

Bird & Bird

Early Careers:

*Our opportunities for
aspiring solicitors*

2024/25



Your firm.
Your future.

Contents



Opportunities for you	4
An insight into law	7
Becoming a solicitor apprentice	10
Becoming a trainee solicitor	14
Sustainability	19
Diversity, Inclusion, Equality & Social Mobility	21
Pro-bono & Corporate Social Responsibility	25
Applying to us	27
FAQs	28



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

Is it possible to work on some of the biggest mandates in your field, and know that every office will pull out all the stops to support you? Is it possible to have real autonomy but never feel like you're just left to do it all yourself? Is it possible to work in an environment where your contribution is valued, even when you are just starting out? And is it possible to be yourself in a global law firm?

It is at Bird & Bird. We're a firm built on a sense of connection and collaboration, where the culture helps us to grow as a firm and develop as individuals and teams.

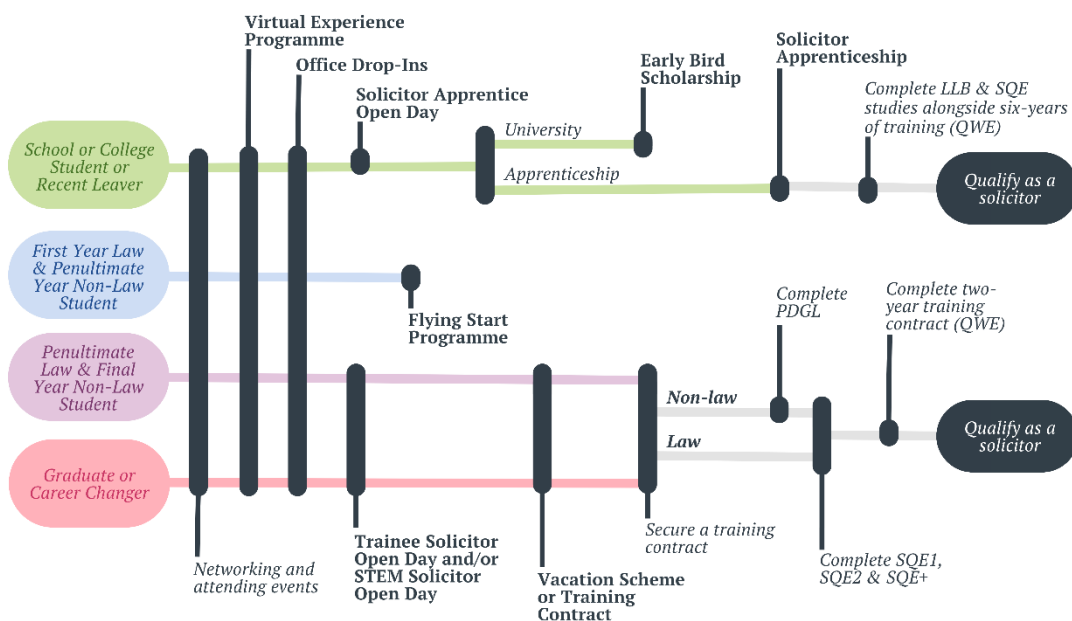
Bird & Bird is an international law firm with offices across Europe, North America, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region. We're one firm internationally, which is something our clients value because it brings consistency, collaboration, and clarity. Our vision is to be the number one law firm in the world for organisations being changed by the digital world or those leading that change.

From commercial to intellectual property, and dispute resolution to financial regulation, we're a full service law firm with a stellar, global reputation for providing sophisticated, pragmatic advice to companies which are carving the world's digital future.

We're interested in the world, current issues, and emerging trends. We're an outward-looking, sector-focused 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 Scholarship, Solicitor Apprentice Open Day, 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 to apply for a training contract, including the Flying Start Programme, 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 Schemes, Trainee Solicitor Open Day, Office Drop-Ins, and Virtual Experience Programme.

Penultimate Law & Final Year Non-Law

If you've decided to take the leap into a legal career, explore the possibilities with our Vacation Schemes, Trainee Solicitor Open Day, Office Drop-Ins, and Virtual Experience Programme.



Key dates

Solicitor Apprenticeship Open Day

23 October 2024 (Online)

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 17 October 2024

Trainee Solicitor Open Day

30 October 2024 (Online)

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 17 October 2024

Office Drop-Ins

21 October 2024 (In-Person)

29 October 2024 (In-Person)

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 17 October 2024

STEM Solicitors Open Day

13 November 2024 (In-Person)

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 31 October 2024

Training Contract

Commencing September 2025 or 2026

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 17 October 2024

Spring Vacation Scheme

31 March to 11 April 2025

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 19 December 2024

Summer Vacation Scheme

16 June to 27 June 2025

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 19 December 2024

Solicitor Apprenticeship

Commencing September 2025

Applications open: 24 October 2024

Deadline: 20 February 2025

Flying Start Programme

15 July to 16 July 2025 (Online)

Applications open: 10 April 2025

Deadline: 3 July 2025

Early Bird Scholarship

Commencing September 2025

Applications open: 10 April 2025

Deadline: 31 July 2025

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

Learn what life is like as a solicitor at an international law firm with our online work experience. *See page 7.*

Flying Start Programme

Fly ahead with our two-day, online programme 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 & Events

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

Vacation Schemes & Training Contracts

Unlock 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're finishing school or college, commencing a university degree, or considering changing to a career in law, we have opportunities for you. From workshops, panel discussions and law fairs, to online work experience and open days, there's so much to discover at Bird & Bird.

Early Bird Scholarship

Commencing September 2025

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 with a junior solicitor 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'll choose to apply for a training contract with us.

Applications open on 10 April and close on 31 July 2025. Our Scholarship is open to students who meet our eligibility criteria. Please visit the website [here](#) for more detail.

Flying Start Programme

Tuesday 15 July to Wednesday 16 July 2025

Our Flying Start Programme is a two-day, online programme for university students not yet eligible for a training contract. We're inviting undergraduate students to learn about our firm,

our work, and our people through interactive workshops, talks, and presentations, panel discussions, and Q&As. It's an opportunity for you to explore your interest in the legal industry and prepare for training contract applications next year. Find out more [here](#).

Applications open on 10 April and close on 3 July 2025. Our programme is open to first year law or penultimate year non-law or STEM undergraduate students.

Virtual Experience Programme

Learn what life is like as a solicitor at an international law firm with our online work experience in partnership with Forage.

Develop your knowledge of what a solicitor *actually* does and use this experience during the recruitment process to showcase your enthusiasm for a career in law.

Did you know Forage applicants are *13.4x* more likely to receive an offer compared to non-Forage applicants at Bird & Bird? *70%* of future trainees completed the programme, so it's phenomenally successful.

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*.

Start the programme [here](#).



Open Days

Solicitor Apprenticeship Open Day (Online)

Monday 21 October 2024

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 17 October 2024

Trainee Solicitor Open Day (Online)

Wednesday 30 October 2024

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 17 October 2024

STEM Solicitor Open Day (In-Person)

Wednesday 13 November 2024

Applications open: 19 September 2024

Deadline: 31 October 2024

To apply to the Solicitor Apprenticeship Open Day, you must be eligible for an apprenticeship. At the time of submitting your application, you should be in Year 13 or recently left school or college.

To apply to our Trainee Solicitor Open Day, you must be able to start a training contract in September 2027 or sooner. At the time of submitting your application, you must:

- be in your penultimate year, final year, or have completed a law degree.
- or be in your final year or have completed a non-law degree.
- or be studying or have completed the PgDL.
- or be studying or have completed SQE1 and/or SQE2.

To apply to our STEM Solicitor Open Day, you must be able to start a training contract in September 2027 or sooner. At the time of submitting your application, you must:

- or be in your final year or have completed a STEM degree.
- or be studying or have completed the PgDL.
- or be studying or have completed SQE1 and/or SQE2.

Find your Open Day [here](#).

Office Drop-Ins

Monday 21 October or Tuesday 29 October 2024

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 one of our Drop-Ins between 19 September and 17 October 2024 [here](#).

Events

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!

View our events calendar on our website [here](#).



Paving a new way
to qualification



Becoming a solicitor apprentice

Paving a new way to qualification. You can qualify as a solicitor by undertaking on-the-job training while studying for a law degree and the Solicitors Qualifying Examinations (SQE) over six years.

Our Solicitor Apprenticeship is a Level 7 qualification combining study with work to allow you to qualify as a solicitor without incurring student debt often associated with attending university. You'll 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 an LLB Law degree and complete the Solicitors Qualifying Examinations (SQE). At the end of the apprenticeship, you'll be a qualified solicitor.

Find out more [here](#).

Application Process

Applications open on 24 October 2024 and close on 20 February 2025. You can apply if you can commence the apprenticeship in September 2025. At the time of submitting your application, you should be:

- in your final year of A-Levels (Year 13) or have already completed school or college (e.g., on a gap year or working).
- at least 18 years of age at the start date of the apprenticeship.
- and have the right to work in the UK.

You should 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're a current university student, or have already graduated, please apply for a vacation scheme or training contract.



An inspiring environment where people are passionate about their work and respected for the difference they bring.

Studying

Study towards an LLB Law degree and work towards the Solicitors Qualifying Examinations (SQE) at The University of Law alongside working on cutting edge legal work. 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 solicitor at Bird & Bird. All tuition fees and course materials are covered by the firm.

Working

Put into practice the legal knowledge and skills you're learning at university by working in our London office four-days a week. Build your knowledge of the law and find the area you wish to qualify into by working for stimulating clients across a range of sectors with our experts in the legal field.

From Years 1 to 4, you'll rotate once a year across four different departments, known as 'seats', giving you a rich learning experience and development opportunities. We have eight departments: Corporate, Commercial, Dispute Resolution, Employment, Finance & Financial Regulation, Intellectual Property, Real Estate, and Tax. Within our departments, we have sector and sub-sector specialisms, which you'll experience in each seat.

You may also experience a client secondment to further your experience and develop your

commercial edge by understanding their business from the inside.

Learning & Development

Prior to starting your first seat, you'll have a comprehensive induction designed by our Early Careers 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'll ensure that you are set up for success. We'll 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'll also assign you a Solicitor Apprentice Mentor and Partner Apprentice Mentor to support you throughout your programme, acting as a point of contact from induction to qualification. You'll 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.

Alongside your seat rotations, you'll 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'll put this learning into context as you rotate around different departments throughout your apprenticeship.

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'll 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 and £30,000 in Year 2.
- All tuition fees and course materials covered for your studies.
- Network and socialise with colleagues through our employee-led networks, socials and events, immersing yourself in our friendly, vibrant culture.
- 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.



Charlotte Edmondson

Year 2 Solicitor Apprentice

“I applied to Bird & Bird was because I felt the firms’ values aligned closely with my own. Bird & Bird is a law firm that combines a determination to excel with an incredibly friendly work culture. I have been made to feel so welcome since my first day and I am so excited to see what the following years bring”



Ella Perring

Year 2 Solicitor Apprentice

“The opportunity to apply the legal theory that you are learning as part of the law degree on a day-to-day basis whilst working in a professional environment really stood out to me. I believe there is no better place to start your career than surrounded by highly knowledgeable individuals who you can learn from and build connections with”





Training *beyond*
your expectations

Becoming a trainee solicitor

Qualify as a solicitor with two-years of exceptional training to kick-start your career in law.

At Bird & Bird, your two-year training contract will give you two years of Qualifying Work Experience (QWE). The two-year training programme will commence after university and the Solicitors Qualifying Examinations (SQE) to develop practical skills and legal knowledge. You'll experience four 'seats' in different practice areas for six-months each. You'll be supervised by experts in their field and work for stimulating clients across a range of sectors. After the end of the training contract, you'll be a qualified solicitor.

To become a trainee solicitor at Bird & Bird, you can apply by attending a vacation scheme.

Vacation Scheme

Explore your potential by undertaking real legal work, in-person, in our London office, and decide whether we're the right firm for you.

Spring Vacation Scheme (two weeks)
Monday 31 March to Friday 11 April 2025

Summer Vacation Scheme (two weeks)
Monday 16 June to Friday 27 June 2025

A vacation scheme with us is much more than just work experience. It's an opportunity to discover your potential and kick-start your career in law, taking you straight to the heart of our global firm. Alongside working in a department, you'll be provided with training, skill sessions, and the opportunities to meet a breadth of people from across the firm. You'll also have the chance to network and socialise with colleagues through our socials and events, immersing yourself in our friendly, vibrant culture.

Securing a training contract

If you would like to be considered for a training contract commencing in 2027, you must apply for a 2025 vacation scheme as all vacation scheme participants will be considered for a training contract at the end of the scheme.

We have a small number of spaces in our 2025 and 2026 trainee cohorts. We're unable to consider any applications for these cohorts if you're not eligible to commence a training contract in September 2025 or 2026. Please read the application criteria before you apply on our website. We will not be able to consider deferral requests if you're successful.

Application Process

Applications open on 19 September 2024. Our training contract applications close on 17 October 2024, and our vacation scheme applications close on 19 December 2024.

Please visit our website for the entry requirements and more information [here](#).





Intisar Abdi

Newly Qualified 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

Newly Qualified 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

Newly Qualified 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

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"



Be part of a specialist international law firm, which is exceptional in its advice and ambitious in its intent.

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 training 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, designed in collaboration with The University of Law.

Induction programme

Your relationship with us starts from the moment you secure your training contract - as a future trainee solicitor. You'll 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'll 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'll have a comprehensive 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'll ensure that you're set up for success. We'll 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'll spend time in four different departments for six-months each, known as 'seats', giving you a rich learning experience and development opportunities. During each seat, you'll be assigned to a dedicated supervisor who is an associate or partner.

We have eight departments: Corporate, Commercial, Dispute Resolution, Employment, Finance & Financial Regulation, Intellectual Property, Real Estate, and Tax. Within our departments, we have sector and sub-sector specialisms. You'll 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 a client secondment to further your experience by developing your commercial edge by understanding their business from the inside.

Learning & Development

Alongside your seat rotations, you'll take part in a tailored Learning & Development Curriculum 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'll put this learning into context as you rotate



around different departments throughout your training contract.

You'll 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 training contract, you'll 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 £98,000 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.
- Study with your future trainee cohort at The University of Law for your PGDL and/or SQE studies.
- Build your network and socialise with colleagues through our employee-led networks, socials and events, immersing yourself in our friendly, vibrant culture.
- 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



Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is a core issue for us – it's 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're committed to 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're 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're reducing our production of merchandise in Early Careers UK, and anything we do produce will be from a sustainable, ethical source.
- We're recruiting most of our candidates online, with online application forms, critical reasoning tests, video interviews, and (some) virtual assessment centres. Our Flying Start Programme, Virtual Experience Programme and Open Days are entirely online.
- We're 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.

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 initiatives.

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
- 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, don't ask a candidate to indicate if they have a link to the firm. This is so candidates know that they'll 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're 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've 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 to minimise bias. Similarly, we don't 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 worked with an occupational psychologist to determine what skills and competencies an excellent Bird & Bird trainee demonstrates. These include Communication & Engagement, Proactivity & Initiative, and Working Effectively under Pressure.

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've 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, our Scholars have been awarded a training contract at Bird & Bird. We've supported 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. We also offer a sign-on bonus to help with relocation and purchasing workwear.

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're 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.

Multi-Faith Groups is a broader network for all faith networks within the firm, including Muslim, Jewish, and Christian groups.

Retaining our employees

We're 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 isn't an add on. We're 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's 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're an outward-looking firm. We're 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's 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

As a candidate, you must be prepared to showcase your skills and experience in different assessment styles. The recruitment process is different for each opportunity and programme, but the competencies we look for are consistent across our offering. 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

We're 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 by contacting earlycareers@twobirds.com.

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?

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

At Bird & Bird, there are different routes to qualification – as a solicitor apprentice or as a trainee solicitor. If you're currently studying 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're a school leaver and have not attended university yet, you can become a solicitor apprentice by applying to our Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme. Please note that our apprenticeship is not open to university graduates.

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're successful in securing a training contract, we'll 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, and those who have, or will expect to have, a minimum of AAB at A-Level (or equivalent).

For our Early Bird Scholarship, we accept applications from those who have at least 5 GCSEs at grade 7/A, including English and Maths, and those who have, or will expect to have, a minimum of AAB at A-Level (or equivalent).

7. I don't 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. Anyone who has not yet studied the PGDL and/or SQE upon receiving a training contract offer will do so at the University of Law.

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'll discuss individual circumstances with all those offered a training contract.

10. Do you financially assist students in their PGDL 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've 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.

12. I'm an overseas qualified lawyer, how do I get qualified in the UK?

A foreign qualified lawyer may seek to qualify as a solicitor through the SQE. The SQE assessment is made up of two parts: SQE1 tests legal knowledge through a multiple-choice test and SQE2 test practical skills through oral and written exams. Unlike other aspiring solicitors, qualified lawyers don't need two years' qualifying work experience.



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