

MAYER • BROWN

# The Inside Track

◆ Your guide to negotiating the trainee solicitor recruitment process at Mayer Brown.

# Introduction

What's involved in training to be a lawyer at Mayer Brown? What's the best way to get to know us? What are we looking for at interview, and what's the secret of completing a winning application form? This guide focuses on some of the practical information you need to know if you're considering applying to us.

From what happens on Open Days and Work Experience Programmes through to tips on applications and interviews. You will also find details of the training journey that successful applicants take once they join us – read this for the inside track on securing a training contract with Mayer Brown.

# Open Days

Open Days are an opportunity for you to meet some of our partners, mingle with our current trainees and get some insider tips on making your application and impressing at interview.

We run Open Days every year in December and January. These are open to all undergraduates and graduates, regardless of degree discipline. Each day has a full programme of events and has been designed to provide a real insight into life at Mayer Brown and the opportunities on offer. As well as meeting some of our partners, associates and trainees informally, the Open Days also include seminars by leading partners from two of our major practice areas, a commercial exercise, a day in the life of a trainee and a skills session with our graduate recruitment team. You can find application details for our Open Days in [The application timetable](#) section of this guide.

# Skills Sessions

Each year we visit many universities to deliver our on-campus skills sessions. These have been designed to help increase your chances of securing a training contract and are a great way to find out more about Mayer Brown. Many of our trainees first met us at one of these popular events, and they are useful opportunities to get the inside track on our firm.

Go to [www.mayerbrown.com/careers/gradrec](http://www.mayerbrown.com/careers/gradrec) for an up-to-date diary of our on-campus events.

# Work Experience Programmes

Every year we offer three paid Work Experience Programmes. There is one in the Spring and two over the Summer, and you can find the dates in [The application timetable](#) section of this guide. The programmes will give you a valuable insight into the world of a trainee at Mayer Brown and first-hand experience of life in a global law firm.

The programmes are very hands-on – you will be sharing an office with a partner or associate, assisting them on real deals and helping with their day-to-day work. You will have the opportunity to sit within two departments, and we will ask you in advance which areas interest you most.

To supplement the practical work experience, you will also attend presentations and workshops covering our practice areas, designed to give you even more insight into the breadth of the firm. Expect plenty of planned social activities, including a trip to one of our European offices.

You will be based at our City of London office and you will be able to meet, work and socialise with trainees, associates and partners. You will be assigned a trainee buddy during the programme, who will act as your personal guide during your time here with the firm.

Visit [www.mayerbrown.com/careers/gradrec](http://www.mayerbrown.com/careers/gradrec) for programme dates and application details.

# The training journey

## LPC at Kaplan Law School

Life as a trainee with Mayer Brown begins at Kaplan Law School with the Legal Practice Course (LPC). The Kaplan LPC has been exclusively tailored to reflect our core practice areas. The course includes a Mayer Brown Commercial Contracts Elective, devised by Kaplan in collaboration with our lawyers.

In addition to the LPC, Mayer Brown students at Kaplan participate in an LPC Enhancement Programme. These sessions are designed to smooth the transition from legal studies to working life and to improve presentation and writing skills, teamwork, relationship management, commercial awareness and time management.

The sessions include:

- a five-module introductory course on US law, with presentations by the students at our London office;
- research exercises carried out in our Information Centre; and
- sessions on briefing your supervisor and running a client meeting.

## The training contract

During the two-years there are four seats – including a secondment to one of our major clients in the UK or possibly to one of our international offices. During each six-month seat, you will share an office with a partner or senior associate, who will act as your supervisor and mentor, and you can expect to be given high levels of responsibility, case management and client contact from an early stage; as well as two appraisals to discuss your training journey.

## The training journey

### The training programme

Training and development are a way of life at Mayer Brown, but your first two years will be the most intensive time for learning. Supporting you through this time is an important part of our commitment to you.

The Professional Skills Course (PSC) must be completed by all trainee solicitors prior to qualifying as a solicitor. The course comprises three core modules: Financial and Business Skills, Advocacy and Communication Skills and Client Care and Professional Standards.

In addition to these three core modules, we will also ask you to complete the following electives:

- Introduction to the City;
- Communication Skills;
- Personal Effectiveness; and
- Presentation Skills.

You will also get the chance to attend our new Trainee Development Centre to enhance your client handling skills and business acumen.

### After your training contract

Training and development remain an important part of life at Mayer Brown after qualification. Our comprehensive programme focuses on delivering appropriate professional and technical training initiatives. These are specifically designed to develop lawyers with strong technical and commercial skills through our Associate and Senior Associate Development Centres.

# Deciding which firm is right for you

Big and global or small and intimate? Specialist expertise or broad skills? Finding the firm that is right for you will take research. As well as the other guides in our series on Mayer Brown – [The Real Deal](#) and [The Lowdown](#) – there are a number of sources available to help you find out more about us and other firms.

## Careers Services

Start here. Talk to an adviser about your skills and your plans. They will have literature from lots of firms for you to look at. They can also tell you about law firm recruitment days, skills sessions or presentations that are coming up. Later in the process, they can help you to complete your application form and prepare for your assessment.

## Careers Directories

There are lots of publications available, in print and online, which will tell you about the size of different firms and the types of work they specialise in. Some will also have ‘day in the life’ and trainee solicitor profiles. Your Careers Service will have directories for you to look at that will help you to draw up your shortlist of firms.

## Law Fairs

Law Fairs are an opportunity to hear what life is really like at a law firm – in person, not just on paper. They are a great opportunity to talk to trainees and associates who have been in the same position as you and to find out more about the culture of each firm.

# The application

Once you have decided that Mayer Brown is the right firm for you, the next step is making an application. Of course, there is more to this than form filling. Here are some simple tips that have helped other people secure an opportunity at Mayer Brown:

## Check your junk mail

Spam and junk email filters can stop important emails getting to your inbox (especially Hotmail, Gmail and Yahoo!). Either check your junk mailbox regularly or change your settings.

## Keep your details up to date

If you change your email, phone number or address, don't forget to tell us. We might need to get more information from you, or invite you to an Assessment Centre or interview. (If you are using a university email account, check how long it stays active for after you graduate.)

## Do a rough draft first

Print off a few blank copies of the form. Work on a rough draft that you can refine for the final, clean copy. This will help you to gain an overall understanding of the information required, so you don't just write whatever springs to mind.

## Tell the truth!

We check all the references and grades you give us, so there is no point trying to enhance anything. Don't try to be someone you are not. You will impress us far more by being honest.

## Check, check, and check again

Attention to detail is essential for a legal career, as are strong communication skills. Mistakes on your form can really count against you. Ask someone to proofread it for you.



## The application

### Keep a copy

It is hard to remember what you wrote on your form by the time you get to interview. Make sure you keep a copy of your completed form so you can refresh your memory later.

### Covering letters

Keep them concise, to the point and then check and proofread them too.

### Follow-up

We will send you a confirmation email within 24 hours of receiving your application. If you haven't heard from us, phone us to check whether we have received anything from you.

# The application timetable

You can check for any changes to the dates for Work Experience Programmes and training contract applications on our website. All applications must be made online, please visit [www.mayerbrown.com/careers/gradrec](http://www.mayerbrown.com/careers/gradrec)

### Open Days

Open to undergraduates and graduates from all disciplines.  
*Apply* From 1 November 2011

### Spring Work Experience Programme

Open to final year undergraduates and graduates from all disciplines.

*Apply* From 1 November 2011 to 31 January 2012  
Interviews will take place in January/February 2012  
*Dates* Monday 26 March to Thursday 5 April 2012

## The application timetable

### Summer Work Experience Programmes

Open to penultimate year law undergraduates and final year undergraduates from all disciplines.

*Apply* From 1 November 2011 to 31 January 2012

Interviews will take place in January/February 2012

*Dates* Monday 25 June to Friday 13 July 2012

and Monday 13 August to Friday 31 August 2012

Applications for our Work Experience Programmes are made online. If successful, you will be asked to complete an online verbal reasoning test followed by a 40-minute interview with a member of the graduate recruitment team.

### Training contracts beginning September 2014/March 2015

*Apply* From 1 November 2011 to 31 July 2012

Law undergraduates should apply after receiving their penultimate year results.

Applications for training contracts are made online. If successful you will then be invited to a one-day Assessment Centre where you will complete a written exercise, an interview with two partners and a group exercise.

# The interview

The most important advice we can give you is to be yourself at interview. We don't want you to be over-rehearsed or scripted for your interview but being well prepared is important. Here are some ideas that might help you do well:

## Know the firm

Find out everything you can about Mayer Brown and the areas we specialise in. You don't need to memorise everything – but you should have a sense of our size, scope and identity, as well as how we differ from our competitors.

## Know your role

Understand what you are applying for. Read some trainee profiles; visit Law Fairs and Open Days. Make sure you know what a trainee solicitor actually does.

## Know yourself

Know your strengths. Why would you fit in well here? What have you done in your life that has shaped who you are? Have some stories about you ready to share.

## Be punctual

Time management is critical for lawyers. Leave yourself plenty of time to arrive.

## Look the part

We are not judging on style, but the way you present yourself is very important. Dress, body language and your enthusiasm all contribute to that all-important first impression.

## The interview

### Be natural

Try to relax and be yourself. We are all normal people, and we want to see you for who you really are. This will help to ensure that you are suited to the position of trainee solicitor.

### Think ahead

Don't rehearse your answers, but do have some thoughts and opinions ready. All of us have weaknesses but make sure you have a positive slant on yours.

### Be positive

Have some faith in yourself. Confidence is a very attractive quality (in good measure). Own up to your faults but don't dwell on them, and resist the temptation to criticise unnecessarily.

### Ask questions

This is the one most people struggle with. The trick is not to over think it. Instead of trying to think up an 'intelligent' question, focus on asking about the things you genuinely want to know about but haven't found in your research.

### Get feedback

If you are unsuccessful, then take the opportunity to get constructive feedback on your performance.

# The Assessment Centre

If we like your application, we will want to know a lot more before making a decision. Assessment Centres are a great way to do this, but we know that they can be stressful. Stay calm and consider some advice from people who have lived through them.

## Watch the clock

Plan your time – some for reading and digesting, some for writing.

## Don't over-draft

Get your thoughts down on paper quickly. Don't waste time on notes and outlines, just write.

## The approach to take

Law is all about analysis and interpretation – don't waste time restating the facts; tell us what you think instead.

## Keep it simple

Communication skills are essential for a legal career – be clear, avoid jargon and don't over complicate your language.

## Remember your audience

Would you be happy to submit what you have written to a partner? It should be concise and considered.

## Be diplomatic

Don't be afraid to voice your opinion – but do it constructively. Make a suggestion; don't just tear apart someone else's idea.

## Pay attention

Active listening is another key skill. That means absorbing what others are saying and acknowledging that you are listening to what they say by nodding, smiling and keeping eye contact.

# Where to find out more information

You can find out more about training to be a lawyer at Mayer Brown by taking a look at the other guides in this series. [The Real Deal](#) is an insight into work at Mayer Brown via a case study of one of our recent pieces of work. [The Lowdown](#) is an opportunity to hear first hand some important facts about the firm, our areas of expertise and our clients. Copies of these are available on our website, please visit [www.mayerbrown.com/careers/gradrec](http://www.mayerbrown.com/careers/gradrec)

You can also contact a member of the graduate recruitment team in London on

T +44 (0)20 3130 8524

E [graduaterecruitment@mayerbrown.com](mailto:graduaterecruitment@mayerbrown.com)

Good luck.



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