quite significantly between universities. This is especially true if you're deciding between universities in different countries.

If you're applying to one or more UK universities, you'll have to follow the UCAS application process. With UCAS, you can apply to up to five universities in the same year, so knowing what to look for in a university will make it easier to narrow down your choices.



How to Choose



The Course

Most English and Welsh universities offer the Qualifying Law Degree (QLD), which is a necessary qualification to have if you want to train as a solicitor or barrister in England and Wales. The QLD is made up of a number of core modules, which you can expect all universities to offer in some form. These include:

- ✓ Criminal Law
- ✓ Law of Torts
- ✓ The Law of Contract
- ✓ Land Law (Property Law)
- ✓ Equity & Trusts
- ✓ Constitutional & Administrative Law
- ✓ EU Law

However, universities will also offer optional modules. These will differ based on the speciality of the university's lecturers and can include a number of choices.

When you're researching different law degrees, keep in mind any specific interests you have in the legal field. If there's a certain area of law you're hoping to go into, it's always advantageous to take any relevant optional modules. This will enhance your future job applications and demonstrate your long-standing interest in the topic.

The Facilities

Given a law degree involves a lot of reading, you want to ensure you'll have access to lots of high-quality legal resources. All universities will offer you free access to their libraries, but the number of books available per student and the overall working environment will be heavily dependent on the particular university you're attending.

For example, at the University of Oxford, Trinity College has its own small law library, making it easier to find the resources you need without leaving college grounds. The small community served by the library makes for a relaxed and productive working environment, complemented by the grandeur of the historical building and its mass of resources.

If you get the opportunity, visit universities in person to get a feel for what it might be like to study there.



How to Choose

Quality of Teaching

The quality of teaching can vary between different universities and this should be kept in mind when deciding where you want to study your law degree.

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge both utilise a tutorial system, where weekly or bi-weekly sessions are held by a tutor for one to three students. These sessions allow students to engage in depth with the week's reading and reflect on any essays they've been working on. Alongside tutorials, there are numerous optional lectures and classes to supplement teaching, which are particularly useful for revision.

The tutorial system is incredibly beneficial for law students, allowing you to articulate your arguments in a constructive environment. Without tutorials, you may get fewer opportunities to talk one-on-one with your tutors or lecturers, making it more difficult to develop the necessary nuance to succeed as a legal professional. This unique style of teaching at Oxford and Cambridge are reflected in their positions at the top of [law school rankings in the UK](#).



Graduate Opportunities

If you're studying a law degree, chances are you want to go on to become a legal professional. There are numerous ways to do this, including capitalising on graduate schemes or studying a postgraduate qualification. Choosing the right university for your undergraduate degree can help make sure you're in the best possible position for life after graduation.

A university with strong links to legal professionals will be able to offer greater networking opportunities for their law students. Commercial law firms, such as 'Slaughter and May', often ask employees from top universities to return to their alma mater to network with current students. These events are a great opportunity to find out more about the transition from university life to professional life and can help inform future career decisions.

Additionally, a university that has a great undergraduate course is likely to have a great postgraduate course as well. Many universities will offer scholarships to students who stay on to study a postgraduate degree, reducing the overall cost of tuition. Some may even offer bursaries to high-performing students.

Your choice of university can therefore be very influential on your future prospects, so we encourage you to consider life after university when making your decision.





Gaining Work Experience

Given the confidential nature of the profession, legal experience is notoriously hard to find prior to university. The need to protect the privacy of those involved in a legal dispute can often make it difficult for law firms, solicitors, barristers and the courts to offer any meaningful experience.

However, universities recognise the difficulty of gaining experience at this early stage and will be appreciative of any relevant legal experience that you've obtained.



Types of Experience



Law Firms

Although it can be difficult to obtain appropriate legal experience, it's by no means impossible. It's unlikely you'll work for 'Slaughter and May' for a month, but there are certainly opportunities to approach smaller boutique firms where the lawyers are better placed to offer you opportunities. Approach these firms with tact, and communicate professionally and confidently in your correspondences, to increase your chances of success.

Essentially it comes down to being proactive. Don't be afraid to reach out, use your network and ask any contacts you already have in the profession for some help. Even if they can't offer you any work experience, they'll likely be able to guide you in the right direction.

Even if you can only get an hour of their time to discuss their work over a coffee, it's still a very useful experience and will give you lots to discuss at a university interview or in your personal statement.



Pro Bono Work

'Pro bono' is a Latin phrase which translates to 'for the public good'. In the legal context, it represents work undertaken by legal professionals without payment. Legal fees are expensive and many people would not have access to legal aid if it weren't for the provision of pro bono legal advice. Pro bono work can be incredibly advantageous in your university application, showing a commitment to helping disadvantaged areas of society.

There are numerous pro bono clinics that may offer work experience for students looking to study law at university. It's especially common for pro bono law clinics to focus on issues like family law or human rights, so it's a great option if you already have a particular interest in these areas.

Volunteering to help a lawyer that has taken on a pro bono case will definitely strengthen your university application, even if you're simply sitting in on meetings or proofreading documents. It's all useful, relevant experience.



Types of Experience



Mooting

A ‘moot’ is the name given to a mock trial intended to mimic the procedural aspects of a real court. They’re an excellent way to gain substantial legal experience, giving you the opportunity to prepare and present a case in front of a trained legal professional, usually a King’s Counsel (KC) or solicitor but sometimes even a judge.

The process begins with the provision of a case: a series of facts to build an argument on. A moot is conducted in two teams who each take on either the role of the defence or the role of the appellant. Each team is given the chance to prepare skeleton arguments. These are then passed on to the opposing team, which enables both sides to strengthen their rebuttals.

Once preparation is complete, each team presents their arguments in front of the judge, who is able to stop and challenge them at any time. This is an invaluable experience as it requires you to think on your feet while still maintaining the integrity of the case. The judge will then decide on a winning team and give feedback to all participants.

If you’re interested in taking part in a moot court, our [Experience Law Academy](#) course features a Moot Challenge where students research and present a case in an immersive legal scenario.

Key Points:

- Take notes at the end of each session you take part in. Write down the tasks you completed, the things you learnt and how you felt about each aspect of the experience. These notes will be a valuable resource when you come to write your personal statement and prepare for interviews.
- It’s okay not to enjoy something. Finding one aspect of the legal field tough or tedious doesn’t mean you’re not cut out to be a lawyer. Be honest with yourself and try to find experience in another area.
- It’s also okay to change your mind. If you try a range of different placements across different areas and you don’t enjoy any of them, it’s okay to decide it isn’t the field for you. Read through the ‘Career Options’ (p. 25) section of this guide – or look into other careers entirely.
- Be sure to factor in rest. If you spend your whole summer break gaining work experience, you’ll be too tired to concentrate when you start classes again. Remember to take breaks, do things you enjoy and look after yourself while on your quest for work experience.





Writing Your Personal Statement

An important element of any application to a UK law school is the UCAS personal statement. While your predicted grades, references and entrance exam results are designed to demonstrate your intellectual capabilities, the personal statement is your chance to convey your unique motivations, interests and individuality.

There is a wealth of conflicting information about what a perfect law personal statement should look like. Unfortunately, because the statement is all about you, there is no one formula for this. The most important thing is that you honestly convey your interest in the subject. That said, we've included a few law-specific things to consider when drafting your personal statement.

Note: In 2023, UCAS announced changes to the personal statement. This Ultimate Guide reflects the new format for students applying to start university from September 2026 onwards.



The Basics



The Basics

You can't write an exceptional law personal statement without first understanding the basics: what is it, who needs one and what are universities looking for?

If you're applying for an undergraduate law degree in the UK, you'll need to write a personal statement (no more than 4,000 characters) as part of your UCAS application. This is an opportunity to articulate why you deserve a place on a highly-competitive law course. Your statement will need to be structured as answers to the following questions:

- 1 Why do you want to study this course or subject?
- 2 How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course?
- 3 What else have you done to prepare outside of education and why are these experiences helpful?

The key is to demonstrate why you want to learn more about law. Universities want to see that you have a real interest in the field, that you've explored the content, completed your own independent learning and reached your own conclusions. They're looking for evidence that you're a keen learner and that the law degree at their university is right for you.

The Process

It's important to remember that nobody gets their personal statement perfect on their first attempt. Drafting an excellent statement, like an excellent essay or article, takes a number of drafts, revisions and rewrites.

In order to produce the best law personal statement you can, write a draft you're happy with and then seek out feedback from teachers, peers and family members. Whether it's to improve the flow of your writing, help with grammar or clarify your ideas, advice will almost always be helpful in crafting a statement you can be truly proud of.



What to Include

The Content

A key element of any personal statement is that it must be personal to you as an individual. It should reflect your interests, your experiences and your motivations.

One of the most important considerations for your law personal statement is the structure. As long as you write at least 350 characters for each of the three questions, you can choose where to allocate the remaining characters. The questions are designed to help you meet the specific criteria that universities are looking for, so dedicating a fairly even number of characters to each section will allow you to make the most of your limited space.

Throughout your statement, each sentence in each paragraph should connect in a logical and cohesive way, demonstrating a natural progression in your thoughts and ideas. Your ability to write convincing statements and make strong arguments is particularly important for a law degree, so use your personal statement as an opportunity to highlight your writing capabilities.

Within this structure is where a personal statement needs to be personal! Be sure to include high-quality examples of your own experiences that demonstrate why you want to study a law degree. Admissions boards aren't looking for a long list of all the things you've done and achieved. If you can write about one book, experience, competition or article in detail, explaining why you found it interesting or what you learnt from the process, that's far more persuasive than a long list of achievements.



For example, perhaps you've studied history or economics at school and found a particular legal element interesting; this is an excellent starting point to build upon.

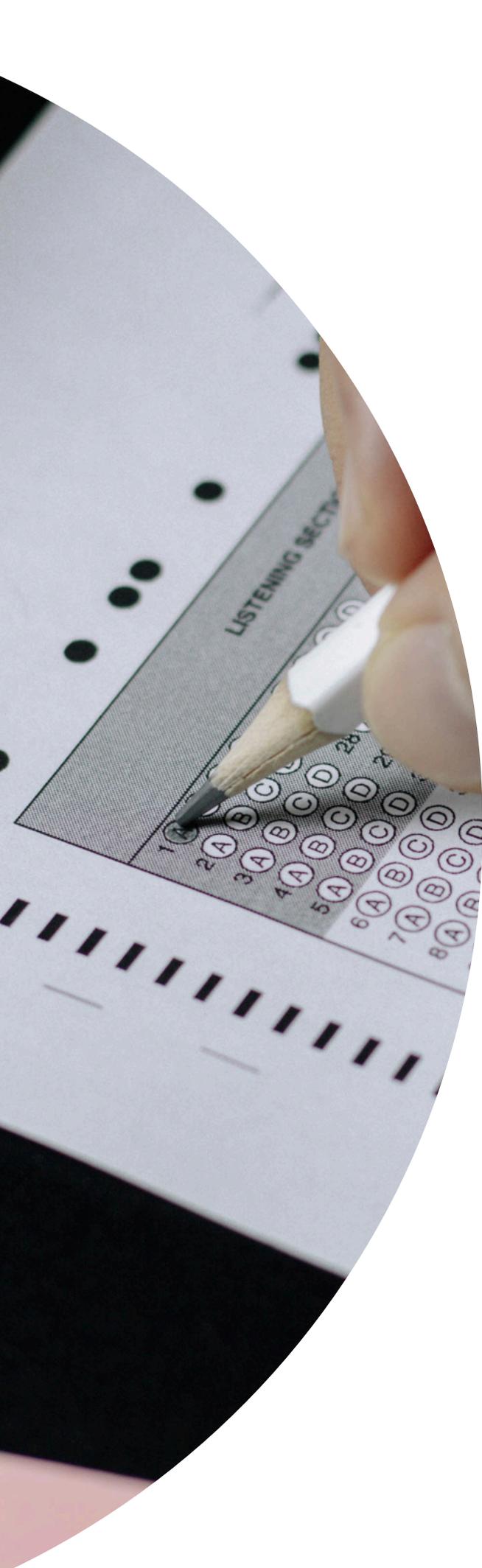
If you haven't studied a subject that's closely associated with law before, this can still be a great place to start. A biology student may choose to look into medical ethics and its relation to the law. A keen mathematician may decide to examine what makes a mathematical rule a rule, what makes a legal rule a rule, or why a school rule is different to a legal or mathematical one. The key is finding something that interests you, that you want to write about and that demonstrates your desire to learn more.

If you're struggling with starting, we recommend reading a range of news articles on topical issues to see what piques your interest.

Personal Statement Key Facts

- ✓ No more than 4,000 characters, including spaces
- ✓ You can only write one statement, not different ones for each course or university
- ✓ Divided into three separate questions (minimum 350 characters per question)
- ✓ It's all about you, so let your personality shine through!





Entrance Exams

Law is a complex, far-reaching field that ranges well beyond the content of the typical school curriculum. This is why many top-tier UK universities require you to complete the Law National Aptitude Test (LNAT).

The aim of the LNAT is to assess your reasoning, deduction and writing ability prior to offering you an interview. It's a timed test split into two sections.

Section A consists of 42 multiple-choice questions based on twelve different passages of writing. You have 95 minutes to complete Section A.

Section B requires you to answer one of three essay questions. You'll be expected to balance your arguments and come to a defensible conclusion. You have 40 minutes to complete Section B.



The LNAT

Entrance exams like the LNAT are often the most intimidating part of the admissions process for many prospective students. Our main piece of advice is to prepare properly, understand how the test works and try to relax. Remember that admission tests are only one part of your application to law school and are by no means the most important factor.

Use Past Papers

Given that the LNAT is a timed exam, you should practise completing the past papers under timed conditions. This will help you get comfortable with the format of the test and make it easier to manage the time pressure on exam day.

Unfortunately, there aren't unlimited papers online, but the official [LNAT website](http://www.lnat.ac.uk) has a small selection of past papers available.

 www.lnat.ac.uk/how-to-prepare

The practice papers on the LNAT website also include a commentary section which explains each answer. This is perhaps the most important reason to utilise past papers as it highlights how to best approach the questions in order to do well.

There are no facts to learn for the LNAT, but you do need to learn how to assimilate a text quickly and identify which part the question is referring to. If you can learn to do this effectively, you'll be well prepared to sit the exam.



Read the News

This is a particularly useful tip that doesn't take much time and will benefit you beyond your law applications and into your professional career.

Reading an article from an esteemed newspaper or website, such as 'The Financial Times' or 'The Economist', and spending five or ten minutes thinking critically about the piece is a great way to improve your reasoning and comprehension skills.

For example, you could challenge yourself to summarise two different arguments that are being made or to distinguish between fact and opinion in the article. This will help simulate the type of analytical and inductive thinking you'll need to succeed in the LNAT. You could also get a friend to ask you questions about the article to help sharpen your comprehension skills.

Practise Writing Essays

In addition to the multiple choice section, the LNAT requires you to write an essay answering one of three questions. The questions can be on a range of topics and often feature a philosophical or abstract twist. A list of past essay questions can be found on the LNAT website, so you're able to get a feel for the kind of questions that tend to come up.

You have 40 minutes to write up to 750 words, but candidates generally tend to write about 500-600 words. The examiners are looking for quality rather than quantity, so don't feel like you need to add more if it's going to take away from the quality of your answer or obscure your argument.

As the exam day gets closer, practise answering a few of the sample essay questions under exam conditions. Set a 40-minute timer, work without distractions or notes, and then ask a friend to review your answer and question you on the points you've made. Being able to form a reasoned judgement and orally defend your point of view are both key skills in law, and will serve you well in further study.



The LNAT



Read the LNAT Preparation Guide

The official LNAT website has a downloadable [preparation guide](#) to help you get started with your revision. It contains practical advice from students, answers and rationale from examiners, preparation tips and recommended reading.

It should be noted that there are many LNAT preparation packages available online. These are not endorsed by the LNAT administrators (Pearson Vue) and can often be quite expensive.

Working with your teachers, tutors, family and friends can be just as effective in preparing for the LNAT. Taking part in nuanced discussions about a piece of work, reflecting on complex arguments and picking apart information to find the exact answer you're looking for are all excellent skills to develop in preparation for exam day.



Pace Yourself

It's completely normal to be nervous before any admissions test. Try to remember the purpose of the exam isn't to trick you or catch you out, but rather to provide a challenge and give you the opportunity to shine.

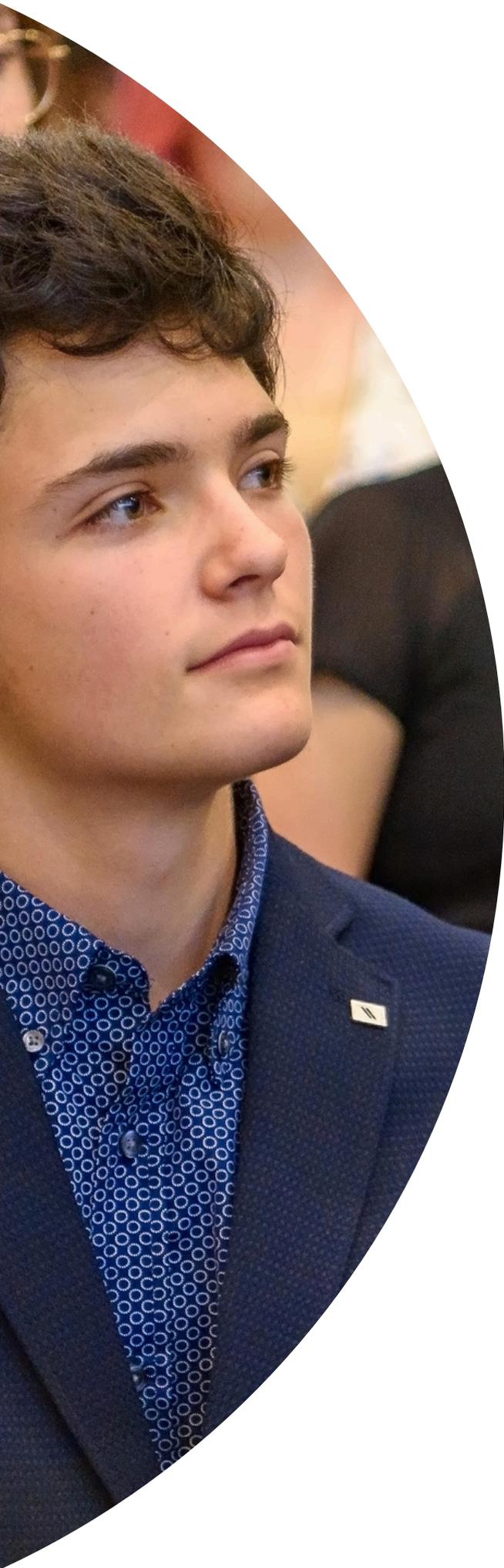
For Section A, you'll have plenty of time to read through the extract twice before attempting to answer the questions. Use as much of the time as you can and always triple check your answers.

For Section B, you aren't expected to write pages and pages. Take five minutes to plan out a structured essay with a small introduction and a clear conclusion which summarises your arguments. You want to write clearly and coherently, so it's definitely worth taking a small amount of time at the beginning to flesh out a basic structure.

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Practise, practise, practise
- ✓ Remember your timings (Section A: 95 mins; Section B: 40 mins)
- ✓ Read the LNAT preparation guide
- ✓ Work with teachers, tutors and friends to prepare
- ✓ Relax, you've got this!





Interviews

So, you've submitted your applications, you're studying hard for the LNAT and you've just found out that at least one university would like to interview you.

Firstly, congratulations! Your application has caught their eye and they think you could be a great fit for their law course.

The law interview can seem daunting as it requires you to think on the spot in what feels like a high-pressure situation. That said, there are lots of things you can do to prepare for your interview and this section covers some of the most important ones. However, the number one thing to remember is to be honest and be yourself. The interview works both ways; the interviewer wants to make sure you're right for their law degree, but you also want to make sure their law degree is right for you.

So, with that in mind...



Interview Prep

Read Example Questions

You can find a number of examples online of questions that have previously been asked during real law interviews. The [University of Oxford's interview guide](#) includes a range of questions used in undergraduate admissions. These are organised by subject and include helpful advice on how to approach each question.

Even if these exact questions don't feature in your interview, this is still a great way to understand what the interviewer is looking for and which skills are being assessed.

Understand the Criteria

Law interviewers are looking for evidence of three key skills: critical thinking, applied analysis and verbal reasoning.

Practising with another person is a tried-and-tested method of developing these skills. Be proactive and ask friends or family members to engage in interesting or controversial discussions with you. Asking someone else to challenge you on points of disagreement is invaluable in learning to effectively defend your point as it exposes you to the other side of the argument.

We also recommend watching [this video](#) published by Jesus College at the University of Oxford, which clearly breaks down the interviewer's approach to the law interview.



Feel Free to Change Your Mind

Being able to defend a point of view you feel strongly about is important, but being able to respond to your interviewer and adapt your argument in light of new information is arguably even more crucial.

This demonstrates an ability to think critically and a capacity to weigh up the merits of different arguments. You won't be penalised for going back on something you've said or admitting a mistake in an interview. In fact, it can really help you stand out from other candidates.

Take Your Time

Don't feel like you have to have the answer straight away when you're asked a question. Take your time to think about what's being asked and collect your thoughts before you answer. This helps you to provide concise and informed responses, and shows the interviewer that you're thinking deeply about the question posed.

You're also perfectly entitled to say you're unsure of the answer or you don't understand the question. There's no shame in doing this and interviewers will usually provide you with some additional information to help you formulate an answer. Remember, you aren't expected to know everything before you even start your degree!



Interview Prep



Understand the Interview Structure

The structure of your interview will vary depending on the law school you're applying to, so do your research beforehand.

My law interview at the University of Oxford was split into two sections.

The first section was to assess my comprehension skills. I was given an article to read, and then the interviewer asked me a series of questions about the content and the information I'd gathered. I found it particularly helpful to begin by summarising the article in a sentence or two.

The second section focused on my interpretation skills. This time I was given a statute to read and tasked with interpreting it in different circumstances. The interviewer changed the circumstances very slightly to see how I would react to these changes. In this type of situation, the interviewer is assessing your ability to distinguish between different circumstances and articulate how (and why) any changes might lead you to change your answer.

It's also common for interviewers to ask about your academic background and motivations for applying to study law at university. Anything you've mentioned in your personal statement could also be raised, so I'd highly recommend revisiting your application before the interview.

Jamie
Law graduate



Speak to Current Law Students

One of the best ways to prepare for an admissions interview is to speak to those who've already experienced it. University open days, Q&A sessions and online forums are all filled with people who've been in your position, impressed at interview and secured their place at university.

Interviews are different for everyone and hearing about a range of experiences can help you prepare for a broader range of possibilities. This can make it easier to stay calm and collected on the day of your interview. If you've prepared thoroughly for a range of questions, then you've put yourself in the best possible position to impress.

Take Part in Mock Interviews

Mock interviews can be invaluable in your preparations. Some universities will signpost you to an external provider who can organise an accurate replica of the real thing, but practising with friends and family can be just as effective.

Seeking feedback on your interview performance can help you better understand your strengths and areas for improvement. The more interview experience you can get, the better; each interview will be beneficial and teach you something different.

Incorporating these tips into preparations for your law interview is sure to help you excel on the day. During your interview, try to remember that interviewers aren't there to trick or confuse you; they want to see you succeed. Their role is to help you demonstrate your knowledge and show your willingness to learn. Prepare well, speak confidently and don't be afraid to ask clarifying questions.





A Day in the Life of a Law Student

As you're working on your applications to university, it's important to understand exactly what it is you're applying for.

There's a lot of speculation about the day-to-day life of a law student. The degree is a demanding one, and the stresses and struggles that arise along the way should not be underestimated. However, there's also plenty of scope to get involved with social activities and enjoy all aspects of university life.

In this section, Jamie recalls a typical day as a first-year undergraduate to give you a real insight into the realities of a law degree.



A Typical Day

Below is a snapshot of what a typical day in my life involved as a first-year law student. I've since graduated so you'll also find some things I wish I'd done differently. It's useful to keep in mind that although the days will always be varied, there are certain aspects of the day which you'll need to get used to, especially if you like to keep to a routine.



Jamie
Law graduate



Life at University

I attended a collegiate university, which means every student joins a college within the wider university structure. Colleges typically manage things like accommodation, pastoral support and a large number of social activities.

Living in a college community made it much easier to manage the different aspects of student life. Most of the days in my first year would start and end at my college. I had a spacious room with a great view, and the dining hall, library and college bar were all right on my doorstep, which allowed me to split my time between work and socialising incredibly effectively.

For example, I could end a lazy morning in the dining hall by meeting some friends for lunch, before heading to the college's law library for the afternoon. On another day, I might have been to the gym and finished my work by 12:30pm, just in time to catch the early kick-off at the college bar.

Essay Preparation

Any law degree will inevitably involve many hours in a library. A typical week for me involved five to six hours of reading, four or five times a week, which I would split between the library and a few cafés. This would leave me with a sixth day to write and edit a weekly essay, as well as a full day off – most of the time! I know many people who treated their degree like a 9am-5pm job, whilst others worked late into the night almost every day of the week. There's no one right way to complete a law degree; it's simply a matter of working out how you work best.

Each week, my daily reading was supplemented with a tutorial. This was a chance to discuss my most recent essay with my tutor and one or two other law students. There were also optional daily lectures, although my attendance for these waned after my first year. Not all lectures were useful or relevant to my work, and my time was often better spent reading some of the more relevant material on my reading lists. Having said that, I found lectures to be particularly useful for revision in my final year. I'd always recommend keeping up to date with the latest lecture timetables and attending those that align with your interests, especially if they're online.

As you can see, essay preparation is going to take up a great deal of your time when reading for a law degree. This is especially true at the beginning as you adapt to writing legal essays and navigating the numerous legal databases in search of cases, case notes and academic articles. However, if I were to go back to first year and restart my degree, I would remind myself that essay preparation is only one part of the experience; it's important to spend time enjoying yourself too!



A Typical Day

Sports

An aspect of university life which I really enjoyed in my first year was playing for my college football team. 11-a-side football took place throughout term time, with a league game happening most Wednesdays. I would make sure to organise my tutorials around the Wednesday afternoon kick-off so I could participate in as many games as possible.

I remember attending a 9am Criminal Law tutorial most Wednesday mornings, cramming in some post-tutorial reading and heading to our sports ground for 1pm. This was often followed by a team drink at the nearest pub. I'd then head back to the library before dinner in the dining hall.

Sports are a brilliant way to get involved in university life. Sports clubs often organise great social events where you can meet lots of different people. The opportunity to play a number of sports in a refreshingly laid-back environment was one aspect of my degree that I will always appreciate. It would be an understatement to say I wish I'd played even more sport!



Exam Preparation

A day in the life of a law student during exam season can be quite a different experience to the typical day-to-day.

During my first year, I sat exams in three modules: Constitutional Law, Criminal Law and A Private Introduction to Roman Law.

In the lead up to exams, I would typically spend most of my time studying. I'd revise with flash cards and past papers in the library for most of the day, factoring in plenty of breaks and some free evenings where possible.

Exam season isn't the most fun aspect of university, but revising alongside your friends definitely makes it more manageable.





Career Options with a Law Degree

It's often stated that a law degree is among the most versatile and transferable options at undergraduate and postgraduate level. While there are many traditional and well-trodden paths for a law graduate to take, there are also a number of opportunities outside of the legal field.

This section features six potential careers a law degree can lead to.



Careers to Consider

1 | Solicitor

One of the traditional legal careers available to law graduates is that of a solicitor. Solicitors are legal professionals who take instructions from a client and give advice on a host of matters such as criminal issues, family disputes, taxation, shipping law and more. For most solicitors, the majority of their work is done within an office, with occasional travel to meet clients or attend court. If you're a budding debater or looking for a career spent arguing in court, then this probably isn't the one for you.

A key point to note is that not all solicitors are the same and there are two key areas in which they differ. The first is the type of work they conduct. This can be specialised to one area of law, like only working on criminal cases or focusing solely on family related matters, or it can be far broader, covering a wide range of legal issues and client requirements.

The second is the organisation for which they work. There are dedicated law firms which only employ solicitors, as well as larger companies with their own in-house legal departments. Solicitors also work with other organisations, including local authorities, the government legal profession and the Crown Prosecution Service.



2 | Barrister

The second traditional legal career is that of a barrister. Barristers are legal professionals who, similarly to solicitors, take instructions from clients and offer advice. Unlike solicitors, they also represent these clients in front of juries and judges in court. Barristers can work in a range of fields, covering all areas of the law, both domestic and international.

An important point to note here is that barristers are usually self-employed. Some are directly employed by organisations such as the Crown Prosecution Service, however the majority are tenants at a set of barrister's chambers. Barristers benefit from greater working flexibility, increased choice over the type of work they accept and more control over their workload at any given time. However, there are drawbacks to this arrangement that should also be considered, including reduced security, no guarantee of consistent work and no paid holiday.

3 | Politics

Although a less traditional path, it's not uncommon for law graduates to build a thriving career in politics. You may be surprised to hear that both Bill and Hillary Clinton attended law school, as did Barack Obama, Sir Keir Starmer, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro.

Studying law at university can be an excellent launchpad into student politics, which has been known to have launched many a successful professional career. The skills you gain as a law student, like the ability to analyse information, think critically and respond on your feet, are all directly transferable to an active career in politics.

It's worth noting that politics and the limelight are not for everyone. If you're undecided about whether you want a career in politics, or want to keep the door open for other possibilities, a law degree won't disadvantage you; it's often a great benefit.



Careers to Consider

4 | Military Legal Services

A lesser known possibility for those who have studied law is to enter into the legal department or service of a military branch. The Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force each have independent legal services that deal with both day-to-day and specialist requirements as needed. This includes a range of military and administrative law, both in the UK and internationally, alongside elements of traditional public and private domestic legal work.

It's worth noting again that this isn't a career for everyone, however there are a number of unique benefits to entering the profession. There can be opportunities to travel extensively and take part in events, activities and legal work of an entirely different nature than you would typically find as a traditional barrister or solicitor.

These can conversely be downsides depending on your particular preferences, but this is a career well worth considering if you want to study law.

5 | Journalism

A well-known career, though not one often associated with studying law, is journalism. The skills gained as a law student, particularly in writing, analysing and critically processing information, are directly transferable to a professional career as a journalist.

As with politics, studying a law degree can be an excellent opportunity to engage in student journalism, develop some experience and gain clarity on whether to pursue the field in the future.

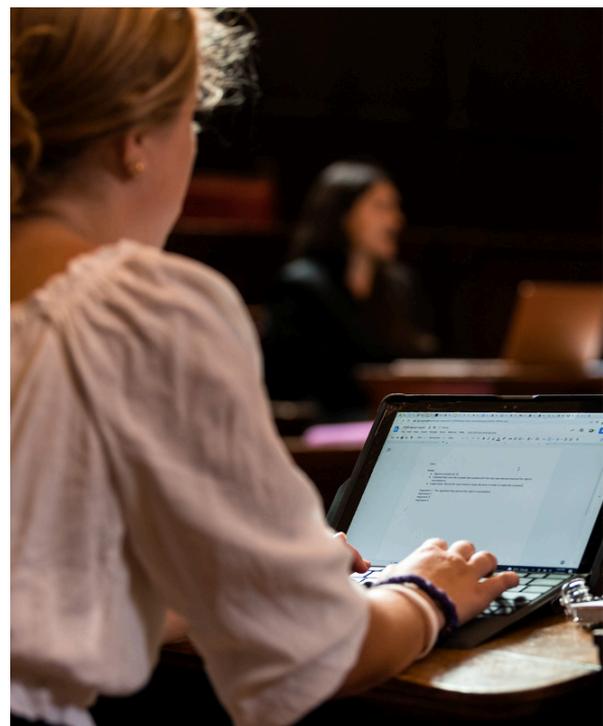
A particular consideration is the range of work that can be undertaken as a journalist. There are, of course, opportunities to engage in legal journalism, writing and publishing on legal developments, issues and matters. However, with the transferable and essential skills acquired while studying law, the possibilities are almost endless.

6 | Business Consultancy

The last legal career on this list, though by no means the least important, is that of business consultant. This career involves working with businesses and organisations to improve on the business' strategy, resolve any issues that may be present or on the horizon and add overall value. This can include working with large for-profit companies, small start-ups, charities and social enterprises across a whole range of fields, specialities and areas.

While completing your law degree, you'll likely have plenty of opportunities to get involved with student consulting, volunteering events and internships with consultancy firms. A law degree will equip you with the transferable skills necessary to make the most of these opportunities and kick-start a career in consulting. These include critical thinking, strong analytical skills, and excellent individual and team management, leadership and organisation.

Whether you're interested in business, helping charities, social impact, problem solving or working with people, this is a career well worth considering.



BEFORE YOU GO...

We hope you've found the Ultimate Guide to Studying Law both interesting and useful. You're now well prepared to take the next steps on your journey to becoming a lawyer.

We've put together a checklist to help you stay on track and submit a standout law school application. You can print or save this page and tick off the steps as you complete them.

Best of luck with your applications!

Jamie, Rhys and the whole Oxford Scholastica team

The Ultimate Checklist to Studying Law

- Read Oxford Scholastica's Ultimate Guide to Studying Law
- Take the [Oxford Scholastica Career Test](#)
- Complete the [Oxford Scholastica University Preparation Report](#)
- Browse the [UCAS website](#) to see which law courses pique your interest
- Secure [legal work experience](#) and seek out volunteering opportunities
- Attend open days at universities you're interested in
- Write and perfect your UCAS personal statement
- Complete your UCAS application
- Prepare for your admissions interview and the LNAT examination
- Accept (or decline) your university offers
- Study for and sit your A-level, IB or equivalent exams
- Accept your place and prepare for life as a law student. Congratulations!





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