

# In Brief

## Step 10 – Managing Your Career

### Introduction

This 'in-brief' guide focuses on the immediate next steps on leaving law school. Most graduates from the College follow one of the routes discussed below.

### Training contracts

Training contracts typically last two years. Most large firms operate a system of four, six-month 'seats,' but smaller firms may have a more flexible approach. All trainees will however cover both contentious and non-contentious areas of law.

During your traineeship you will also be required to complete the 'Professional Skills Course' – a short course covering three main areas: client care and professional standards; advocacy and communication; and financial and business skills.

In order to impress your employer during your training contract, there are four main areas you should be concentrating on:

- Personal attitude: you should be keen and confident (but not arrogant)
- Client handling skills: good communication and client service skills
- Approach to research: the ability to *apply* your research to the matter in hand
- Commercial and business awareness: from such mundane issues as time recording to marketing and business development.

### Pupillages

Pupillage consists of two 'sixes' or six-month long periods of training usually undertaken over the course of twelve months in the same chambers. The first six is 'non-practising' and most of your time will be spent working with and observing your pupil supervisor. Typical tasks include:

- Researching points of law
- Preparing skeleton arguments or pleadings
- Drafting advice and opinions
- Attending court and client conferences.

If you successfully complete your first six you will receive a Practising Certificate, enabling you to provide legal services and exercise your Rights of Audience. You can now (with the permission of your supervisor) take on work of your own and represent others during your second 'practising' six.

In addition to completing your pupillage and passing the courses stipulated by the Bar Standards Board in order to receive a 'Full Qualification Certificate,' the next stage is to secure tenancy. If you are not offered tenancy by your chambers at the end of your second six, you have a number of options:

- Apply for tenancy in another chambers
- Secure a third 'six' pupillage at a different set of chambers to where you undertook your first and second six while you look for tenancy
- Squatting: you may be able to stay on in chambers as a 'squatter' – you are given work, but are not a member of chambers, and it is usually a short term arrangement
- Apply for positions 'in-house' at the 'employed bar'.

### Other legal employment

You may be looking for non-qualified legal employment while you look for a training contract or pupillage; or you may have decided that you do not want to pursue qualification, but want to remain in the legal sector.

There is a huge choice of alternative careers within the law which you might be interested in, ranging from paralegal opportunities (which is the most popular destination for College students, after training contracts) and legal clerking, through to legal-related occupations such as legal publishing or legal journalism..

### Non legal occupations

If are thinking of pursuing an alternative career, outside the legal profession, start by asking yourself:

- What attracted you to law in the first place? Which other careers could offer you similar rewards or satisfaction?
- What skills and competencies have you developed that are transferable to other careers? (see Step 2)
- What do you like about the legal profession, and where else could you find this?
- What do you dislike about the legal profession, and which careers would allow you to avoid it?

### Further study (for example, an LL.M)

Gaining further qualifications can help to:

- Increase your knowledge, specialisation and interest
- Maintain your connection to the law
- Increase your employability.

Consider these benefits in the light of the further time and expense required, though remember that if you have taken your LPC or BPTC at The College, you will already have 60 out of the 180 credits required for the LL.M.