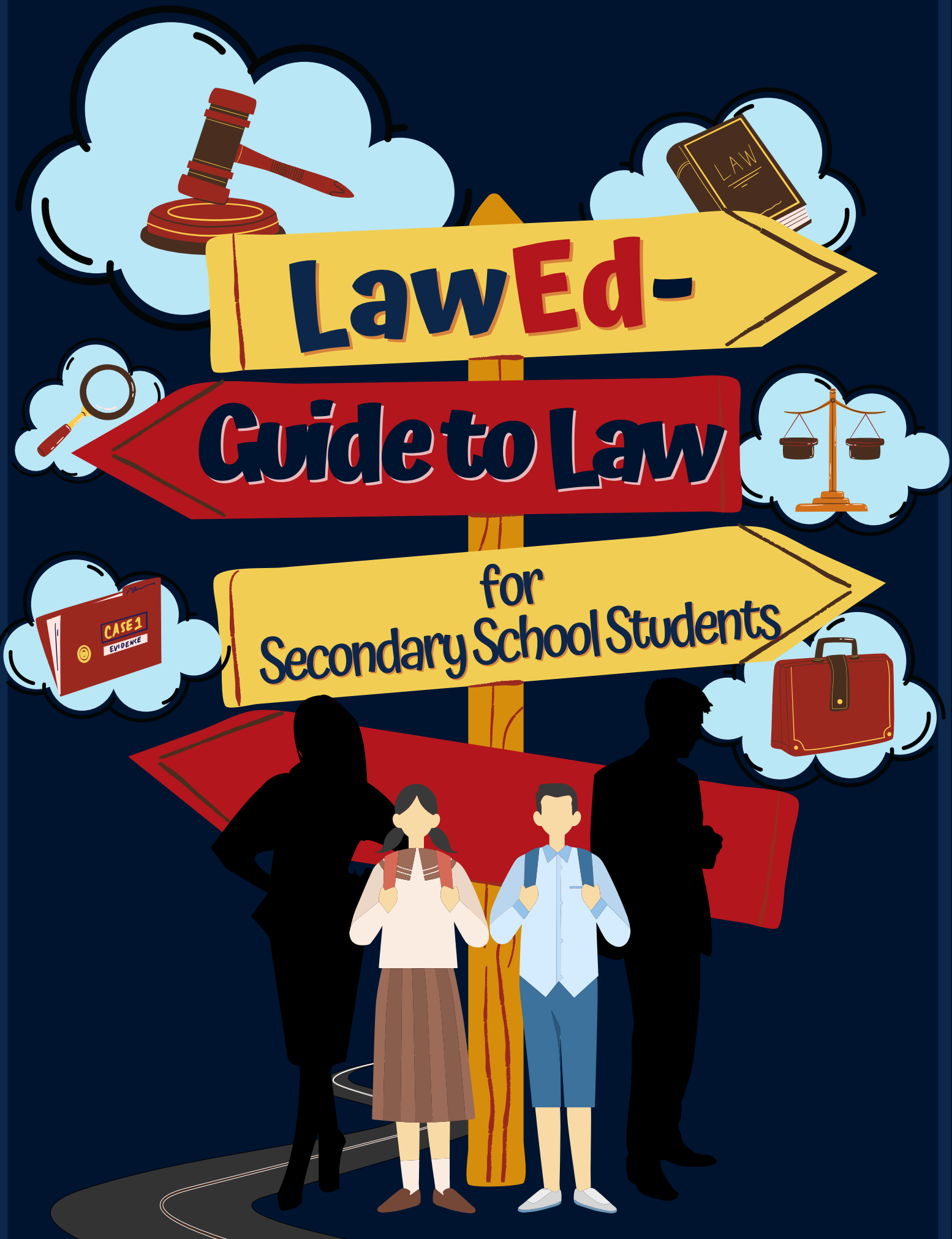




PREFACE

Law is an incredibly diverse and important subject, as it affects almost everything that happens in our lives. From the high-profile criminal court cases, to the silent business takeovers affecting the global economy, to the simple act of buying a chocolate bar, almost all of our daily activities are governed by and related to some aspect of the law.

The great reach of law is neatly summed up by Raymond Wacks in 'Law: A Very Short Introduction' (2015): *"Your job, your home, your relationships, your very life – and your death – all, and more, are managed, and directed by the law"*.

The decision to study law at a higher level is a bold one, and one which should not be made without careful consideration. The study of law can be demanding, sometimes stressful, and is an arduous process, taking on average 4-8 years before qualification. It requires a high level of dedication and motivation, and in order to truly succeed you must be willing to work hard and show a sincere willingness to learn. However, if you can successfully demonstrate these traits, you will find the study of law to be a rich and rewarding education, with an almost limitless set of exciting possibilities!

This guide aims to offer an insight into the law in Ireland, and the different pathways you might follow in order to pursue a profession in it.

About LawEd

Over the past 17 years, LawEd has become one of Ireland's premier providers of law workshops and tailored career advice (CareerEd).

We have more than 17 years' exemplary experience on the people side of the profession as educators, trainers and content makers. We continuously strive to create new content and learning outcomes to move with the accelerated changes in all aspects of the law and education.

LawEd is one of the first providers to deliver blended learning workshops and e-learning courses. We have created the first of its kind e-learning interactive law courses for young people. We work onsite, virtually and through our eLearning law school to deliver unique and educational content. We work with transition year students, senior cycle students, leaving cert applied, LCVP, Youthreach, and also tailor workshops to junior school students (short courses) in all aspects of the law. LawEd delivers courses nationwide.



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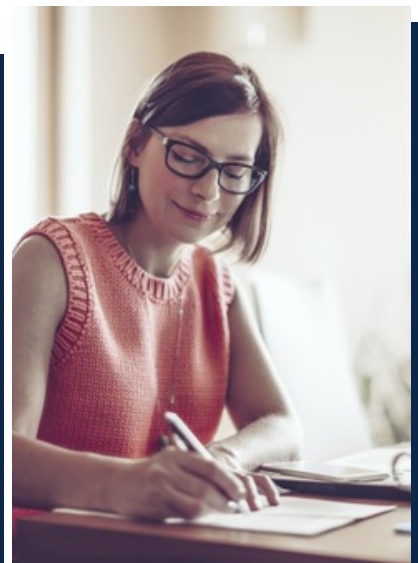
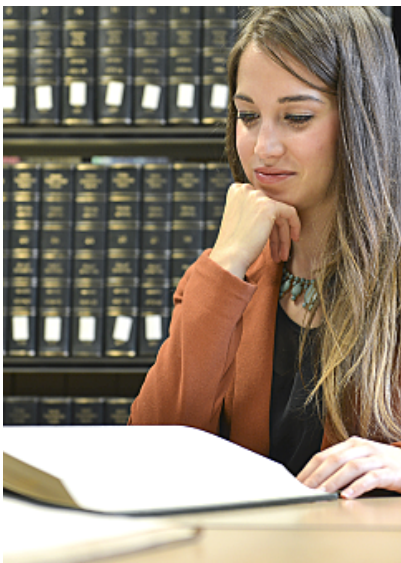


STUDYING LAW AT THIRD LEVEL

Although a law degree is not generally a necessity in order to work in the legal field, many students with an eye to the future will choose to study it at third level. This can be very beneficial, as it will give students the chance to gain a high level of understanding and education in many different areas of law.

Individuals who choose to study law may as a result have an advantage over those who don't when it comes to obtaining a career in law. Equally, studying law at third level can help students to decide which areas they are most interested in, and this can be advantageous when it comes to choosing a future career in this field. Even if you choose not to pursue a career in law, an education in this subject will provide individuals with many different and fascinating opportunities in a wide variety of different industries.

At the heart of all the law schools teaching methods is 'learning the law': knowing and understanding what the law is, critiquing, evaluating and commenting upon it and applying it to issues and problems.





LAW COURSES IN IRELAND

Most universities & institutes in Ireland offer at least one level 8 course to incoming students for obtaining a law degree. A list of these courses are documented below.

UNIVERSITY	COURSE TITLE	LEVEL	Points 2026
South East Technological University	Law (LL.B.) - <i>Waterford</i>	8	319
South East Technological University	Law (LL.B.) - <i>Carlow</i>	8	301
University College Cork	Law (Pathways)	8	534
University College Cork	Law and French	8	532
University College Cork	Law and Irish	8	545
University College Cork	Law and Business	8	565
Atlantic Technological University	Law (LL.B.)	8	301
Atlantic Technological University	Corporate Law	8	307
Atlantic Technological University	Law and Business	8	307
Dublin City University	Civil Law (BCL)	8	496
Technological University Dublin	Law (LL.B.) with a Language	8	376
Technological University Dublin	Law (LL.B)	8	430
University College Dublin	Law	8	559
Griffith College	Law	8	253
Griffith College	Law - Commercial Law	8	306
Trinity College Dublin	Law	8	578
Trinity College Dublin	Law and French	8	600
Trinity College Dublin	Law and German	8	555
University of Galway	Law (BCL) and Business	8	509
University of Galway	Law (BCL)	8	509
University of Galway	Law (BCL) and Human Rights	8	508
University of Galway	Law (BCL), Criminology, Criminal Justice	8	507
Maynooth University	LLB Law	8	453
Maynooth University	BCL Law	8	400
Maynooth University	BCL Law and Languages	8	400
University of Limerick	Law and Accounting	8	454
University of Limerick	Law Plus	8	500
Technological University Shannon	Law - <i>Limerick</i>	8	377
Technological University Shannon	Law - <i>Athlone</i>	8	320
Dublin Business School	Law	8	244

Some universities and institutes also offer level 8 degrees which are related to law, as well as level 6 & 7 degrees also related to law. These are listed below

UNIVERSITY	COURSE TITLE	LEVEL	Points 2026
South East Technological University	Business with Law	8	274
South East Technological University	Criminal Justice Studies	8	288
University College Cork	Criminology (International Pathway)	8	418
Dublin City University	Economics, Politics and Law	8	462
Dublin City University	Arts: Joint Honours (Law)	8	413
University College Dublin	Business and Law	8	555
University College Dublin	Criminology with Psychology	8	510
Griffith College	Law - Criminal Justice	8	252
University of Galway	Government (Politics, Economics, Law)	8	402
Technological University Dublin	Business and Law	8	455
University of Limerick	Common and Civil Law	8	542
University of Limerick	Criminal Justice	8	391
University of Limerick	LLB Law and Cyber Security	8	510
Technological University Shannon	Business and Law - <i>Limerick</i>	8	298
Technological University Shannon	Business and Law - <i>Athlone</i>	8	262
Dublin Business School	Business Studies (Law)	8	279
Maynooth University	Criminology	8	380





INTRODUCTION TO LAW CAREERS

Generally, when we think about careers in the law, we think of the courtroom lawyers as portrayed by the media on the news, and by entertainment companies on our favourite TV programmes – *Silk* or *Suits* does not give an accurate impression! However, this is only one of several legal occupations.

Here are some examples of the different legal career paths:



Solicitor



Barrister



Judge



**Court Clerk/
Registrar**



**Legal
Secretary**



**Legal Intern/
Paralegal**

These various careers will be discussed in detail later in this guide.



SOLICITOR

One of the most common career paths in law is that of the solicitor. Most solicitors are employed by a law firm, and as a result their occupation is full-time with regular income, holidays, sick leave, etc. The job of the solicitor is to provide people with legal information and assistance. They are usually the first person that you would get in contact with if you required legal counselling. They provide advice, seek to find a resolution to the legal issue at hand and represent their own client when dealing with other parties.

THE ROLE OF THE SOLICITOR

Generally speaking, the type of work carried out by a solicitor can be categorised into two separate groups:

a) contentious (litigious) work

b) non-contentious (non-litigious) work

The first category involves resolving disputes between two or more parties, and may often require the use of a court or tribunal. This is the kind of thing that we often see portrayed on TV.

The second category of non-contentious cases involve work carried out by a solicitor to address a client's personal or business needs. Examples include buying and selling property, performing a business takeover, and the drafting of wills.

A solicitor's day-to-day work will generally involve;

- ✓ **meeting clients,**
- ✓ **conducting interviews,**
- ✓ **drafting and processing legal documents & contracts, and**
- ✓ **researching complex legal issues.**

A solicitor may also sometimes be called to speak on behalf of their client in court, although this is more commonly associated with the work carried out by barristers.



BECOMING A SOLICITOR

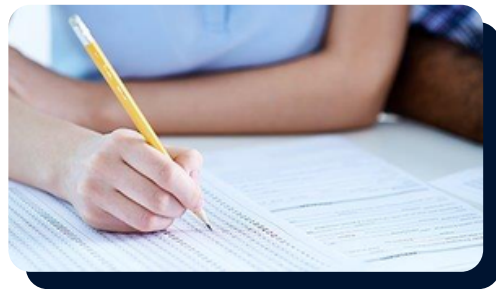
There are several steps involved in becoming a solicitor, as explained below:

STEP 1 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION (FOR NON-GRADUATES ONLY)

Generally speaking, most solicitors will choose to study law at third level, as this will provide them with a high level of understanding of the law going forward. However, it is also possible to become a solicitor without holding a degree in law or any other field by way of the Preliminary Examination. This exam is held once a year, and candidates must be at least 21 years old to apply.

It consists of three papers:

- a) English
- b) Irish Government and Politics
- c) General Knowledge

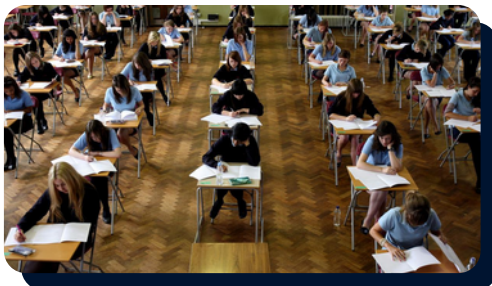


All three papers must be passed in the same sitting, with a grade of 50% required. Three attempts to take the Preliminary Exam are allowed.

STEP 2 FINAL EXAMINATION – FIRST PART (FE-1)

Once you have either passed the Preliminary Examination, or graduated from a third level institute, the next step to becoming a solicitor is by sitting your **FE-1 examinations**. The FE-1 exam is held twice a year, once in Spring and once in Autumn, and consists of eight papers in the following disciplines:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a) Company Law | e) European Union Law |
| b) Constitutional Law | f) Equity |
| c) Law of Contract | g) Real Property |
| d) Criminal Law | h) Law of Tort |



Each paper generally requires a minimum pass grade of 50%. Once this has been achieved, the candidate will have their name entered into the Law Society of Ireland to study with them for their professional qualification.

STEP 3 SECURE A TRAINING CONTRACT

After passing the FE-1 examinations, candidates must secure a Training Contract with an eligible practising solicitor before applying for the Professional Practice Course (PPC). The Training Contract must be registered with the Law Society of Ireland and provides for a 24-month period of in-office training..



STEP 4 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE COURSE (PPC)



Once the FE-1 examinations have been passed and a Training Contract secured, trainee solicitors can begin the Professional Practice Course (PPC) with the Law Society of Ireland. The PPC is currently available through three pathways: Full-Time, Hybrid and Modular. Each pathway covers the same core curriculum and leads to the same professional qualification, but differs in its structure, pace and method of delivery.

	PPC FULL-TIME	PPC HYBRID	PPC MODULAR
Typical Duration	10 months (September to June)	18 months (Dec to Dec + following May/June electives)	18 months consecutively, or up to 5 years max.
Format & Delivery	In-person full-time campus environment. Weekdays (Monday–Friday).	Blended learning. Online lectures + 10-11 onsite weekend sessions (Fri/Sat).	Block modular system. Online lectures + 3-4 onsite/online weekend sessions per module.
Schedule	Continuous academic year over 3 semesters.	Fixed pace over 3 continuous semesters.	3 defined modules (Dec–Apr, May–Jul, Aug–Dec). Can pause/resume between modules.
Working While Studying	Not practical due to full-time weekday contact hours.	Fully optimized to allow trainees to continue full-time local employment.	Designed for ultimate control over pacing around work or care obligations.
Location	Requires living in or commuting to Dublin daily.	Eliminates need to relocate to Dublin. Ideal for regional trainees.	Eliminates need to relocate to Dublin. Ideal for regional or flexible learners.

STEP 5 IN-OFFICE TRAINING

In-office training is an essential part of qualifying as a solicitor. Trainees complete a 24-month period of practical training under the supervision of their training solicitor. The in-office training period begins 14 days after the last examination of Semester 2 of the PPC.

CREDIT FOR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Trainees may apply to the Law Society for up to four months' credit for qualifying legal work experience completed before starting the PPC. This can include work in the office of their training solicitor or another practising solicitor, or relevant work within the Courts Service. The work must have been undertaken within the 12 months immediately before commencing the PPC. Trainees completing the Part-Time (Hybrid) PPC may also be eligible for up to five months' additional credit for qualifying legal work undertaken in the Republic of Ireland during the Hybrid PPC. Any credit awarded is deducted from the end of the 24-month in-office training period and must be formally applied for and approved by the Law Society.



STEP 6 ADMISSION TO THE ROLL OF SOLICITORS

Once a candidate has successfully completed their traineeship and PPCs, they may apply to have their names entered on the Roll of Solicitors. Once this application has been accepted, the final step is to apply for a **practicing certificate**, enabling the candidate to begin practicing in Ireland as a qualified solicitor.



SOLICITOR

ADMISSION TO THE ROLL OF SOLICITORS
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE COURSE & IN-OFFICE TRAINING
FINAL EXAMINATION – FIRST PART (FE-1)
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION (FOR NON-GRADUATES ONLY)



BARRISTER

Another common career path in law is that of the barrister. Barristers specialise in court representation and advocacy, and are the kind of lawyers that are often portrayed on the TV. Unlike solicitors, barristers are generally self-employed, and therefore this occupation can sometimes be very demanding and difficult to make a living from, particularly just after qualification. However, if you are successful as a barrister, there is almost no cap on how far you can go; the sky's the limit!

THE ROLE OF THE BARRISTER

Generally speaking, a barrister will carry out two principle services.

Firstly, they provide **legal representation** in court, and as a result they must be experts in legal debate and presentation; it is very important to come across well in order to construct a convincing argument.

Secondly, barristers provide **independent legal advice** to individuals with regards to most legal issues, although some barristers will be specialised in certain areas.

A barrister's role in court is generally what most people will associate with their occupation. In terms of court work, barristers are tasked with:

- ✓ **drafting arguments (pleading) for their client,**
- ✓ **preparing written and oral legal submissions,**
- ✓ **interviewing and conducting cross-examination on court witnesses.**

A highly skilled barrister may also try and negotiate a settlement between his client and the opposing person outside of Court, in order to avoid a lengthy and costly ordeal in Court. Therefore, barristers must also be skilled in mediation in order to achieve the optimum result for their client.



BECOMING A BARRISTER

Similarly, to solicitors, the path to becoming a barrister is no simple task. Furthermore, even when qualified, barristers are self-employed and independent, meaning that it can take even longer for them to set up a reliable network to provide them with steady work. There are a number of steps involved in becoming a barrister, as outlined below:

STEP 1 ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

The first step to becoming a barrister is to satisfy the first academic requirements. There are two ways to do this:

a) by obtaining a law degree from a university or approved third level institution, or

b) by completing a diploma in legal studies at the King's Inns college following successful completion of an approved non-law degree.

Mature students (over 25) may apply for the diploma without needing to firstly obtain an approved non-law degree.

Students studying a law degree and intending to become barristers must enrol in and pass the following subjects:



a) Land Law

b) Equity & Trusts

c) Jurisprudence

d) Company Law

e) European Union Law

f) Administrative Law

Most law degrees take an average of 3-4 years for successful completion, and the diploma takes two years to complete.

STEP 2 ENTRANCE EXAM & KING'S INNS DEGREE OF BARRISTER-AT-LAW

Once a candidate has satisfied the academic requirements, the next step is to pass the King's Inns entrance exam. The exam consists of five papers in the following disciplines:

- a) **Contract Law**
- b) **Criminal Law**
- c) **Irish Constitutional Law**
- d) **Law of Torts**
- e) **Law of Evidence**



Each paper generally requires a minimum pass grade of 50%.

Upon successful completion of the entrance exam, candidates may choose to enrol in either a one-year fulltime course, or a two-year part time course in the King's Inns in order to obtain their degree of Barrister-at-Law. This course covers a wide variety of subjects, generally relating to procedural & practical education for barristers. There is also a strong emphasis on advocacy, and students will have the opportunity to regularly attend the courts, tribunals, and other specialist bodies throughout their time at Kings Inns. The course is also taught solely by qualified barristers.

STEP 3 PUPILLAGE (ALSO KNOWN AS 'DEVILLING')

Once candidates have successfully obtained their degree of Barrister-at-Law, they will be called to the Bar of Ireland by the Chief Justice. In order to practice independently, candidates must then undertake a 12 month pupillage with a qualified barrister. This is the final step to become a barrister, and gives the candidate the chance to gain valuable experience and learn from an established professional.



BARRISTER



PUPILLAGE (ALSO KNOWN AS 'DEVILLING')

ENTRANCE EXAM & KING'S INNS DEGREE OF BARRISTER-AT-LAW

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS



JUDGE

Judges play an incredibly important role in any legal system. Their primary function is to act as **impartial decision-makers** in cases brought to court. In Ireland, there are not one but several courts, in a hierarchical structure. The highest court in the country is the Supreme Court, and the lowest are the District Courts. This hierarchy also applies to the decisions which judges make. If a judge in the Supreme Court makes a decision concerning a case, and an identical case arises a year later in the District Court, then the District Court Judge is bound by and must follow the Supreme Court decision. This is known as **precedent**. In the lower courts, there may be only one judge deciding a case, whereas in the Supreme Court there can be up to seven judges at once.

THE ROLE OF THE JUDGE

In order to be a good judge, several key skills are required.

- ✓ The individual must have an outstanding **understanding of the law**, as they will be dealing with cases in many different areas.
- ✓ A good judge must also be able to **act impartially**, and to deal with the case purely on its merits without letting personal feelings enter into the equation. When a judge decides a case, it is extremely important for them to be able to **articulate and explain** exactly why they came to their decision.



Imagine if your teacher gave you detention and then refused to explain why they had done so; you might quickly lose faith in their authority!



Although judges do not create legislation, they are law-makers in a sense, as their decisions create the precedent that binds and affects future cases. In Ireland, the court system exists in a **common law jurisdiction**, and this means that the decisions which are made by judges are incredibly important in determining the law from thereon out. The alternative to a common law jurisdiction is a **civil law** system (France for example), where codified law is regarded as more important than previous court decisions.

Sometimes a jury will be present in a trial, and if this is so then the judge will not be in charge of deciding the case. Instead, the judge will provide guidance to the jury, and will ensure that the trial is run correctly.

BECOMING A JUDGE

The path to becoming a judge is perhaps the longest and most difficult of all the legal professions.

- ✓ In order to be appointed as a District Court judge, the individual in question must have **at least 10 years of experience as either a barrister or solicitor**.
- ✓ In order to be appointed to the High Court, Court of Appeal, or Supreme Court, they must have at least **12 years of experience**. Typically, most judges will actually have much more experience than the minimum requirements, so it can really take a long time before an undergraduate law student sits on the supreme court!

Generally speaking, the Irish Government will decide who should be appointed as a judge after being advised by the **Judicial Appointments Advisory Board**. In turn, the Government will then advise the President who will appoint the Judge on their behalf. If an individual wishes to apply to become a judge, it is important that they have an impeccable reputation and career record, and that their tax affairs and all other relevant documentation are in order. This is important, because if a judge's character is questionable, then this will have an impact on their credibility.



JUDGE

PRESIDENT'S APPROVAL

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS ADVISORY BOARD

10 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A BARRISTER / SOLICITOR



COURT CLERK/REGISTRAR

The court clerk/registrar holds an important position in court as the person responsible for documenting the various elements of the case and the orders made by the judge. They are also tasked with **managing administrative matters** and keeping court documents in order. Essentially, court clerks work hard to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the courts.

THE ROLE OF THE COURT CLERK/REGISTRAR

The primary role of the court clerk is to **assist the judge in court**. There are several key functions which they must perform.

- ✓ To begin with, each day the court clerk must compile a document listing all the cases that are due to appear before the court each day, and use this to call out the party names in order to identify them before proceedings begin.
- ✓ When a case involves witness testimony, if the witness chooses to make an oath by swearing on the bible it is the court clerk who is in charge of presenting this.
- ✓ During the case, the court clerk will keep and look after all relevant court documents, and will provide these to the judge where needed.
- ✓ Finally, where a judge makes an order concerning a case, such as an award to one party or a prison sentence, the court clerk will take note of this to keep a record of the events of the day.
- ✓ This position can be very incredibly rewarding, as court clerks get to sit in on many different cases every day, and have the chance to see first-hand how the law operates in the court room.



BECOMING A COURT CLERK/REGISTRAR

Unlike the majority of legal professions, court clerks are generally not required to have any legal qualifications. This is because they are public servants, meaning that they are hired directly from the civil service. In order to become a part of the civil service, individuals must apply directly to the **Public Appointments Service**.



In order to be a successful court clerk, individuals should have:

- ✓ **excellent organisational skills**
- ✓ will generally be required to have **basic IT skills** such as typing.
- ✓ However, these skills are not enough on their own, and an individual applying for this role should be really interested in, and have a reasonable **understanding of how the law works**; without these traits, the job could become tiring!



COURT CLERK/ REGISTRAR

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF LAW

BASIC IT SKILLS SUCH AS TYPING

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS SERVICE APPLICATION



LEGAL SECRETARY

The profession of legal secretary is another occupation which doesn't necessarily require a law degree to perform. It is a fantastic way for someone with an interest in law to get involved in legal work without taking a central role in a courtroom or firm. Legal secretaries are similar in some ways to court clerks, as they are responsible for a lot of **administrative work**, and act as figures behind the scenes who keep things running smoothly. However, rather than working in a courtroom, legal secretaries are generally **employed by legal firms** to keep on top of paperwork and other related affairs.

THE ROLE OF THE LEGAL SECRETARY

The main duties that legal secretaries are responsible for are generally related to administrative and secretarial work.



Most legal secretaries will also be generally required to have:

- ✓ good organisational skills
- ✓ typing skills as a result
- ✓ in terms of daily tasks, legal secretaries will often have to produce and store legal/court documents
- ✓ travel with the solicitors in the firm to court or to Garda cells to keep notes on daily events
- ✓ as well as these tasks, legal secretaries may be put in charge of answering phone calls for the firm
- ✓ organising meetings/ appointments
- ✓ recording firm expenditure
- ✓ keeping on top of filing.



BECOMING A LEGAL SECRETARY

Legal secretaries are not necessarily required to obtain formal training in order to work in the legal sector, but it will be a huge advantage for anyone looking to secure such a position. There are many courses in Ireland which offer qualifications in this area:

- ✓ helping individuals to increase their typing speed
- ✓ learn the intricacies of Microsoft Office
- ✓ improve their written and verbal business communication.

Aside from obtaining a formal qualification, some individuals may seek out administrative or receptionist work to begin with. This will provide experience in some of the key skills that are associated with that of the legal secretary. Law firms are always on the lookout for legal secretaries, so it's a really great opportunity for individuals who are interested in law to get involved in legal work.





LEGAL INTERN/PARALEGAL

As a law student, or a student simply interested in law, obtaining a legal internship is the best possible way to gain experience and to add to your CV with respect to law. The great thing about internships is that they are all very different to one another, and in this way individuals can pick and choose the internship that suits them best. For example, many firms will offer a limited amount of unpaid summer internship places each year, usually running for 4 weeks. However, other companies will offer more advanced internships, sometimes lasting a year and often accompanied by a modest salary!

THE ROLE OF THE LEGAL INTERN/PARALEGAL

The roles and responsibilities of a legal intern will vary depending on the type of law firm that they are employed by. However, most internships will involve completing tasks such as:

- ✓ **research**
- ✓ **assisting senior staff** with paperwork and other assistant jobs
- ✓ completing **minor legal work** for the firm

Many firms will try and move their interns around the various departments within the company, in order for them to experience the different areas in which the firm specialises in. However, it is important as an intern not to simply do as instructed, but to try and take initiative where possible and to demonstrate your value to the company; if a firm thinks highly of an intern, they may offer them an extended internship, or even possibly a traineeship to work at the firm full-time after university.



BECOMING A LEGAL INTERN / PARALEGAL

Most law firms will offer a limited number of internships every year to students/graduates. However, this does not mean that all students will get an internship, and competition for places is typically very high.

As a result, it is really important for applicants to stand out from everyone else!

Good academic results will never hurt your chances, and some places will only take on interns who have achieved a specific grade in university. There are other ways in which individuals can improve their chances of selection, however.



- ✓ joining and being an active member of your university's law society
- ✓ being elected as class representative for your year
- ✓ demonstrating volunteer work are all ways in which an individual can make themselves seem more appealing to a law firm

Equally, as most firms will run interviews before making their final selection, it is important for students to be able to demonstrate different qualities that other applicants might not have; for example,

- ✓ being fluent in another language
- ✓ having prior work experience in an administrative role
- ✓ being part of your university's drama society.

Traits such as these will show potential employers that you enjoy taking on new challenges, and have interests outside of law. Remember, employers want to work with people who they can get along with and possibly share interests with; not just students who are interested in law.



Many firms provide an online application for internships, with deadlines to submit the relevant documents. However, this is not the only way of obtaining an internship; it is equally as important to get in contact with anyone you know in the legal profession, and to demonstrate persistence and eagerness in looking for work. Equally, if you are unsuccessful with an application, look for feedback, and try and engage with the employer as best you can; they might remember you the next time!



DIFFERENT AREAS OF LAW

One of the best parts about studying law is that it is incredibly diverse, and there will always be some areas which students will really enjoy learning about. Equally, there will be some areas that some students will find less enjoyable. Everyone is different in this regard, and therefore as a law student it is really important to try as many different areas as possible in order to find the ones that suit you best.

This section aims to provide a basic summary of some of the main areas of law which students will have the opportunity to study at third level. It is worth noting, however, that these are just some of areas available to students; to list them all would require writing a book!



**Criminal
Law**



**Tort
Law**



**International
Law**



**Contract
Law**



**Property
Law**



**Company
Law**



**Sports
Law**



**Medical
Law**

CRIMINAL LAW

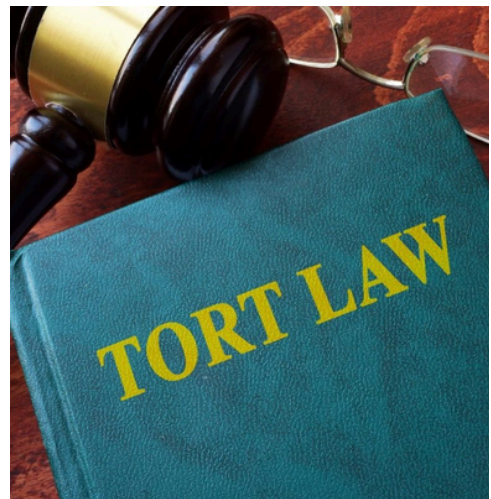


Criminal law is often one of the most popular areas with law students, as it can be very exciting and fascinating to learn about. It is one of the most topical areas of law, and is often related to newspaper headlines, or seen in our favourite tv shows. As a result, students can feel more familiar with it than other areas, meaning it can sometimes feel easier to study. However, criminal law is one of the most complex and difficult areas of law, and requires a high level of dedication to succeed in.

Students studying criminal law will typically be introduced to the **elements of a crime**, before moving onto more specific topics. These may include **public order offences, homicide, sexual offences** and **defences**. As well as being very interesting, some of these areas can be quite intense, and if students feel uncomfortable about anything they are learning about, then they should bring it up with their personal tutor or lecturer.

TORT LAW

Tort law, also known as civil law, is another area that many students studying law particularly enjoy. Essentially, tort law is the law which governs private civil wrongs. For example, if a pedestrian is crossing the street at night without any reflective clothing and is hit by a motorcycle travelling over the speed limit, who has to pay the hospital costs? Sometimes the answer isn't straightforward, and both parties might be partly in the wrong. Unlike criminal law, which requires the accused to be guilty beyond reasonable doubt,



tort law looks at the balance of probabilities. In this way, both parties may end up paying part of the cost of the hospital bills in our motorbike-accident scenario.

Students studying tort law at third level might study areas such as **trespass, defamation, negligence**, and **the law of nervous shock**.

INTERNATIONAL LAW



International Law is one of the most diverse areas of law, and is truly only a summary title for many different subjects that students can study at university. Students will typically receive a general introduction to **international** and **European Union law** in first year, before studying more specific areas such as **public international law**, **private international law**, **competition law**, and **human rights law**. International law is such a large area that in fact students may enjoy

some aspects of it, and dislike other aspects, so once again it is important to try as much of it as you can. Due to its diversity, there are many career-path options with international law, including working with the EU, working with non-profit organisations, and working with national governments.

CONTRACT LAW

This area of law regulates agreements between parties that are enforceable by law. It is a very important area of study, and will usually be a core module for first year students. Generally, when we think of a contract, we think of the huge wage-earning agreements between sports stars and their clubs, or high-scale business takeovers and acquisitions. Contracts can, however, come into existence by the simple act of buying your favourite sweets. By offering money to your local supermarket in exchange



for a chocolate bar, you unknowingly satisfy the first characteristic of a contract: **the offer**. When the supermarket takes your money, which is known as **consideration**, they satisfy the second requirement, **acceptance**. So, in reality, most people enter into contracts every day without being fully aware!

PROPERTY LAW



Many people will associate 'property' with houses and other buildings. While this is true, property is actually a much broader term than this, and means anything that belongs to someone. For example, your schoolbag, laptop, and latest pair of socks are all your property, and are therefore governed under this area of law. Topics related to this form of property might include **succession** and **trusts**. However, land is also a very large part of property law,

and as a result this subject is also often referred to as land law. Topics related to land include **mortgages**, **adverse possession**, and **licenses**. Property law is another core module for students at third level, but due to its complexity it is generally taught in either second or third year.

COMPANY LAW

If you were to take a wild guess at what this subject is about, you would probably be correct; company law is the study of the law governing companies. It is a highly complex area of law, and is generally taken by students who plan on sitting their FE-1 exams. Some of the topics that students will study in company law include **the formation of a company**, **shareholder's rights**, **director's duties**, and **fraudulent & reckless trading**. If you have any interest in business, or plan on specialising in commercial law, then this area might appeal to you!



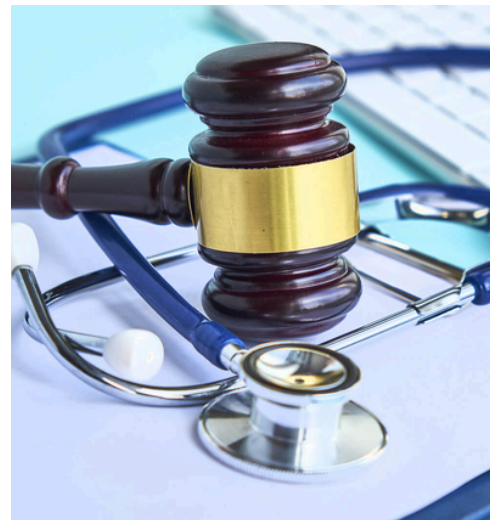
SPORTS LAW



Sports law is usually an elective module, meaning that students may choose to study it if they wish. It is a highly evolving area of law, and there are many excellent career opportunities related to it. Students studying sports law will study the legality of **fighting sports**, **doping in sport**, and **sports-related injuries** such as concussion. They will also be introduced to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) which is the primary international institution for dealing with sports-law related matters.

MEDICAL LAW

Medical law is another highly diverse area of the law, and is usually an elective module. However, students will touch on **medical negligence** when studying tort law. Essentially, medical law relates to any issues that arise in the medical field, or that are health-related. For example, students who study medical law will generally study the law on **abortion & euthanasia**, a doctor's **duty of care** to their patient, and **mental health law**. Similarly, to criminal law, this area can sometimes be quite intense, and students who experience discomfort while studying medical law should arrange to speak to their personal tutor or lecturer.





KEY SKILLS & QUALITIES

If this guide hasn't completely put you off the idea of studying law, then it's likely that it might suit you very well! The final thing to discuss on the checklist are the key skills & qualities necessary for an individual to become a successful lawyer. Not everyone will have all these skills before entering their third level of choice, and that is absolutely fine too; one of the main reasons for going to university is to improve your weaknesses, and to refine your strengths!

Here are three of the main competencies associated with law:

KEY SKILLS & QUALITIES

COMMUNICATION

RESEARCH

PERSEVERANCE



COMMUNICATION

In practically every legal profession, your job is to assist clients with legal matters. It is therefore extremely important that you are able to communicate effectively and efficiently with your clients, and to keep them up-to-date with any developments in their cases. Even if someone is the best divorce lawyer in the country, they won't be very successful if they don't appear to care about their clients, or fail to keep them in the loop about their own divorce! Equally, bad communication skills will make your job far more difficult, as it will be trickier to obtain key information relevant to the case at hand.



RESEARCH

Outside of the courtroom drama, most of what lawyers do is research, research, and more research! It is really important not just to know how to look for information, but to know *what* information to look for. This is one particular skill that will be improved hugely at university, as many subjects require written assignments involving high levels of research on national and international databases. The law is constantly evolving, and even when you think you know everything there is to know about something, you will more than likely find that there have been huge developments in it a year, or even a few months later. Therefore, it is important to be inquisitive, and to keep an eye out for changes related to your field.



If you choose to study law at university or in any other way, you might initially find it to be very confusing, complex, and difficult. This can result in some people becoming quickly disheartened, and dropping out of their course. The most important thing to know when you begin studying law is that this applies to almost everybody. You are not alone in your confusion, and if you show determination and perseverance then slowly but surely it will all start to make sense. Similarly, even when you are qualified, it might be difficult to immediately find work in a field that interests you. However, if you are determined to achieve your goals and keep working hard, you *will* eventually succeed; the only limits you have are the ones you set yourself!



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