

Our People, Your Team

 **Lanyon Bowdler**
SOLICITORS



**Careers in
a Law Firm**



0800 652 3371 www.lblaw.co.uk

Support function careers in a law firm

Many larger law firms have specialist support departments which offer careers in non-legal type jobs.

- **Human Resources/Personnel** - responsible for all aspects of personnel management, including data management, administration, coaching and supporting managers on people issues, performance management, talent management, recruitment and retention, reward and employee welfare. Often includes responsibility for training and development.

Roles range from HR Administrator or Training Administrator, through HR or Training Advisor, to HR Manager or Director.

- **Accounts & Finance** - responsible for managing the accounts, including payments in/out, ledger management, data input to accountancy systems, producing data reports, reconciliation of accountancy ledgers, providing information for compilation of annual accounts.

Roles range from Accounts Administrator/Accounts Clerk to Accounts Manager, Finance Director or Head of Finance.

- **Marketing** - responsible for marketing the business profile to generate income from new and existing clients, including identifying areas for business development, advertising & promotion of the firm, planning and organising promotional events such as seminars and stands at shows, managing and analysing client data, managing marketing budgets.

Roles range from Marketing Administrator/Assistant to Marketing Manager/Director.

- **IT** - responsible for the technology and computer systems, including IT strategy, purchase of hardware and software, user support and training, help desk to log and fix issues, on-going maintenance and support of all IT systems.

Roles range from Help Desk Administrator/Support through Systems Administrator to IT Manager/Director.

- **Administrative Support/Receptionist** - support roles responsible for tasks such as mail, reception, copying, data collection, and any other general administrative duties.
- **Secretarial** - responsible for team or individual secretarial support including audio/copy typing, file management, diary management, arranging meetings, dealing with client calls. Some secretaries also do basic fee earning work with clients, including providing information and face to face meetings, or attending court to support fee earners.

Key skills and competencies

What do employers look for when recruiting into law firms?

General skills and competencies for all roles:

- Communication skills - written and verbal. Able to confidently communicate at all levels. Ability to understand complex language and information. Ability to present information in plain English.
- Self confidence, self motivation and commitment.
- Team working, the ability to work well with others.
- Planning and time management, the ability to manage your own time and effectiveness.
- Computer literacy with ability to use general computer software such as email, Microsoft Word and Excel. Aptitude for learning and using computer packages.
- Positive approach.
- Commitment to continuous personal development.
- Interpersonal skills.

Specific qualifications:

- All roles require a good standard of education with four GCSE passes at grade C, or level 4 – 5, or above, including English.
- Ideally managers or senior roles in specialist functions will need a degree in the relevant subject or professional qualification, together with and/or a number of years relevant working experience, for example HR degree/CIPD qualified, marketing degree, accountancy qualification etc.
- Secretaries should possess typing skills and RSA Typing and Word Processing qualifications.

Career progression:

- Opportunities for self development and training exist to enable career progression from unqualified roles to qualified or management roles.
- Junior staff often begin employment in admin or support roles and progress through continuous learning and development to more senior or qualified roles.
- Most firms will support and encourage employees in development including undertaking specific learning and qualifications. Often firms will provide financial support for specific qualifications ie CILEX.
- Employers look for someone who has planned their career in Law and has achieved or wishes to achieve the relevant qualifications.



Routes to becoming a Solicitor

Two routes to becoming a Solicitor in England and Wales:

- Law graduate route - degree in law (three years full time), followed by Legal Practice Course (one year full time), followed by a training contract incorporating the Professional Skills Course* (two years full time).
- Non-law graduate route - degree in any subject (three years full time), followed by Common Professional Examination/ Graduate Diploma in Law (one year full time), followed by Legal Practice Course (one year full time), followed by a training contract incorporating the Professional Skills Course (two years full time).

Further information on becoming a Solicitor can be found on the Law Society website: www.lawsociety.org.uk - careers in law section.

**It is possible that soon, the PSC will be replaced by a “super exam”.*

Routes to becoming a Chartered Legal Executive

The role of the Chartered Legal Executive is similar to a Solicitor and is a qualified lawyer specialising in a particular area of law.

To become a Chartered Legal Executive or Solicitor through the CILEx route, you must complete the academic part of the CILEx training programme which is made up of two stages of training - the CILEx Level 3 Professional Diploma in Law and Practice and the CILEx Level 6 Professional Higher Diploma in Law and Practice.

If you have a qualifying law degree you should instead follow courses leading to the CILEx Graduate Fasttrack Diploma.

The programme is assessed by the completion of assignments and examinations set by CILEx, designed to enable study alongside working. Study can be undertaken by either distance learning or through a local college. **For more information please visit the CILEx website: www.cilex.org.uk - careers section.**

Typically students receive on-the-job training in solicitors' offices or legal departments, whilst also attending classes in law and practice at academic institutions or via distance learning.

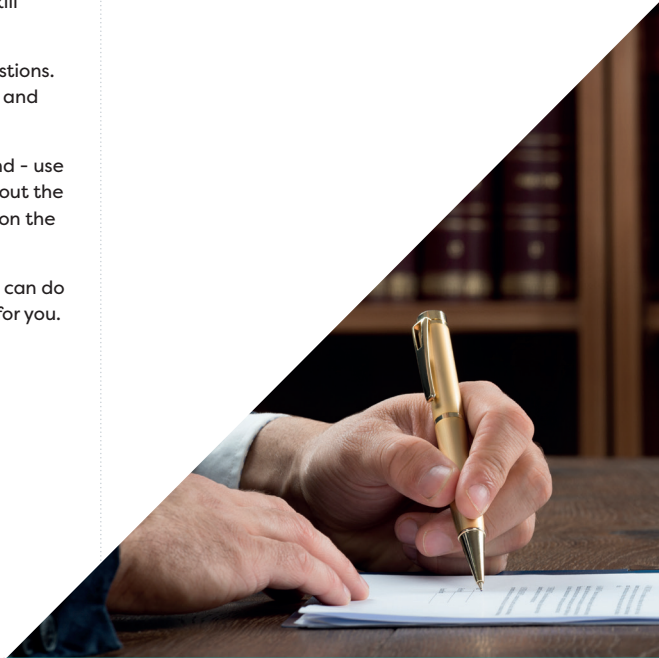
Preparing for an interview

Competition for jobs is fierce and ability to interview well is important. Candidates should ensure they prepare in advance and are able to make the most of the opportunity to “sell themselves” to the prospective employer. Research the role and organisation, and prepare evidence and examples of your skills and competencies.

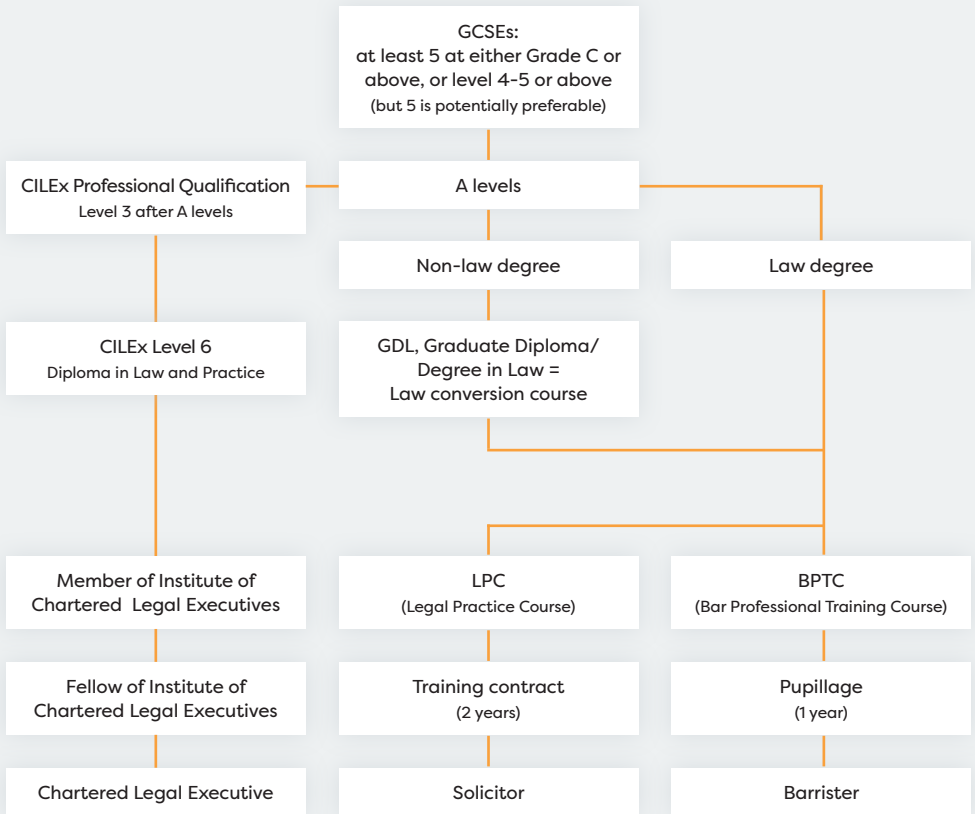
What to do:

- Dress smartly, look bright and attentive, and speak clearly and confidently.
- Find out what kind of interview it will be so you can prepare.
- Examine the person specification and your CV/ application form, and think about what type of questions they will ask you.
- Prepare answers for the main questions - for example, why do you want the job, what are your strengths and weaknesses, what are the main tasks in this job?
- Make about three or four points in each answer.
- Quote real examples of when you've used certain skills - just saying you've got a skill isn't enough.
- Take your time when answering the questions. Make sure you understand the question and take your time if you need to think.
- Prepare some questions to ask at the end - use it as an opportunity to find out more about the role and the company - don't just focus on the money or benefits.
- Keep your answers focused on what you can do for the employer, not what they can do for you.

Further help on completing a CV/application form and preparing for interviews can be found on the Directgov Next Step website: <https://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>



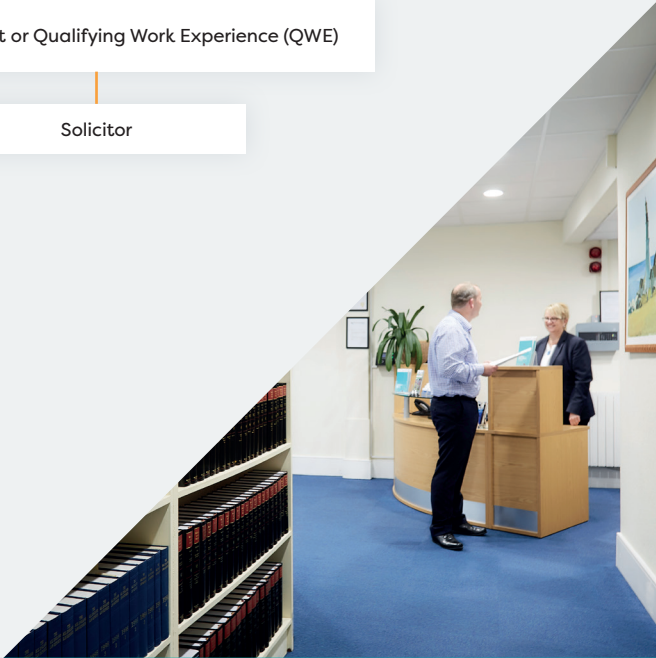
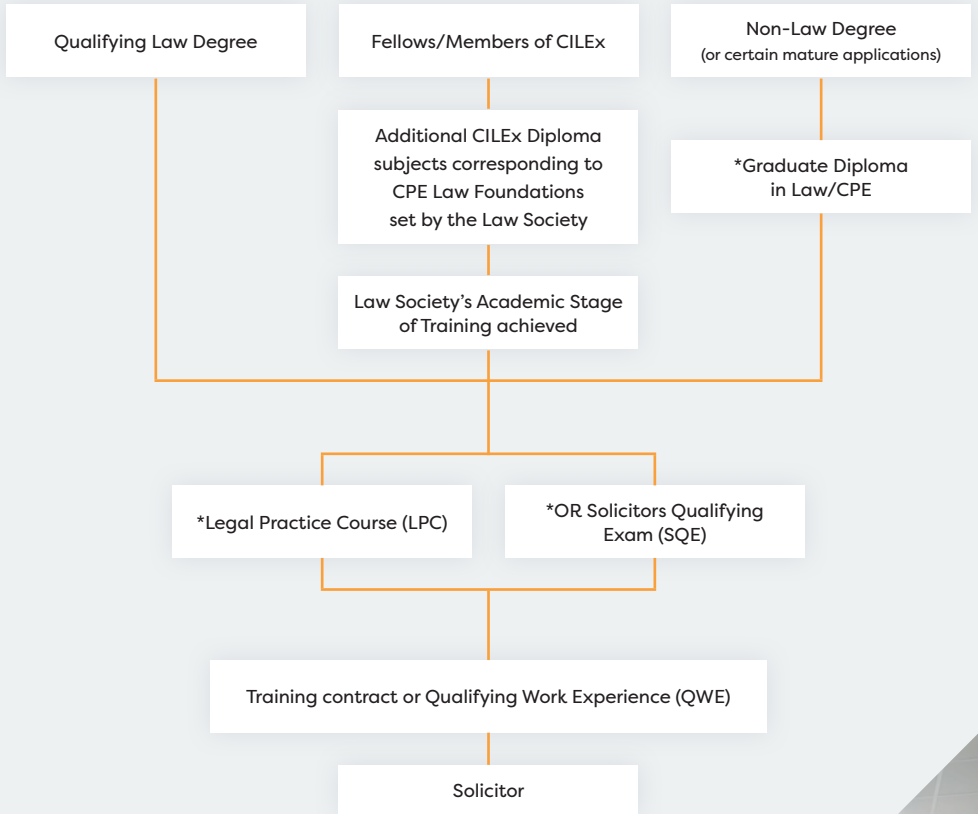
Routes in law from school



It is possible that from around 2020, the LPC and BPTC will be replaced by a “super exam”.

Some degree courses are including the prep for this super exam, but many are not, and it seems likely it will still be available as a separate course.

Law Career Path (Law Degree & CILEx Routes)





More information about working at Lanyon Bowdler, along with current job opportunities, can be found here: www.lblaw.co.uk/careers

or you can email:

learninganddevelopment@lblaw.co.uk

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