

Bird & Bird

# Getting into law

*Our opportunities and  
programmes for aspiring  
solicitors*

2023/2024



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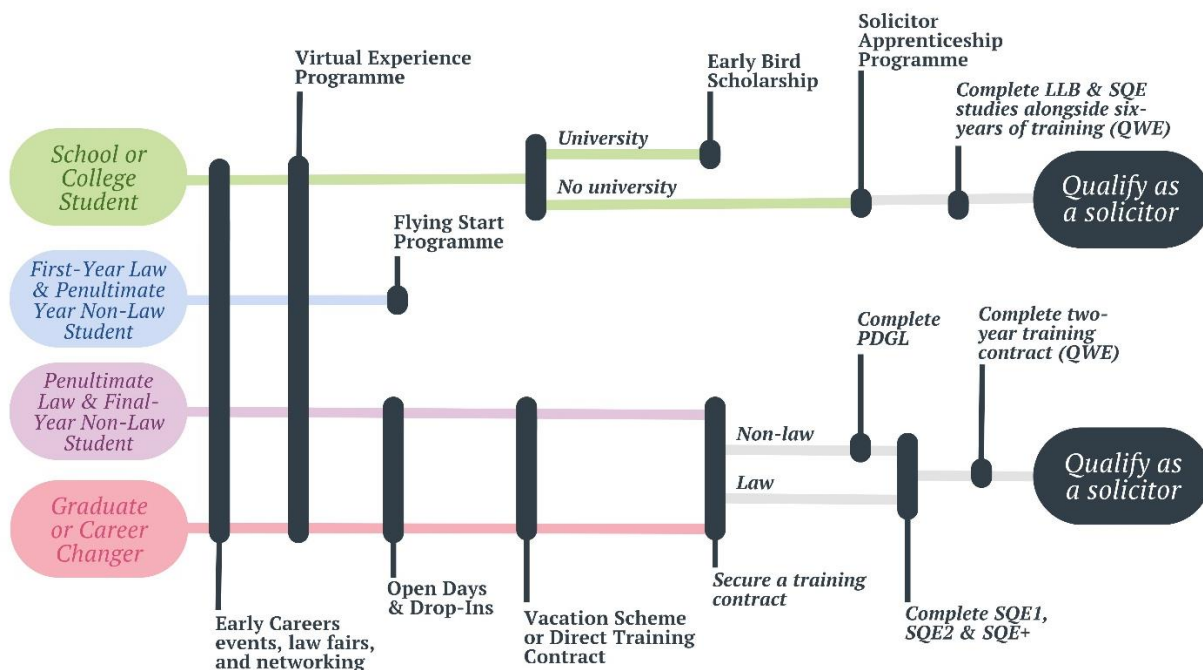
# Start your career at *an international, sector-focused, and innovative law firm.*

Whatever your background or ambition, join a firm with the scale and spirit to make it possible.

Bird & Bird is an international law firm with 31 offices across Europe, North America, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region. We are one firm internationally, which is something our clients value because it brings consistency, collaboration, and clarity. Our approachable culture and inclusive working environment set us apart from the crowd. We pride ourselves in providing an inspiring, supportive, and professional environment where quality, innovation, and collaboration play a key role.

Our vision is to be the number one law firm in the world for organisations being changed by the digital world or those leading that change. We've advised clients from over 120 countries within the last year, and our clients include 17 of the world's most innovative companies according to Forbes. We have a stellar, global reputation for providing sophisticated, pragmatic advice to companies which are carving the world's digital future. We are interested in the world, current issues, and emerging trends. We are an outward-looking, sector-focussed firm, specialising in Automotive, Aviation & Aerospace, Defence & Security, Energy & Utilities, Financial Services, Life Sciences & Healthcare, Media, Entertainment & Sport, Retail & Consumer, and Technology & Communications. We use our sector understanding and legal expertise to unlock the issues and we take a commercial approach when applying the law.

## Getting into law



# Opportunities for you

## *School or College Student*

The early bird catches the worm – take your first steps towards a career in the legal sector with our Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme, Early Bird Pathway (Early Bird Scholarship), Open Days, Office Drop-Ins, and Virtual Experience Programme.

## *First Year Law & Penultimate Year Non-Law*

Take flight ahead of the flock with our early career opportunities tailored for undergraduate students not yet eligible for a training contract, including the Flying Start Programme, Office Drop-Ins, and Virtual Experience Programme.

## *Penultimate Law & Final Year Non-Law*

Whether you are a law or non-law student, there are opportunities for you with our Vacation Scheme, Training Contract, Open Days, Office Drop-Ins, and Virtual Experience Programme.

## *Graduate or Career Changer*

Spread your wings and bring your previous experience and knowledge to the legal sector with our Vacation Scheme, Training Contract, Open Days, Office Drop-Ins, and Virtual Experience Programme.

# Key dates

## Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme

*Starting September 2024*

Applications open: Thursday 26 October 2023

Deadline: Friday 1 March 2024

## Early Bird Scholarship

*Starting Autumn Term 2023*

Applications open: Thursday 17 August 2023

Deadline: Friday 13 October 2023

## Flying Start Programme

*Tuesday 16 July to Wednesday 17 July 2024*

Applications open: Thursday 14 March 2024

Deadline: Friday 21 June 2024

## Open Days

- *Wednesday 18 October 2023 (All Degrees)*
- *Wednesday 25 October 2023 (Apprentices)*
- *Wednesday 1 November 2023 (STEM)*

Applications open: Thursday 14 September 2023

Deadline: Friday 13 October 2023

## Office Drop-Ins

- *Thursday 19 October 2023*
- *Thursday 2 November 2023*

Applications open: Thursday 14 September 2023

Deadline: Friday 13 October 2023

## Spring Vacation Scheme

*Monday 8 April to Friday 19 April 2024*

Applications open: Thursday 14 September 2023

Deadline: Friday 1 December 2023

## Summer Vacation Scheme

*Monday 24 June to Friday 5 July 2024*

Applications open: Thursday 14 September 2023

Deadline: Friday 22 December 2023

## Training Contract 2026

*Apply directly for a training contract*

Applications open: Thursday 14 September 2023

Deadline: Friday 12 January 2024

### Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme

Get qualified without heading straight to university. Begin your career in law by training with leading lawyers and business services in the office whilst studying a law degree. *See page 10.*

### Early Bird Scholarship

Supporting, developing, and equipping young people with the skills and mentoring they need to achieve their career potential. *See page 7.*

### Virtual Experience Programme

Immerse yourself in the world of an international law firm and discover what life is like as a trainee solicitor at the firm. *See page 7.*

### Flying Start Programme

Fly ahead with our two-day interactive workshop to accelerate your legal knowledge and skills as you prepare for a career in the legal sector. *See page 7.*

### Open Days & Office Drop-Ins

Explore our opportunities, learn something new, and meet our lawyers at Bird & Bird. *See page 8.*

### Vacation Schemes & Training Contracts

Discover your potential and kick-start your career in law by securing a training contract. *See page 14.*

*Navigating your  
future career in law*



# An insight into law

*Whether you are studying your GCSEs or A-Levels, completing your degree, or considering changing to a career in law, we have opportunities for you.*

## Early Bird Scholarship

Our Early Bird Pathway supports, develops, and equips young people from low socio-economic backgrounds with the skills they need to achieve their career potential as part of Bird & Bird's flagship social mobility initiative.

As part of this pathway, the Early Bird Scholarship offers a mentoring scheme with our trainees for support and career guidance during your university studies in law, work experience at the firm, tailored workshops and skills sessions, and financial assistance of £7,500 paid in instalments over your time at university.

As an Early Bird Scholar, you automatically have a place on our Flying Start Programme in your first year. We hope that as your knowledge and understanding of the legal world and Bird & Bird develops, you will choose to apply for a training contract with us.

Applications open on Thursday 15 August 2024 and close on Friday 11 October 2024 at midnight. Our Scholarship is open to all students at the end of Year 13 receiving their A-Level results/starting university who meet our eligibility criteria.

## Flying Start Programme

Our Flying Start Programme consists of practical skills sessions, interactive group tasks, insightful talks and presentations, panel discussions, and Q&As. It is an opportunity for you to explore your interest in the legal industry. You will develop legal skills and commercial awareness, network

with our lawyers, and add valuable experience to your resume.

*Tuesday 16 July to Wednesday 17 July 2024  
(online)*

Applications open on Thursday 15 February 2024 and close on Friday 7 June 2024 at midnight. This programme is for those who are not yet eligible for a training contract. You can apply if you are a first-year law undergraduate, or penultimate-year non-law undergraduate student.

## Virtual Experience Programme

Immerse yourself in the world of an international law firm and discover what life is like as a junior lawyer at Bird & Bird.

Experience life at the firm in your own time and in your own space with our Virtual Experience Programme. You will gain real work experience and learn directly from us, which you can use on your resume, during interviews, and in your future work as a lawyer. You will also earn a certificate to share with prospective employers and your professional network.

If you want to research more into the firm or practice completing some work, the programme is a great place to start. You can complete the free, self-paced programme online. Open to *all*.

## Open Days

Our Open Days offer a unique insight into life at an international law firm and the work we do. You will experience insight sessions, network with our lawyers, learn application tips, and can ask questions to our expert lawyers and the Early Careers team.

You can only apply to one Open Day. You must be in your penultimate-year of a law degree, final-year of a non-law degree, or a graduate to apply to our All Degrees or STEM Open Day. You must be in Year 13 or a recent school leaver to apply to our Apprentice/School Leaver Open Day.

All Degrees – Wednesday 18 October 2023

Apprentice – Wednesday 25 October 2023

STEM – Wednesday 1 November 2023

Applications open on Thursday 14 September 2023 and close on Friday 13 October 2023 at midnight for all dates.

## Office Drop-Ins

Our Drop-In is the chance for you to meet our lawyers, Early Careers team, and fellow aspiring lawyers in-person at our London office. Come and learn about our firm, the work we do, and our opportunities available to you.

Register to attend our Drop-In on Thursday 19 October 2023, 12-2pm *or* Thursday 2 November 2023, 12-2pm from Thursday 14 September 2023 to Friday 13 October 2023.

## Events

*Education. Discussion. Question.*

Our events are a chance for you to learn more about our firm, our work, the legal sector, and the business world. From law fairs to panel discussions, networking opportunities, Q&As, and insight sessions into our firm and the business world; we offer a variety of events throughout the year.

Alongside our internal events, we partner with a breadth of networks, partnerships, and platforms to deliver external events, as well as mentoring opportunities, networking, and more!

We work with the following:

- AllAboutLaw
- Aspiring Solicitors
- Bright Network
- DiversCity in Law (LGBTQ+)
- Gradcracker (STEM)
- GROW Mentoring
- Legal Cheek
- Target Jobs
- The Lawyer Portal
- Vantage
- Young Professionals



An aerial photograph of a two-lane asphalt road curving along a rocky shoreline. A red car is driving on the road. The water is a deep blue, and there is some green vegetation on the right side of the road. A thick green graphic element is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

*Paving* a new way  
to qualification

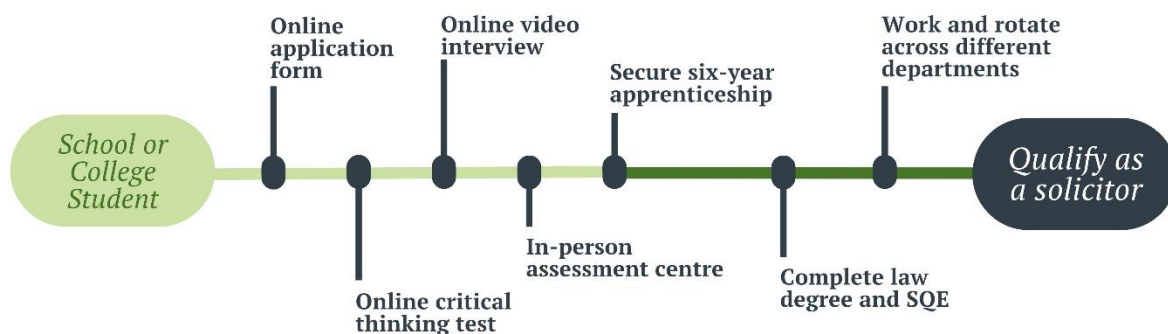
# Becoming a solicitor apprentice

We provide aspiring lawyers with an alternative to the traditional route to solicitor qualification. You can qualify as a solicitor by undertaking on-the-job training while studying for a law degree over six years.

Our Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme combines study with work to allow you to qualify as a solicitor without incurring student debt often associated with attending university. You will learn on-the-job at our London office, alongside a small cohort of solicitor apprentices, while studying for one day a week at the University of Law to obtain a law degree and complete the Solicitors Qualifying Examinations (SQE). At the end of the apprenticeship, you will be a qualified solicitor.

## *Application Process*

Applications open on Thursday 14 September 2023 and close on Friday 1 March 2024 at midnight. We are recruiting for a September 2024 start. You can apply if you are in Year 13 or if you have recently left school and have, or expect to have, 5 GCSEs at grade 4-9 (C-A\*) including Maths and English, and AAB at A-Level or equivalent.



*Please note, our apprenticeship is not open to those who have completed a degree. If you are a current university student, or have already graduated, please apply for a Vacation Scheme or Direct Training Contract.*

*An inspiring, supportive environment where people are passionate about their work.*

## Studying

We partner with The University of Law to deliver a LLB Law degree and SQE programme over the 6-year apprenticeship. The LLB is designed to prepare you for the academic challenges of the SQE examinations, as well as the fundamental skills, technical excellence, and commercial awareness required for your role as a lawyer at Bird & Bird. All tuition fees and course materials are covered by the firm.

## Working

You will spend time in different departments, known as 'seats', giving you a rich learning experience and development opportunities. During each seat, you will be assigned to a dedicated supervisor who is an associate or partner.

Within our departments, we have sector and sub-sector specialisms. You will get exposure to different areas of law whilst working alongside an array of lawyers and clients, as you find the area you want to pursue and qualify into.

You may also experience an international or client secondment to further your experience. On an international secondment, you will explore life in a new city, immerse yourself in our global firm, and work even closer with our international lawyers. On a client secondment, you will develop your commercial edge by understanding their business from the inside.

## Learning & Development

Prior to starting your first seat, you will have a comprehensive induction designed by our Early Careers and Learning & Development team, providing you with the basic building blocks for your personal growth and professional success as a solicitor apprentice. From practical learning to insight sessions and skill-based workshops, we will ensure that you are set up for success.

We will introduce you to all areas of the firm, from business services to fee earners, strengthening your understanding of how we operate as one seamless international, sector-focused firm.

We will also assign you an Apprentice Mentor to support you throughout your programme, acting as a point of contact from induction to qualification.

Alongside your seat rotations, you will take part in a tailored Learning & Development Programme which will equip you with a broad range of technical and business skills. This programme is led by a mixture of internal and external speakers in a combination of online and in-person sessions. You will put this learning into context as you rotate around different departments throughout your apprenticeship.

You will receive regular feedback from your supervisors and the Early Careers team to provide you with the support and guidance fundamental to you excelling in your law career.

From induction to qualification, networking and social events will allow you to immerse you in our friendly, vibrant culture. You can also get involved in pro-bono and CRS initiatives, support the Early Career team with events and mentoring, or get involved in other firm-wide opportunities such as sports teams and our employee networks.

## Qualification

At the end of your apprenticeship, you will qualify as a solicitor and each year we hope to retain most of our apprentices in newly qualified (NQ) roles across the firm.

## Benefits

- £25,000 salary in Year 1.
- All tuition fees and course materials covered for your studies.
- Opportunity to socialise and study with your apprentice cohort, to build your legal network.
- Health and wellbeing in mind with a benefits package that includes private medical insurance, health assessments, maternity, and paternity leave, shared parental leave, adoption leave, gym membership, flu vaccinations, eyecare, and dental insurance.
- Flexible benefits package for your lifestyle, including 25 days of paid holiday annually, travel insurance, interest-free season ticket loan, computer loan, cycle to work scheme, and give as you earn charity account.
- Bespoke benefits package for your finance, including 5% pension contribution, group income protection, group life assurance, group critical illness, and will writing.

## Our qualified solicitors



*Freddie Eastwell*

Associate (Recent NQ)

*"I loved the sports group in my commercial seat, as I had the chance to work with national and international sporting federations, including a secondment to a leading sports association"*



*Neely Middleton*

Associate (Recent NQ)

*"As someone with an interest in fashion, it's been really amazing working with big luxury and non-luxury fashion brands. I love the inside scoop on what's going on in their business, helping with their transactions, and being involved in client interactions"*

Training *beyond*  
your expectations



# Becoming a trainee solicitor

To become a trainee solicitor at Bird & Bird, you can apply through two different routes: attending a Vacation Scheme or applying directly for a training contract. We are recruiting for our August/September 2026 cohort.

## Vacation Scheme

A vacation scheme with us is much more than just work experience. It is an opportunity to discover your potential and kick-start your career in law, taking you straight to the heart of our global firm.

Develop your knowledge of our firm through introductions to different areas of law and business services. Immerse yourself in a department and have an unfiltered look at the way people work in a law firm and the impact of client relationships, globally.

Our vacation scheme is both an opportunity for you to showcase your potential as a trainee solicitor and decide whether Bird & Bird is the right firm for you.

Spring Vacation Scheme – Monday 8 April to Friday 19 April 2024

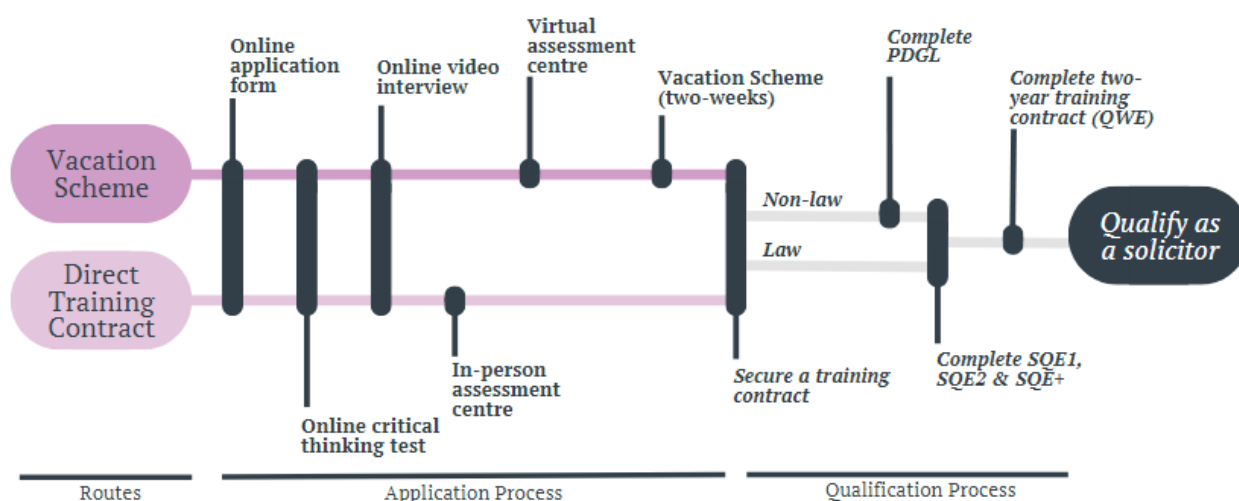
Summer Vacation Scheme – Monday 24 June to Friday 5 July 2024

## Apply directly for a training contract

Our direct route is an alternative to our vacation schemes. We recruit the majority of future trainees through our vacation schemes; however, we recruit from a range of diverse backgrounds and appreciate that it might not be possible to attend a vacation scheme. If you are unable to attend a vacation scheme, please apply directly for a training contract.

## Application Process

Applications open on Thursday 14 September 2023. Our Spring Vacation Scheme applications close on Friday 1 December 2023, our Summer Vacation Scheme applications close on Friday 22 December 2023, and our direct training contract applications close on Friday 12 January 2024 at midnight. You can apply if you can commence a training contract in 2026. This means you will be in your penultimate-year of a law degree, final-year of a non-law degree, or a graduate.



## Our trainees



*Intisar Abdi*

Trainee Solicitor

*"When I was a future trainee, the firm supported me during my law studies and provided me with work opportunities. Prior to starting my training contract, I was a Paralegal in the firm's Risk & Compliance team and then an Intern at one of the firm's top clients"*



*Naji Tilley*

Trainee Solicitor

*"From my intention to pursue top-tier intellectual property litigation work, to my unnatural obsession with football being brought to legal life in my sports regulatory seat, the work I have carried out has completely surpassed my expectations"*



*Vruksha Patel*

Trainee Solicitor

*"I was involved in the firm's diversity and inclusion initiatives in my first seat, such as helping to launch our Period Positivity drive which saw free, sustainable sanitary products brought into bathrooms at our office - I did not expect to contribute towards a such a big change so early on"*



*Hibaat Abdi*

Future Trainee Solicitor

*"While sitting in dispute resolution during the vacation scheme, I was able to support trainees and associates with real work and I could see how my tasks fed into supporting the work of the wider team. I also went to court for the first time, which was a highlight"*

# *Excellence expected, shaped, and delivered.*

## Solicitors Qualification Examination (SQE)

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) requires aspiring solicitors to have a degree qualification in any subject, pass two centralised assessments (the SQE1 and SQE2), undertake two years' full-time Qualifying Work Experience (QWE), and meet the character and suitability requirements to qualify.

While the SRA no longer requires aspiring solicitors to complete a law degree to be able to qualify, at Bird & Bird we still require all future trainees to either complete a law degree or the Postgraduate Diploma in Law (PGDL) before commencing the LLM in Legal Practice.

We partner with The University of Law to deliver a bespoke SQE programme prior to your training contract. The SQE1 tests your legal knowledge and the SQE2 which assesses practical legal skills. You must pass each stage of the SQE before progressing onto the next.

The SQE+ programme is a tailored experience for our future trainees joining Bird & Bird, which is being designed by our award-winning lawyers and Early Careers team in collaboration with The University of Law. For more information on the SQE, visit The University of Law or the SRA.

## Induction programme

Your relationship with us starts from the moment you secure your training contract. You will be invited to firm-wide socials, events, and be updated on firm news. Our aim is to ensure your transition into the firm is as smooth as possible. We will also assign a Trainee Buddy to support

you during this period of change, acting as a point of contact from offer letter to qualification.

Prior to starting your first seat, you will have a comprehensive two-week induction designed by our Learning & Development team, providing you with the basic building blocks for your personal growth and professional success as a trainee solicitor. From practical learning to insight sessions and skill-based workshops, we will ensure that you are set up for success. We will introduce you to all areas of the firm, from business services to fee earners, strengthening your understanding of how we operate as one seamless international, sector-focused firm.

## Qualifying Work Experience (QWE)

At Bird & Bird, your QWE is your training contract. You will spend time in four different departments for 6-months each, known as 'seats', giving you a rich learning experience and development opportunities. During each seat, you will be assigned to a dedicated supervisor who is an associate or partner.

Within our departments, we have sector and sub-sector specialisms. You will get exposure to different areas of law whilst working alongside an array of lawyers and clients, as you find the area you want to pursue and qualify into.

You may also experience an international or client secondment to further your experience. On an international secondment, you will explore life in a new city, immerse yourself in our global firm, and work even closer with our international lawyers. On a client secondment, you will develop your commercial edge by understanding their business from the inside.



## Learning & Development

Alongside your seat rotations, you will take part in a tailored Learning & Development Programme which will equip you with a broad range of technical and business skills. This programme is led by a mixture of internal and external speakers in a combination of online and in-person sessions. You will put this learning into context as you rotate around different departments throughout your training contract.

You will receive regular feedback from your supervisors and the Early Careers team to provide you with the support and guidance fundamental to you excelling in your law career.

From induction to qualification, networking and social events will allow you to immerse you in our friendly, vibrant culture. You can also get involved in pro-bono and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, support the Early Career team with events and mentoring, or get involved in other firm-wide opportunities such as sports teams and our employee networks.

## Qualification

At the end of your two-year training contract, you will qualify as a solicitor and each year we hope to retain most of our trainees in newly qualified (NQ) roles across the firm.

## Benefits

- £47,000 first-year salary, £52,000 second-year salary, and £95,000 newly qualified salary.
- £10,000 maintenance grant and all fees covered for the PGDL, and £15,000 maintenance grant and all fees covered for SQE studies.
- Tailor your learning to Bird & Bird with our bespoke SQE+ programme and two-week

induction prior to starting your training contract.

- Opportunity to socialise and study with your cohort before starting your training contract, to build your legal network.
- Health and wellbeing in mind with a benefits package that includes private medical insurance, health assessments, maternity, and paternity leave, shared parental leave, adoption leave, gym membership, flu vaccinations, eyecare, and dental insurance.
- Flexible benefits package for your lifestyle, including 25 days of paid holiday annually, travel insurance, interest-free season ticket loan, computer loan, cycle to work scheme, and give as you earn charity account.
- Bespoke benefits package for your finance, including 5% pension contribution, group income protection, group life assurance, group critical illness, and will writing.



Working with  
*sustainability*  
in mind

# Sustainability

Sustainability is a core strategic initiative for us – it is vital to our people, our clients, and our planet.

From paper brochures to tote bags, plastic bottles, and travelling across the country, we recognise the impact of recruitment on the environment, and we are committed to making a greener way of recruiting. The Early Careers UK team are transforming the way in which they recruit, with sustainability in mind.

## Our highlights:

- We are using digital brochures and/or QR codes for people to access our information. You can access all our early career opportunities online, via our social media or website.
- We no longer travel across the UK to universities to participate in in-person law fairs or events, as part of our sustainability and diversity and inclusion initiative. Instead, we're adopting a hybrid approach by hosting online events and ensuring that any in-person events are accessible by public transport or are hosted at our London office.
- We are reducing our production of merchandise in Early Careers UK, and anything we do produce will be from a sustainable, ethical source.
- We are recruiting most of our candidates online, with online application forms, online Watson-Glaser tests, online video interviews, and (some) virtual assessment centres. Our Flying Start Programme, Virtual Experience Programme and Open Days are entirely online.
- We are reducing the amount of meat served at our events and offering more meat-alternatives for vegetarians, vegans, and those with dietary requirements.
- You can read more about our firmwide sustainability programme, including our commitment to set science-based net zero targets [here](#).



*Levelling* the  
playing field

# Diversity, Inclusion, Equality & Social Mobility

From attraction and marketing to recruitment and selection, and HR and development, the Early Careers team is committed to diversity and inclusion, social mobility, and equality. We know an inclusive culture, alongside a diverse workforce, makes us more innovative and agile as a firm. It is also the right thing to do.

## *Attraction & Recruitment*

### Recruiting from all universities

At Bird & Bird, we want to attract and recruit the brightest and best aspiring lawyers from all walks of life.

In 2019, we made the active decision to not target individual universities and we no longer travel across the UK to universities to participate in in-person law fairs or events, as part of our sustainability and diversity initiative. Instead, we host internal events, most of which are virtual to ensure they are accessible to all, and partner with a range of organisations and student publications to promote our opportunities to aspiring lawyers, no matter their background or education. We recruit from *all* universities and degree subjects.

### Increasing awareness of our opportunities

We want to ensure that we recruit the top candidates onto our programmes, no matter their background or circumstance.

To increase diversity in the legal professional, we partner with a number of platforms, networks and initiatives to educate and equip aspiring lawyers with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. In 2013, we were one of the first law firms to sign a partnership agreement with Aspiring Solicitors, with the aim of increasing diversity in the legal profession, specifically underrepresented groups. In Early Careers, we now partner with the following to host events, law fairs, and work experience opportunities:

- 10,000 Black Interns
- AllAboutLaw
- Aspiring Solicitors
- Bright Network
- DiversCity in Law (LGBTQ+)
- Gradcracker (STEM)
- GROW Mentoring
- Legal Cheek
- Target Jobs
- The Lawyer Portal
- Vantage
- Young Professionals

### Increasing accessibility to our opportunities

To level the playing field, we no longer offer ad-hoc work experience to Bird & Bird employee contacts or clients. Instead, we promote our *Virtual Experience Programme* to all aspiring lawyers. Furthermore, at the application stage of our recruitment process, we no longer ask a candidate to indicate if they have a link to the firm. This is so candidates know that they will be given a fair chance at being selected whether they know us already or not.

To increase accessibility to our opportunities, our *Flying Start Programme*, *Open Days*, and *Virtual Experience Programme* are entirely online, and we host and attend the majority of our events virtually. We are also recruiting most of our candidates online, with online application forms, critical reasoning tests, video interviews, and (mostly) virtual assessment centres.

## Recruiting candidate's potential

From application form to assessment centre, we actively consider how to create a barrier-free recruitment process. We look for the candidate's potential to achieve, rather than disproportionately focus on what's happened in the past. However, to ensure we understand how a candidate's background may have impacted their performance we introduced the Rare Recruitment Contextual Recruitment System (CRS) into our recruitment process in 2018. From that date, we have used contextual data to help us identify candidates with the greatest potential despite significant academic, personal, or socio-economic disadvantage and recognise the achievements of candidates in the context in which they were gained.

We also operate blind application form screening, which means that all unnecessary identification information is removed from an application form before being reviewed by the team, in order to minimise bias. Similarly, we do not share a candidate's application form with interviewers so that all decisions are based solely on what takes place in the interview.

Throughout the recruitment process, we select based on the candidate's potential to achieve, rather than their previous work experience or education. We have worked with an occupational psychologist to update the competencies we look for whilst recruiting, to determine what a Bird & Bird trainee is. Now, we refer to our competencies, such as enthusiasm, people skills, communication skills, and detail-orientation, when selecting future trainees.

## Supporting all candidates

To increase support, we offer confidential advice to candidates with a disability, neurodiversity, mental health, and long-term health problems on adjustments at each stage of the recruitment process.

We know that not everyone has previous experience of psychometric testing, so all candidates receive a practice Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking test and video interview prior to the real assessments, alongside useful tips and guidance to help tackle these new experiences. We have also removed the time limit from the Watson-Glaser for all candidates, with the aim of focusing on a candidate's performance rather than output under time pressure.

At the assessment centre stage and prior to our *Vacation Schemes*, all candidates receive a preparation guide outlining their upcoming assessments and tips on how to be successful at each stage, to ensure transparency, fairness, and a level playing field for all candidates.

## Equipping young people with the skills to achieve their potential

Our Early Bird Scholarship supports, develops and equips young people from low socio-economic backgrounds with the skills they need to achieve their full career potential as part of Bird & Bird's flagship social mobility initiative.

In the past few years, 5 of our Scholars have been awarded a training contract at Bird & Bird. Since 2014, we have supported 37 students during their university studies in law, with a mentoring scheme and career guidance, work experience at the firm, workshops and skill sessions, and financial assistance during their time at university. We mentor Scholars on how to apply for our early career opportunities.

## Our offer

### Financial support

#### *Solicitor Apprentices*

We pay for your university tuition fees and course materials for your LLB and SQE studies. We partner with the University of Law for the LLB and SQE programmes.

#### *Trainee Solicitors*

We provide £10,000 maintenance grant and all fees covered for the PGDL and £15,000 maintenance grant and all fees covered for SQE studies for future trainees yet to gain these qualifications. We partner with the University of Law for our PGDL and SQE programmes.

### Continued support

From offer letter to qualification, we provide wellbeing support and workplace adjustments.

We are a disability, neurodiversity and mental health inclusive employer and want to ensure that you have a barrier-free experience in the workplace. You can get confidential advice from our Early Careers team.

### Networking across the firm

Our apprentices and trainees can join our employee networks, including:

*Embrace* is an award-winning, non-exclusive, and supportive community that welcomes employees of all cultural and racial backgrounds. Embrace is a network for those who relate to, identify with, appreciate, or celebrate culture, religion, history, and experience. The mission is to raise awareness on multiculturalism in the workplace, create an internal network of support, collaborate with leadership in the firm to enhance diversity and inclusion and host socials and events.

*StandOUT* provides a supportive framework for our LGBTQ+ staff and allies, by representing their views and promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion. StandOUT organise internal and external events and initiatives to raise awareness and educate all employees about our LGBTQ+ community.

*NeuroNetwork* celebrates neurodiverse minds and all ways of thinking in the workplace. Neurodivergent people can bring unique abilities and qualities to the workplace, but also face challenges and can feel unsupported. The network is a place of support, education, and inclusivity in the firm, to eradicate the challenges faced by neurodivergent colleagues.

*Beyond Backgrounds* is our social mobility network to increase awareness and visibility of our efforts within the social mobility space and provide a launchpad to build on these efforts. The mission is to foster an inclusive and supportive workplace culture for individuals from less privileged and more diverse social backgrounds, from how we recruit to how we promote.

### Retaining our employees

We are committed to retaining our talented trainees and apprentices as they grow at the firm. Alongside internal workshops, seminars, and events, as well as mandatory training for managers and supervisors, the wider HR and Diversity & Inclusion teams work with, and promote, a variety of charities, charters, and initiatives.

*Dedicating* our  
time to positive  
impacts





# Pro-bono & Corporate Social Responsibility

## Pro-bono

The ability to help isn't always enough. In today's world, more often than not, what's needed is time. We believe pro bono is time well spent.

For us pro bono is not an add on. We are passionate about making a positive difference to people's lives and giving back to the communities we work within.

We give pro bono our time, consideration, and full expertise; because our culture is focused on making it possible. Possible for our people, our clients and our communities. We believe we can open up possibilities for individuals and organisations in need, by contributing the time, legal expertise, skills, and resources needed to progress their cause.

It is all the more satisfying when we can work together, with our clients and other key stakeholders to foster and develop collaborative opportunities that have a greater positive social impact as a result.

Bird & Bird's partners and employees are involved in a variety of pro bono activities, giving back to the communities in which we operate. Some of the pro bono activities the London office has supported include:

- South Westminster Legal Advice Centre (SWLAC)
- South West London Elective Orthopaedic Centre
- International Paralympic Committee
- Prince's Youth Business Trust (PYBT)
- Oxfam International
- OwnIt

## Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

At Bird & Bird, we go beyond what is simply 'compliance' and engage in actions that make a difference and that further some social good. We work hard to support actions and initiatives that demonstrate a positive impact on the environment and communities in which we operate.

We believe in taking an active role in supporting our communities to make a difference. We are an outward-looking firm. We are interested in the world, current issues, and emerging trends. We work with great clients doing great things. Things that have a real impact on the way the world does business, and how we all live. So, it is not surprising that we also want to have a positive influence by supporting our local communities.

We work alongside our clients to champion initiatives that make an impact on the community around us. Our people dedicate time through volunteering and fundraising, and partner with charities across the world to truly amplify our impact. At Bird & Bird we strive to:

- Maintain an inclusive workplace and generate a shared passion amongst our staff for our charitable and corporate responsibility agenda.
- Minimise our impact on the environment.
- Increase our links with local communities and others to ensure we do not operate in isolation from our surroundings.
- Work with our clients and their industry sectors to maximise the impact of our corporate responsibility programme.

*Achieve* your  
full potential



# Applying to us

The recruitment process is different for each opportunity and programme.

Opportunity/Programme	Application Form/Register	Watson-Glaser	Video Interview	Assessment Centre	Other Assessment
Vacation Scheme	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Training Contract	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Solicitor Apprenticeship	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Early Bird Scholarship	✓	✓	✓		✓
Flying Start Programme	✓				
Open Days	✓				
Office Drop-Ins	✓				

## Key competencies

As a candidate, you must be prepared to showcase your skills and experience in different assessment styles. Below, are some key competencies we recognise in our solicitors, which we assess aspiring lawyers against:

- Proactivity & Initiative
- Enthusiasm & Willingness to Learn
- Communication & Engagement
- Critical Thinking & Decision Making
- Quality & Detail Focus
- Project Management & Organisation
- Motivation & Commercial Awareness
- Working Effectively under Pressure

*Visit our employability hub, The Nest, and achieve your full potential with our resources on how to develop your legal skills and experience, build your commercial awareness, find mentoring opportunities, and access events and law fairs.*

# FAQs

## 1. I have a disability and require adjustments, what do I do?

We are a disability, neurodiversity and mental health inclusive employer and want to ensure that you have a barrier-free recruitment experience. If you need adjustments during the recruitment process or require assistance completing an application as the result of disability, you can get confidential advice from our Early Careers team.

## 2. How do you become a commercial solicitor at Bird & Bird?

At Bird & Bird, there are different routes to qualification – as a solicitor apprentice or as a trainee solicitor. If you intend to or have studied a university degree, you can become a trainee solicitor by attending a Vacation Scheme or applying directly for a training contract. If you are a school leaver and have not attended university yet, you can become a solicitor apprentice by applying to our Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme.

## 3. For the trainee solicitor role, can I apply to the two training contract routes at the same time?

No. You cannot apply for a Vacation Scheme and directly for a training contract in the same recruitment year. You can also only apply to either the Spring or Summer Vacation Scheme.

## 4. When is the best time to apply?

We recruit on a rolling basis, which means we review and progress applications as they are received. We encourage applicants to apply as early as possible.

## 5. I am an international student, can I apply?

To apply for our Vacation Scheme, you need the right to work in the UK and will need to check the conditions of your visa. If you require support to get a visa in the UK, we recommend applying directly for a training contract. If you are successful in securing a training contract, we will offer reasonable assistance with obtaining the necessary work permits and visas where required.

## 6. What are your minimum academic requirements?

We accept applications from those who have, or will expect to have, a minimum of AAB at A-Level and a 2:1 undergraduate degree (or equivalent). For our Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme, we accept applications from those who have at least 5 GCSEs at grade 4-9/C-A\*, including Maths and English. For our Early Bird Scholarship, we accept applications from those who have at least 5 GCSEs at grade 7/A, including English and Maths

## 7. I do not meet the minimum academic requirements; can I still apply?

We understand that you may not have received the grade you hoped for due to extenuating or mitigating circumstances. Please detail any relevant information in your application form for us to take into

consideration. We also use a Contextual Recruitment System (CRS) to enable us to recruit people from all kinds of backgrounds and help us understand your achievements in the context in which they were gained.

8. Do I need to study my PGDL/SQE with a preferred provider?

We partner with the University of Law for our future trainee PGDL and SQE programmes, as well as our solicitor apprentice LLB and SQE programmes.

9. If I'm successful in securing a training contract, will I study the LPC or SQE?

At Bird & Bird, our preference is that our future trainees study the SQE route. However, we will not base our decision on who to recruit for our training contract based on whether they have completed the LPC or SQE, or if they have or have not studied a PGDL, LPC or SQE at all. We will discuss individual circumstances with all those offered a training contract.

10. Do you financially assist students in their PDGL and/or SQE studies?

We provide £10,000 maintenance grant and all fees covered for the PGDL and £15,000 maintenance grant and all fees covered for SQE studies prior to the training contract start date. We don't offer retrospective funding, we only fund those yet to study their PGDL and/or SQE. Unfortunately, we cannot reimburse you for your PGDL, LPC or SQE if you have completed these before securing a training contract with us.

11. Does my previous work experience count as Qualifying Work Experience (QWE) at the firm, and if so, does this shorten the length of my training contract?

At Bird & Bird, we ask that all trainees complete the entire two-year training contract, composed of 4 seat rotations, despite any previous work experience/QWE undertaken elsewhere.

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