

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. As 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](#) for 15-18 year olds.

Our Ultimate Guide has been written by current Law students and recent graduates to give you a unique insight into the application process from start to finish, giving you top tips to maximise your chances of success.

In this guide, you'll find:

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These articles form a step-by-step guide to securing a place on your dream Law degree in the UK, giving you the confidence of knowing exactly what you're doing at every stage of the application process.

So, let's get started!





About the Authors

There are lots of guides to studying Law, so why should you trust ours? Put simply, because the people who wrote it are exactly where you're aiming to be in a few years' time.

We've worked with a current Law student and a recent Law graduate at the University of Oxford to bring you first-hand advice to help guide you through the process.

Allow us to introduce you to...

Jamie

Law Graduate, University of Oxford
IP Law Assistant



Hello! My name's Jamie, and I'm a recent graduate of Trinity College, University of Oxford. I have worked as a freelance writer with Oxford Scholastica Academy for over a year now, drawing on my own experiences to offer some first-hand advice for those looking to study Law at university. Alongside my work with Oxford Scholastica Academy, I work at a MedTech firm as an IP Law Assistant, helping to manage our IP portfolio.

Rhys

Law Undergraduate, University of Oxford

Rhys is a final year student at Trinity College Oxford, reading for a BA in Jurisprudence. His interests span a broad range of legal fields, most notably; jurisprudence and the relationship between individuals and the state, with a particular focus on 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 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 suit your interests and goals best.

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

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



UK Law Degree Structure



Stage 1: Applying to University

Most universities in the UK will offer a few different Law degrees, often combined with additional years abroad or a separate honours subject like Business Studies. It's important to research the universities that you are looking to apply to, because the range of modules on offer will differ quite significantly between them.

Most universities offer a Qualifying Law Degree (QLD), where you are assessed in a number of **compulsory core modules**, including EU law and contract law. Having a QLD allows you to go on to study for your **Solicitors Qualification Exams** (SQE), which will then enable you to qualify as a solicitor after an additional two years of qualifying work experience.

Stage 2: Completing Your Degree

Depending on your university, the core modules will be arranged differently across the three years and you will be assessed at different stages in your degree. For example, at the **University of Oxford**, you are examined in two core modules during your first year, and seven more in your third year. In addition to this, you choose two modules in your final year to be examined in. Alternatively, the **University of Bristol** gives a much wider range of options to choose from for examination across the three years. The core modules are arranged differently from Oxford, and include a number of optional modules as well.

Ultimately, your choice of university should reflect the modules that you are interested in outside of the core modules, as you will be assessed on these core modules in some form wherever you study. The additional modules that you choose won't affect your overall degree or your ability to qualify as a solicitor, but they can be helpful in deciding which area of law you might want to work in after you leave university.

Stage 3: Qualifying as a Solicitor

Thanks to the new SQE qualification, which replaces the GDL and 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' scenario (TC). Previously, you would have to work for two years in a TC at a law firm before you qualified as a solicitor. However, the SQE requires you to complete two years of qualifying work experience, which can still include the traditional TC, but may also include paralegal and pro-bono (volunteering) work. It's incredibly encouraging to see the governing body for lawyers increasing the accessibility of the profession by offering these alternative routes to qualifications, and all types of qualifying work experience should be considered when deciding how you want to qualify.

Upon qualification in England and Wales, you can practise law in England and Wales, as well as being eligible to train for qualification abroad. For example, being a qualified solicitor of England and Wales can enable you to take the bar exam in the US, but you are not qualified to practise law there until you have completed that exam.

It's important to note that, depending on the state in which you wish to practise in the US, you might be required to also have a Masters of Law before you take the bar exam. The New York bar exam does not require you to complete an LLM, for example, though other states do. 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, because Scots Law comprises a different legal system with its own unique jurisdiction.



US Law Degree Structure

Stage 1: Completing a Bachelor's Degree

As mentioned above, studying Law in the US requires you to have already gained an undergraduate degree. Law is available as a postgraduate option, to be studied at law school. Though in theory any undergraduate degree should allow you to study Law, having a degree in history, politics, or economics may give you an advantage for getting into law school, as they are essay-based degrees and have considerable overlap with many 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 performance in the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), your GPA or equivalent high-school record, your Bachelor's degree performance, any academic recommendations, and your personal attitude towards becoming a lawyer.

Law school will take you three years on a full-time course, or four to five years if completed as a part-time course. Much like in the UK, you will be tested on core modules to ensure that you can show an aptitude towards practising law across a diverse range of subject matters. Again, you should base your choice of law school partly on the range of additional modules which you are free to pursue, to enable you to find areas of the law that you might wish to work in once you qualify.



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 disadvantaged geographically. The bar exam is famously challenging, but there are numerous options available to help you prepare, including practice centres, tutors, and workshops. Many students secure jobs at law firms prior to completing the bar exam, and many top law firms will pay for you to take the bar exam.

Upon passing the bar exam, you'll be free to pursue a career at a law firm, whether you have already obtained a job before taking the bar exam or not. Successfully passing the bar exam will allow you to practise law in the US, and make you eligible to train overseas. Much like the qualification in the UK, you will 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.

Overall, there is no real advantage or disadvantage to studying law in the UK versus the US, because the choice of modules and research are incredibly broad wherever you study. The decision will ultimately come down to where you wish to work, and what appeals to you about the degree structure in each country. Would you be happy undertaking a degree in something other than law before you train in the US? Or 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 experiences on offer can vary quite considerably between universities. This is especially true if you're deciding between universities in different countries (the UK versus the US, for example), and is reflective of the different formats that the law qualification routes take.

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 a University



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, including contract law and EU law, in which you must be assessed in order to obtain your QLD. The rest of the core modules can be found [here](#), but given the need to be assessed in all of these modules, you can expect that all universities will offer them in some form.

However, all universities should also offer you some optional modules. Oxford offers two optional modules to be taken in students' third year, including options like 'Media Law' and 'Trademark & Copyright Law'. Other universities will offer different modules based on the speciality of their lecturers, and these can include a great number of choices. As you can see from the [University of Cambridge's undergraduate law site](#), there are various modules which you can choose, and unlike at Oxford, they're not all taken in your final year.

Keep in mind any specific legal interests that you have when you look at the different Law degrees. If there is a certain area of law that you would like to go into, it's always advantageous to take any relevant optional modules at university, as this can help you get an edge over competing candidates. It also gives you a great deal of knowledge to talk about in an interview, which is important for showing off your interest in that area of law.

The Facilities

Given the reading-heavy nature of a Law degree, you want to ensure that you have access to the greatest number of legal resources possible. Though all universities will offer you free access to their libraries, the number of books available per student and the overall working environment will be heavily dependent on which university you are at.

At Oxford, for example, Trinity College has its own mini law library, which made it easier to find resources without having to even leave the college. The small community served by the college 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 chance, go and visit universities in person to get a true feel for what it might be like to study there.



How to Choose a University

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. Oxford and Cambridge utilise a tutorial system, where weekly or bi-weekly sessions are held by a tutor for one to three students. These sessions often last an hour, and allow you to reflect more deeply on the week's reading, as well as any essays that you might have written. On top of this, there will be numerous lectures and classes to supplement your teaching, which (whilst optional) will always be useful to attend for revision.

The tutorial system at Oxford is incredibly useful for a Law degree, because it allows you to voice your arguments in a constructive environment. Without tutorials, it can be more difficult to develop the nuance necessary to succeed as a legal professional, as you may get fewer opportunities to talk one-on-one with your tutors or lecturers. The style of teaching at Oxford and Cambridge are reflected in their position at the top of [law school rankings in the UK](#).



Postgraduate Opportunities

If you're studying a Law degree, the chances are you want to go on to become a legal professional. There are numerous ways to do this, which include capitalising on graduate schemes or undertaking further study in the form of an LLM or similar qualification. Choosing a great university for an undergraduate Law degree is therefore important for a number of reasons.

Firstly, you will benefit from greater networking opportunities at universities with good links to legal professionals. For example, commercial law firms, such as 'Slaughter and May', will often send former students back to top universities in order to network with current students. These events are a great opportunity to find out more about the jump from university to work, and can help inform your career decisions too.

Secondly, universities that offer a great undergraduate course are also likely to offer great postgraduate studies. Many universities will offer scholarships to students who stay on to study for postgraduate law courses, reducing the cost of study. Some may even offer bursaries to high-performing students in order to entice them into further study.

Your choice of university can therefore be very influential on your future prospects, and it certainly helps to have an idea of what you want to do after university when you're making your choice.





Gaining Work Experience

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

However, rest assured that universities recognise the difficulty of gaining legal experience before university, and will always be appreciative of any sort of legal experience that you have.



Types of Work Experience

Here, you will find some options to consider for gaining legal experience prior to going to university.

Write to Law Firms

Although it can be hard to find appropriate legal experience prior to going to university, it's by no means impossible. Approaching firms that you're interested in confidently and professionally will greatly increase your chances of gaining work experience, because it shows a level of maturity that's looked upon favourably in the legal profession. Though you are unlikely to go and work for 'Slaughter and May' for a month, there are certainly opportunities to apply to smaller boutique firms where the lawyers will have more freedom to take you on for some experience.

Essentially it comes down to being proactive when finding legal experience at law firms. Don't be afraid to be cheeky and ask any contacts you already have in the profession for some help. Even if they can't offer you any work experience, they can usually help guide you in the right direction.

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 plenty more to discuss at a university interview or on your application.

Pro-bono Work

Pro-bono is a Latin phrase which translates to 'for the public good', and it's an integral part of the legal profession. In the legal context, it represents work undertaken by legal professionals without payment, and is therefore a form of volunteering.

There are numerous pro-bono clinics that may be able to 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 to consider if you have a particular interest in these areas already.

Pro-bono work can be incredibly advantageous in your university application, because it shows a commitment to helping more disadvantaged areas of society. Legal fees are incredibly expensive, and many people simply would not have access to legal aid if it weren't for the provision of pro-bono legal advice.

Volunteering to help a lawyer that has taken on a pro-bono case will definitely make your university application stand out, even if that simply means sitting in on meetings or proofreading documents. Take a look at [The Lawyer Portal](#), a pro-bono website, which will give you a greater idea of what options might be available for pre-university legal experience.



Types of Work Experience



Mooting

A moot is the name given to a mock trial intended to mimic the procedural aspects of a real court trial. They're an excellent way to gain legal experience prior to going to university, because you are given substantial responsibilities to prepare and present your case in front of a trained legal professional, usually a KC or solicitor but sometimes even a judge.

The process begins with the provision of a case; a series of facts which you are given to build your points of argument on. The moots are conducted between two teams, who will either be given the role of the defence or the role of the appellant. You will get the chance to prepare skeleton arguments, which are provided to the other team as a summary of what you intend to say during your presentation. This helps you to strengthen your own rebuttals, as you will usually get the chance to respond to each other's arguments, though the structure of the moot may vary.

Once preparation is complete, you will present your arguments in front of the judge, who can stop you at any time to challenge what you've said. This is a great experience, because it requires you to think on your feet whilst maintaining the integrity of your case. The judge will then decide on a winning team and give feedback to all participants about their presentations.

This really is an invaluable experience for any aspiring young lawyers, and the benefits to be taken from mooting are second to none. Check out [this website](#) to find current mooting opportunities for pre-university students.

Some things to remember

- Take notes at the end of every work experience session you take part in. List what you did, anything you learned, and reflect on how you felt about each aspect of the experience. These notes will be a really valuable resource when you come to write your personal statement and prepare for your interview.
- 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.
- But it's also okay to change your mind. If you try a range of placements in different aspects of law, and you didn't like any of them, it's okay to decide it isn't the field for you. Check out the 'Career Options' (p. 25) section of this guide, or look into other careers entirely. You might like to try the [Oxford Scholastica Career Test](#) as a place to start.
- Factor in rest! If you spend your whole summer holiday gaining work experience, you'll be too tired to concentrate when you restart classes. Remember to take breaks, do things you enjoy, and look after yourself while on your quest for work experience.





Writing Your UCAS Personal Statement

Your law personal statement is one of the most important aspects of your UCAS application to study at a UK university. It's one of the first things universities will see and read, and it forms an integral part of decisions about who most deserves to be offered an interview. Rhys has put together this ultimate guide on how you can create the strongest law personal statement possible, and give yourself the best chance at obtaining an interview and a spot on your favourite Law course!

Please note: UCAS, the UK University and Colleges Admission Service, has announced that the structure of personal statements will be changing for the 2024/25 admissions cycle. We'll update this guide as soon as more information on these changes is published.



Personal Statements



The Basics: Who, What, and Why?

No law personal statement (or prospective law student for that matter) can be truly exceptional without understanding the groundwork: who needs a law personal statement, what is it, why do you need to write it, and what are universities looking for?

Put simply, if you're applying for an undergraduate law course in the UK, you will need a law personal statement! This must be no longer than 4000 characters or 47 lines, and is a chance for you to show why you deserve a place on each highly competitive course. Your statement should detail what motivates you, what your interests and curiosities are, what you've done already to pursue this, and how you've developed your own knowledge independently. The key is to demonstrate why you want to learn more about a subject!

Indeed, that's what universities are looking for in your law personal statement. They want to see that you have a real interest in your subject, that you've explored the content, done your own independent learning and reached your own conclusions. They are looking for evidence that you are a keen learner, and that the degree you're applying for is right for you.

If you would like more guidance about the basics of personal statements, some top tips, and a little more information about the admissions process as a whole, try [the Ultimate Guide to UCAS and Personal Statements!](#)

The Process

It's important to remember that nobody gets their law personal statement right the first time around. Drafting an excellent statement, like an excellent essay or article, takes a number of attempts, revisions, and redrafts. In order to get to the best final version possible, write a statement you are happy with, and ask teachers, peers, and parents to read through and offer any feedback they might have. Whether it's improving the flow of your writing, helping with grammar, or making your ideas clearer, advice will almost always be useful, and will help you to craft a statement you can be truly proud of and that will give you the best shot possible at securing your first choice place!

If you're looking for some extra tips and tricks, try out the Ultimate Guide to UCAS and Personal Statements linked above, or for something law specific, [UCAS's law personal statement advice](#).



Your Law Personal Statement

The Content: Your Law Personal Statement!

The key aspect of a law personal statement is that it must be personal to you as an individual. It should reflect your interests, your experiences, and your motivations. However, saying that is far easier than actually doing it, so here are some tips that I found particularly helpful when writing my statement!

One of the most important considerations for your law personal statement is the structure. A good structure will help your ideas flow, and be succinct and easy to follow, allowing you to make the most of your limited space. As a rule of thumb, aim for 80-90% of your statement focusing on your interest in and your motivations to study Law at university, with the remaining 10-20% covering other, lesser-related activities, though even these should be linked where possible to your desire or suitability for studying Law.

Further, throughout your statement, ensure that each sentence in each paragraph connects well, and demonstrates a progression in your motivation, thinking, and learning. Your ability to write strong essays and convincing statements and arguments is particularly important for a Law degree, and so your personal statement should double as an opportunity for you to show your writing capabilities!

Now, within this rough structure is where a personal statement needs to be personal! Use your own specific experiences to demonstrate what makes you want to study Law, and take your learning further. Universities aren't looking for a simple list of all the things you've done and achieved. Whether you've read one book, ten, twenty, or a hundred, it doesn't matter. If you can write about one book, experience, competition, article, or podcast episode well, and demonstrate why you found it interesting,



what you agreed and disagreed with, and how you took your learning further, that is far more impressive and persuasive than simply listing what you've done.

Perhaps you've studied History or Economics, and found a particular legal element interesting and engaging. This is an excellent starting point to build upon. If you haven't studied a subject that's closely associated with legal issues and elements before, this can still be an excellent place to start.

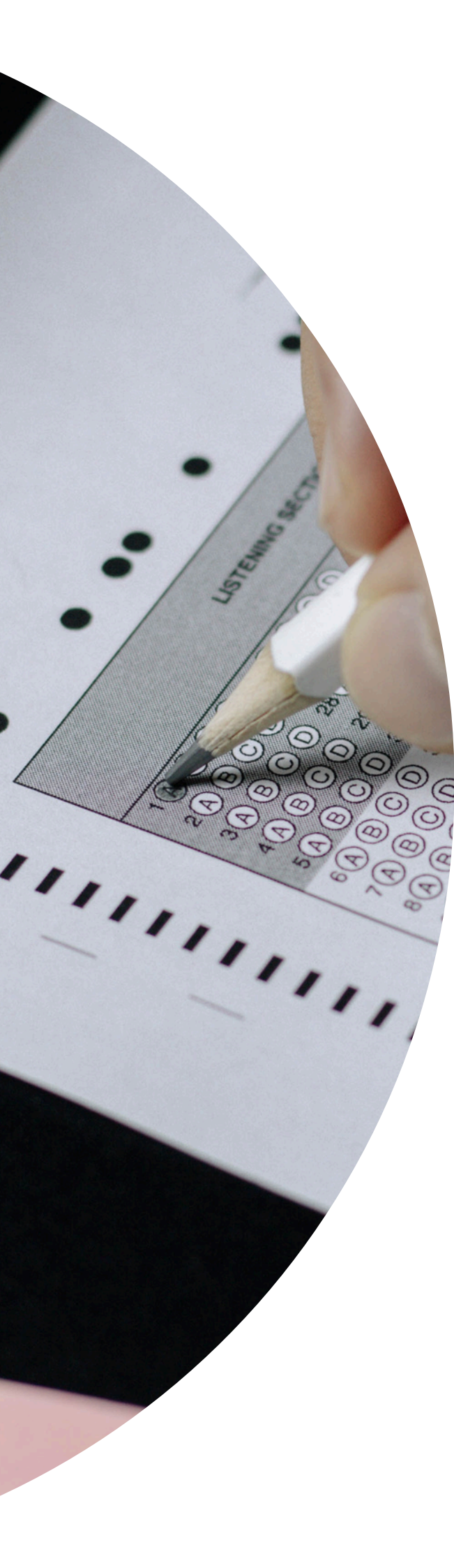
A biology student may choose to look into the interesting issue of medical ethics, a keen mathematician may wish to look at what makes a mathematical rule a rule, and conversely what makes a legal rule a rule, or a school rule different to that of a legal and mathematical one. The options and opportunities are almost endless, regardless of your experience, academic interests, and history. The key really is finding elements that interest you, that you want to write about, and which demonstrate your desire to learn more.

If you're struggling with a place to begin, or are just curious to explore legal issues and topics further, read a range of news articles on topical issues to see what you find most interesting and engaging.

Personal Statement Key Facts

- ✓ No more than 4,000 characters (including spaces!)
- ✓ No more than 47 lines (including blank line breaks)
- ✓ You can only write one – not different ones for each course or university
- ✓ It's all about you! Make sure your personality shines through





Acing the LNAT Exam

In this section, Jamie will walk you through the LNAT exam, from what it is to how you can ace it.

'LNAT' stands for the 'Law National Aptitude Test', and is used by a number of universities to assess your reasoning, deduction, and writing ability prior to offering you an interview. Both Oxford and Cambridge Universities are among those which require their law applicants to take the LNAT – the full list can be found [here](#).

The LNAT is a timed test split into two parts. Section A consists of 42 multiple choice questions based on twelve different passages of writing. The passages will provide you with some information or an argument, and you will be given three to four questions on each article to test your understanding of the points being made and your comprehension of the arguments. You have 95 minutes to complete Section A.

Section B requires you to answer one of three essay questions. These essays can be on a range of topics, but often have a philosophical or abstract twist in order to get you to tie your current knowledge into a wider debate. You'll be expected to balance your arguments but in such a way that you can come to a defensible conclusion. You have 40 minutes to complete Section B.



Acing the LNAT

Though admissions tests can be a daunting task, they are a great way to show off the skills you've learnt during your A-levels or international equivalent. There are a number of ways to prepare for the test, and below you will find my top tips for acing the LNAT.

Use past papers

Given that the LNAT is a timed exam, you should aim to complete the past papers in timed conditions where possible. Unfortunately, there aren't unlimited papers online, but you can check out the official [LNAT website](#) for a small selection of past papers. By doing past papers, you'll already be used to the format of the exam when you go on to complete it, and you should be able to deal with the time pressure.

Furthermore, the practice papers on the LNAT have a commentary to explain the answers to each question. This is perhaps the most important reason to use the past papers, because you need to understand how to 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 of the text the question is referring to. This will help you deal with the time pressure, and ultimately equip you to do as well as you can.



Read the news

This is actually an incredibly useful tip that doesn't take much time, and will benefit you beyond your Law applications. Reading an article or two from an esteemed newspaper or source, such as 'The Financial Times' or 'The Economist', before spending five to ten minutes thinking critically about that piece is a great way to improve your reasoning and comprehension skills.

For example, you could challenge yourself to summarise two different arguments being made in the piece, or to distinguish between facts and opinions in the article. This will help simulate the sort of thinking that you need to undertake to be successful. You could even get a friend to ask you questions about the article, which will also be beneficial to your comprehension skills and your ability to do well in the LNAT.

Practise writing essays

As mentioned, the LNAT requires you to write an essay in addition to answering the multiple choice section. The essays can be on a range of topics, and a list of past essay questions can be found [here](#). You have 40 minutes to write up to 750 words in order to answer the question, but candidates tend to write 500-600 altogether. The examiners are looking at quality, not quantity, so don't feel like you need to write more just to get closer to the word limit if it's going to take away from the quality of your answer or obscure your argument.

Practise timing yourself to write a few of the sample essay questions to get a feel for what you have to do in the actual exam. Get a friend to review your answer and ask you questions on it, as this will enhance your ability to form a reasoned judgement at the end of your essay. Being able to orally defend your point of view is a great way to improve your written work too!



Acing the LNAT



Read the LNAT preparation guide

The official LNAT website has a preparation guide to help you get started with your LNAT revision. It contains numerous hints and tips, as well as telling you what not to do, in order to help you do well in the exam.

Of notable importance is that the LNAT administrators warn against paying for online LNAT coaching. This is important to consider, because some of these coaches charge large amounts of money for sessions which don't have any substantial benefits and do not guarantee an improvement in your mark. However, there is absolutely no harm in working with other people, such as teachers, tutors, or even friends, to get you into the mindset needed to do well in the LNAT. As mentioned above, having those discussions about a piece of work will naturally train you to think more deeply about what you have read, allowing you to pick apart information to find the exact answer you're looking for.



Take your time!

The final piece of advice is for the actual test day. It's normal to be nervous about admissions tests, but they really are there to give you a challenge, not trip you up. For the multiple choice section of the paper, you have plenty of time to read the extract twice before searching for the relevant part of the writing to answer the questions. Use as much of the time as you can, and always triple check your answers.

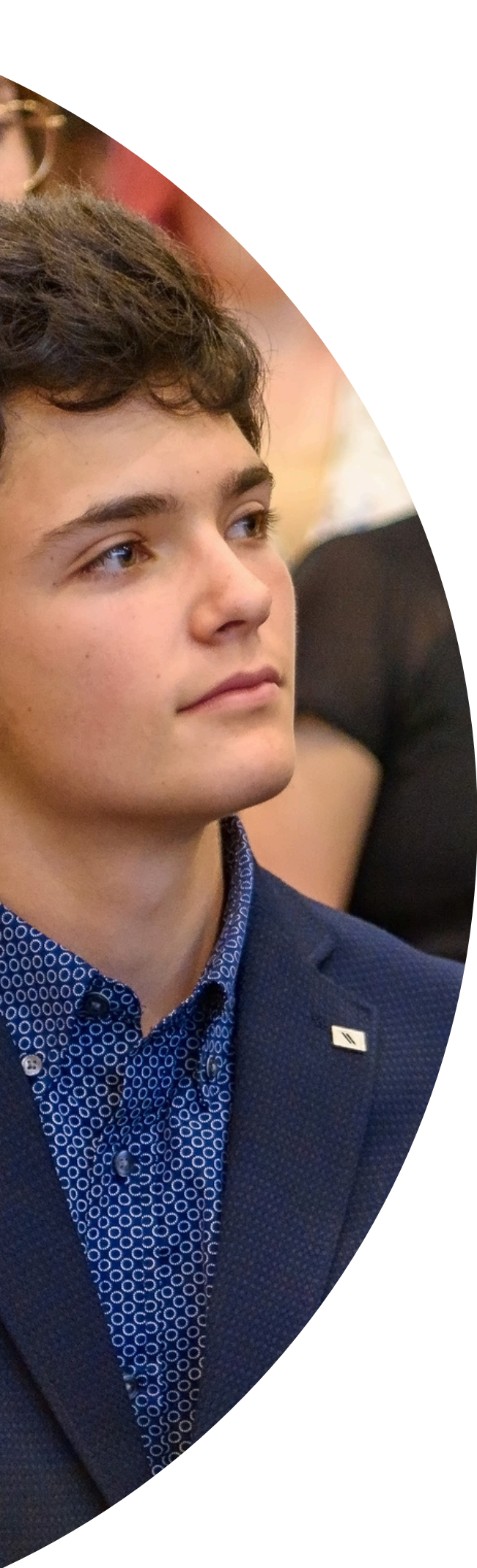
For the essay part, you aren't expected to write pages and pages. Take five minutes to plan out a structured essay, with a small introduction (a line or two) and a clear conclusion which summarises your arguments. You want to make it as clear to the examiner as possible that you can write clearly and coherently. Again, use as much of that time as you can; it will be over in a flash!

LNAT Summary

So, what are the key things to remember to prepare for the LNAT?

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





Preparing for Law Admissions Interviews

In this section, Jamie will walk you through Law Admissions Interviews, covering what the purpose of them is and how you can prepare to succeed.

The law interview often presents itself as the most challenging part of your university application, because it requires you to think on the spot in what feels like a high-pressure situation. That said, being able to ace a law interview is incredibly rewarding, because it gives you the chance to show off all of your amazing attributes which earned you the interview in the first place, as well as helping you to build confidence for job interviews later in life.

Having been interviewed for a Law degree myself, I've identified a number of things which helped me to succeed, as well as things that I've learnt from my interview. These tips are primarily based on my experiences in two Oxford Law interviews, but I think that they're invaluable across all law-related interviews, including job interviews.



Law Admissions Interviews

Read example questions

There are many accessible examples of real interview questions for Law online. The [University of Oxford undergraduate admissions website](#) has a number of example questions for Law, with explanations on how you might want to go about answering them. I was lucky that my interview actually used one of these example questions, which meant I had plenty of interesting points ready to discuss!

Even if these exact questions don't feature in your interview, reading through them is still a great way to know exactly what the interviewer is expecting of you, including the skills being assessed and the thought processes which universities look for in applicants.

Understand what you are being tested on

The key skills which you want to develop to help ace your law interview are: critical thinking, applied analysis, and verbal reasoning.

I found that it was best to develop these skills by practising with another person, having them ask me questions on a whole range of topics, and discussing any interesting or controversial points. Getting someone else to challenge you on points of disagreement is a great way to think critically and defend your point, because it exposes you to the other side of the argument, and forces you to adapt your position.

I recommend watching this [Oxford University Law Video](#) from Jesus College, University of Oxford, because it brilliantly breaks down the interviewer's approach to the interview, and evaluates the students' responses.



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 new information and adapt your argument in light of your interviewer's response is arguably even more crucial. This shows that you have the ability to think critically, and have the capacity to weigh up the merits of different arguments. You will not be penalised for going back on something you have 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 are 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 more concise and informed responses, and shows the interviewer that you're thinking deeply about the question.

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



Law Admissions Interviews

Understand the interview structure

The interview structure may vary depending on the university that you're applying to. From my personal experience, the Oxford interview is split into two.

One section assesses your comprehension skills by providing you with an article and asking you questions about what it tells you and what information can be drawn from it. It's always helpful to be able to summarise the article or information in a sentence or two.

The second section assesses your interpretation skills. I was given a statute about theft, and was asked to interpret it in a range of circumstances. The interviewer changed the circumstances very slightly to see how I could react to these changes. You want to show that you can distinguish between the different circumstances, and understand how and why it might lead you to change your answer.

It's also common for interviewers to ask about your academic background, motivations for applying for Law at university, and just about anything else you've mentioned in your personal statement.

Knowing all of this information is always useful in aiding your preparation, and the structure of your interview will usually be highlighted to you in advance. For example, the [University of Bristol website](#) has information on what they will ask you about, and what format the interview will take. Be sure to research your specific university interview structure, as they'll all be slightly different.



Speak to current Law students

I think that one of the best ways to prepare for an interview is to talk to those who have done it before you! University open days, Q&A sessions, and online forums are all full of people who have been in your position before, and from my experience they're usually incredibly willing to give you any advice you might need.

Although interviews will not always be the same for everyone, hearing about a range of interview experiences can help you ace your interview, because it will prepare you for a broader range of interview possibilities. It also helps you to be well-rounded and knowledgeable no matter what style your interview takes.

Mock interviews

Without a doubt the most useful preparation I did for my university interview was a mock interview. It was organised through my school by an external provider linked to my university, and accurately replicated much of what I experienced in the real thing. It's always great to have feedback about how you performed in your interview as it allows you to learn what works and what doesn't work. Ultimately, the more interview experience you have the better; whether or not they are law-specific, each interview will be beneficial for you and will teach you something different.

Utilising a number of the above tips in preparing for your Law university interview will really help you to stand out from other candidates. The interviewers aren't there to trick you or confuse you. Rather, they want to see how well you can demonstrate everything you already know, and show your willingness to learn more. Preparation really is the best way to help you ace your law interview.





A Day in the Life of an Oxford Law Student

As you're considering all of these application stages, it's important to know what exactly you're applying for! Jamie has put together this 'day in the life' article, remembering back to his first year, to give you a real insight into what the day-to-day realities of a Law degree at Oxford might look like.

There are lots of myths about the 'typical day' of an Oxford Law student, and very few of them are true. It's true that the degree is incredibly demanding, and the stresses and struggles that arise along the way should not be underestimated, but there's also plenty of scope to get involved with social activities and enjoy all the aspects of university life.

It's also important to note that there's no singular way to succeed, and completing a Law degree at any institution is an incredibly rewarding feeling.



A DAY IN THE LIFE... ...of an Oxford Law Student

Below, you'll find a few typical aspects of a day in my life as an Oxford Law student, as well as a few things that 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 that you'll need to get used to, especially if you like to keep to a routine.

Essay Preparation

No matter how you approach an Oxford Law degree, it will inevitably involve many hours in one of Oxford's beautiful libraries. I personally split my time between the Trinity College Library and a few cafés across Oxford, with a typical day involving five to six hours of reading, four to five days a week. This would leave me with a sixth day to write and edit a weekly (or bi-weekly) essay, as well as giving me a full day off (most of the time!). I know many people who treated their degree as a 9am-5pm job, whilst others worked late into the night virtually every day of the week. As I said, there's no one way to complete a Law degree; it's simply a matter of working out how you work best!

My five to six hours of daily reading were supplemented with a weekly (or bi-weekly) tutorial, to discuss the week's essay and any points of disagreement with my various tutorial partners. There were optional daily lectures too, although my attendance for these dropped off after my first year.

Not all lectures were useful or relevant, despite what you might be told by your tutors, and my time was often better spent reading some of the more relevant material on my reading lists. Having said that, lectures can be useful for revision in your 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 an Oxford Law degree. This is especially true at first, as you adapt to writing legal essays and navigating the numerous legal databases in search of hundreds 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, and it will always be important to spend time enjoying yourself too! If you can plan each day as it comes, you'll be absolutely fine.



Life Around Trinity College

Oxford is a collegiate university, which means every student joins a college as well as the University. Colleges manage things like accommodation, pastoral support, and a large number of social activities.

A typical day in my first year would always start and end in Trinity College. I had a spacious room in Front Quad, looking out onto the neighbouring spires of Balliol. First year rooms tend to be on-site at all colleges, which means that the dining hall, library, and college bar are on your doorstep.

Being fortunate enough to live on-site in college made my Law degree much easier to handle. Having access to such great facilities 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 our very own Law Library for the afternoon. On another day, I could have been to the college gym and finished my work by 12:30pm, just in time to catch the early kick-off at The Chequers Pub.



A DAY IN THE LIFE... ...of an Oxford Law Student



Sports

A specific aspect of college life which I really benefited from in first year was playing for my college football team. I would be sure to organise my tutorials around a Wednesday afternoon kick-off to ensure I could play as many games as possible. 11-a-side football took place in Michaelmas (first term) and Hilary terms (second term), with a league game most Wednesdays, and Cuppers fixtures (the inter-college cup) slotted in wherever possible.

For example, I remember having a 9am 'Criminal Law' tutorial most Wednesday mornings, cramming in some post-tutorial reading, and heading to our sports ground on Marston Road for 1pm. This was often followed by a team drink at the nearest pub, before heading back to the library before dinner in the Dining Hall.

College sports are always a great way to get involved in college life, and will always be matched with great social events and a chance to meet plenty of people. Having the option to play a number of sports in a refreshingly laid-back environment was one aspect of my degree that I will always appreciate, and it would be an understatement to say I wish I'd played even more sport.

Exam Preparation

It's fair to say that a day in the life of an Oxford Law undergraduate during exam season is unlike any other you will experience during your degree. Unfortunately, some of the more exciting aspects slowly faded away for me, as I retired from college football a few weeks before the end of Hilary term.

First year Law Moderations or 'Mods' (the term given to certain subjects' first year exams) consist of 'Constitutional Law', 'Criminal Law', and 'A Private Introduction to Roman Law'. These are taught across Michaelmas and Hilary terms, with exams traditionally being held in the ninth week of Hilary term.

A typical day during exam season would go something like this: I would read flash cards and work through some past questions in my College Library for much of the day, factoring in plenty of breaks, and working in some evenings off where possible.

Exam season isn't known for being the most fun aspect of a university year, but revising alongside all of your friends, and taking breaks with them too, 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. Whilst there are traditional and well-trodden paths into the legal industry, there are a further host of legal career possibilities that you may never have considered or even heard of! To help you out, here's a list of six careers to consider if you want to study Law:



Careers to Consider

1 | Solicitor

One of the 'classic' legal careers available to law students is that of a solicitor. These are legal professionals who take instructions from a client and give advice on a host of matters, ranging from 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 want a career arguing in court in a wig and gown, this may not be 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 over the type of work they conduct. This may be specialist, for example only working on criminal cases, or focusing on family related matters, or far broader, covering a wide range of legal issues and client requirements.

The second, is the organisation for which the solicitors work. For example, there are dedicated law firms which only employ solicitors, and larger companies with their own 'in-house' legal departments to deal with any work that the company requires. Alternatively, there are a host of other possibilities such as working with local authorities, the [Government Legal Profession](#), or the [Crown Prosecution Service](#).



2 | Barrister

The second 'classic' legal career is that of a barrister. These are (almost always) self-employed legal professionals who, similarly to solicitors, take instructions from clients and offer advice, but they will also represent these clients in front of juries and judges in court. Again, as with solicitors, barristers can work in a range of fields, covering all areas of the law, both domestic and international.

A key point to note here is that barristers are for the most part self-employed. There are some directly employed by organisations such as the Crown Prosecution Service, however the majority are [tenants](#) at a set of barrister's [chambers](#). This has benefits: greater working flexibility, greater choice over the work you choose to take or decline, and greater choice over the quantity of work at any given time. However, there are also other considerations like reduced security, with no guarantee of consistent work, a greater responsibility for your own management, and no paid holiday!

3 | Politics

A well known pursuit, though not one often associated with studying law, is 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.

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. Beyond that, studying Law at university can be an excellent launchpad into student politics, which have launched many successful professional careers.

It's worth noting that politics and the limelight aren't for everyone, however, if you are undecided about whether you want a career in politics, or want to keep the doors open for other possibilities, a Law degree won't disadvantage you, and may even be of great benefit!



Careers to Consider

4 | Military Legal Services

A little known possibility for those who have studied law is entering 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 find as a traditional barrister or solicitor. These can conversely be downsides, depending on your particular desire for certain work types, locations, and travel, though this is a career well worth considering if you want to study Law!

5 | Journalism

Another well known career, though one not 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 and applicable to a career as a journalist. Furthermore, as with politics, studying Law at university can be an excellent opportunity to engage in student journalism, develop some experience, and test whether this is something you genuinely want to pursue, before launching into a career in the same field after studying.

A particular consideration is also 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 whilst 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 role 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 startups, charities, and social enterprises, across a whole range of fields, specialities and areas!

Whilst completing your Law degree, you will likely have a host of opportunities to be involved with student consulting (for example with [180 Degrees Consulting](#)), and other related activities and events, as well as a host of volunteering opportunities, and the possibility of applying to, and completing, internships with businesses and firms which specialise in offering consultancy. Furthermore, a Law degree will equip you with the transferable skills necessary to make the most of these opportunities, and kickstart a career in consulting. These include critical thinking, strong analytical skills, and excellent individual and team management, leadership and organisation.

This is a legal career well worth considering whether you're interested in businesses generally, helping charities, social impact, problem solving, or working with people!



BEFORE YOU GO...

We hope you've found this Ultimate Guide to Studying Law both interesting and helpful – you're now well-prepared to take your next steps in your journey to becoming a lawyer!

We've put together a checklist for you to help make sure you stay on track and are in the best possible position to get the edge on your law school applications. You can print or save this page and tick off the steps as you complete them.

Best of luck with your applications – and remember, our blog, resources, and courses will always be ready to continue supporting you!

Rhys, Jamie, and the Oxford Scholastica Academy team

Take the Oxford Scholastica Academy Law Report

Our free [Personalised Academic Report](#) will help you to identify the areas of your application that you might want to focus on further, as well as giving you the opportunity to compare your preparation with other prospective legal students'.

☐

Secure work experience

Although it can be difficult to secure, work experience is an important part of a law application. Whether you complete pro-bono work, take part in a moot or work on an [Oxford Scholastica Research Internship](#) studying a law topic, make sure you've got experience on your CV.

☐

Take a course

We run [Law summer schools](#) each year in the city of Oxford (please note, we have no connection with the University of Oxford), or you might like to join one of our [Online Law Courses](#) which run each year in June, July and August, to stretch your legal knowledge.

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Submit your UCAS application!

When you're happy with everything, you can submit your application! Remember, the hard work doesn't stop here, so keep preparing for your interviews and exams once you've submitted. Good luck!

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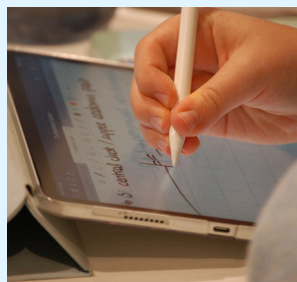


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