



Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School



A Journey into Law

Name:.....

Keep this booklet in a safe place

Introduction

Law is a highly popular degree choice with increasing competition for a place at a Law School. The journey starts in Year 12 with a genuine interest in the profession and undertaking work experience.

This small booklet will help you to make the best application, demonstrating your understanding of the qualities needed to be a solicitor or a barrister. University Admission Officers are seeking to find applicants who have identified their strengths and experiences which match those qualities.

Work Experience

Practical first-hand experience in a legal environment is essential. A range of opportunities would provide the insight necessary to reflect on your ability to interact with legal professionals.

- Volunteer at the Citizens Advice Bureau
- Be a member of a society: for example, Justice and Peace
- Work shadow a solicitor in a legal firm
- Work experience in a legal section of a large company or university, city council etc
- Shadow a legal journalist
- Visit the Crown and Magistrates courts
- Work experience in the court environment
- Meet a Barrister or Judge to discuss their role
- Further work experience in the community would demonstrate your ability to interact with people, for example, charity sector voluntary work

NB: It is important that you record your reflections throughout a placement or volunteering programme. Use the core values and skills to consider how you have developed personally from the experiences.

Remember: Demonstrate a basic awareness and understanding of the law. Consideration of the present social factors that influence the law will broaden your knowledge.



Prior to applying

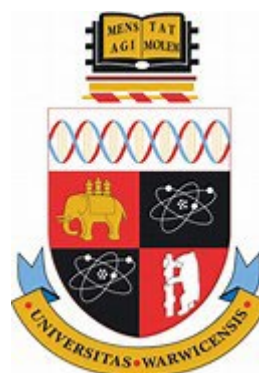
Qualities required of legal professionals:

- Intellectual ability: law is a complex entity which requires,
 - the ability to analyse and solve problems using logical and critical approaches
 - the capacity for accurate and critical observations, for sustained and cogent argument
 - creativity and flexibility of thought and lateral thinking
 - the ability to listen and be able to give considered responses.
- Versatility, no two days will be the same
- A desire to work with and for people
- Commitment, training is rigorous, requiring substantial effort of resources
- Motivation and capacity for successful and intense work
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.

Reflect on the statement above and ask yourself questions of how you have acquired these attributes?

- Have you participated in a Debating society? Enjoyed making presentations?
- Do you have an awareness of the inequalities in society?
- Have you participated in campaigns?
- Are you a member of the Diversity group organised by Ms Gill?

Think of the examples which would illustrate a real understanding of the core values.



Action

Research: www.barcouncil.org.uk
www.lawsociety.org.uk

Choosing a Law School, things to consider:

- Type of course
 - Choose one that suits your needs in relation to specific areas covered, the actual course content and the teaching methods
 - Check the degree is a qualifying LLB (Bachelor of Law) degree. Some universities offer BA (Bachelor of Arts) in Law. Unlike the LLB, some of these courses may not be counted as one of the steps towards qualifying as a solicitor as they do not cover all seven foundations of legal knowledge.
 - Criminal Law
 - Equity and Trusts
 - EU Law
 - Tort Law
 - Property Law
 - Public Law, which includes constitutional law, administrative law and human rights law
 - NOTE: www.sra.org.uk keeps a list of all qualifying law degrees and the universities that offer them
- Size and location
- Placements
- Research opportunities: presently top research universities are Durham, London (Kings), York, Sheffield, Cambridge, Leeds, London (LSE), Ulster, London (QM), Warwick, Bristol and Exeter
- Extra and co-curricular activities
- Student support system

Investigate

- How do Law Schools assess academic potential: GCSE points / predicted A Level grades / Admission Test score? Have you the subject requirements? For GCSE, a guideline is a good spread of science and non-science subjects at grades 9/8). NOTE: A Level Law is not a pre-requisite for degree study. There are no requirements in relation to subjects at A Level but Russell Group Universities will favour traditional subjects (for at least two subjects) for example, English, History, Philosophy or Economics.
- What are they looking for in the personal statement? Non-academic attributes (reflect back to Core Values and Attributes). Do you have the expected work experience?

- How do they structure their interview? Offers are usually made based on the ranking of the students at interview.

Keep a diary:

- Voluntary work undertaken and what did you learn about yourself?
- Articles about law cases
- Articles about new legislation
- Record of visits to the Crown/Magistrates courts and hearings observed
- Record of work experience
- Record of lectures attended
- Record of community action groups
- Record of discussions with legal professionals
- Debating society topics you have participated in
- Books you have read.
- Be reflective and refer to your Enrichment Logbook

Useful websites to use prior to your application

www.lawcareers.net

www.lawscot.org.uk

www.rollonfriday.com

www.lnat.ac.uk

Reading

- “Learning the Law” by Glanville Williams: an introduction to law which will help you decide whether the course will interest you.
- The Times Law Supplement: read regularly to keep up to date on current legal issues.
- “Eve Was Framed” by Helena Kennedy: an interesting and unusual critique of the legal system to get you thinking from new perspectives.
- “What About Law” by Catherine Barnard: an accessible introduction to legal reasoning and the legal system
- “Just Law” by Helena Kennedy: discussion around legal issues surrounding civil liberties and human rights
- “The Secret Barrister” written by a junior barrister specialising in Criminal Law
- Reading from FutureLearn courses
- Legal sections of The Guardian, the Independent and the Daily Telegraph.
- Gresham Lectures and Speakers for Schools, check their library of talks

Admission Tests

The main assessment test required for applicants is the LNAT (the Law National Aptitude Test). It will help you understand if Law is the right career path for you.

Find out how different Law Schools use the test.

- Decide whether to invite a student to interview
- Inform whether an offer should be made
- Decide between two equally ranked applicants

LNAT format: It is divided into two sections to test different types of verbal reasoning (multiple choice and essay).

Multiple choice: This section aims to assess the following about your abilities.

- Can you make logical deductions about information you are given?
- Do you have an eye for detail or do you jump to conclusions?
- Can you accurately identify fact from opinion or inference?
- When given information, can you appreciate what the limitations of a statement are? Can you identify implications that are unsaid?
- Can you spot when statements are not fully qualified by supporting evidence provided?
- Do you pay attention to detail when reading comprehension and writing?

Essay: This section aims to assess the following abilities.

- Can you construct a persuasive, balanced argument backed by evident rather than opinion?
- Can you write persuasively?
- Do you know how to structure an essay?
- Do you have good English skills, grammar, sentence structure, can you use punctuation correctly.
- Are you 'well read' with a good knowledge of current affairs?

Key Dates: August LNAT registration begins

September LNAT test sittings commence

(exact dates and details about choices are available on the UCAS website)

NOTE: Bolton have their own diagnostic test.

Cambridge: shortlisted applicants take the CLT at interview (check college websites for submitted work requirements)

Website: for more information on the LNAT and practice papers visit www.lnat.ac.uk

Making the Application

Choices

- **Five** choices: Remember that there are many combinations of Law degrees that can be considered as well as a single honours degree
- Closing date for Oxbridge applicants is **October**
- **NOTE:** Students should aim to submit their application to Mrs Casey by **1 October**

Completing the UCAS form

- Fill in the form carefully and completely
 - Declare accurately all certified and pending results
 - Explain gaps in education.
- Personal statement structure
 - Address the required qualities of legal professionals (page 5)
 - Use your personal statement workshop notes to help
 - Remember it is your opportunity to convince the university to offer you a place. It needs to include work experience, voluntary work, academic commitment and super extra curricular activities
 - Grammatically correct illustrating excellent communication skills
 - Confidentiality and ethical awareness.
- Advice from admissions offices
 - Do not plagiarise
 - Resit applicants check with individual universities for advice
 - Honesty.
- Academic reference is a personalised reference which will highlight general and specific ability.
 - Personal qualities and contribution to the school and community
 - Mitigating circumstances
 - Students preparation for the application (anything that address the specific criteria of the Law School)
 - Credibility in predicted grades.

Interviews

Not all universities use interviews. Some interview as a matter of process, while others only interview where clarification of the application may be required.

How to prepare:

- Know about the Law School, its course and location
- Re-read your personal statement
- Re-read any reflection diaries
- Keep up to date with news and legal developments
- Think about the possible questions you might be asked and prepare a few of your own questions
- Examples of questions:
 - What interests you in the study of Law?
 - What would you do to overcome the problems of prison overcrowding if you were a) a judge, b) a prosecutor, c) the Prime Minister?
 - What is jurisprudence?
 - What legal cases have you read about recently?
 - A friend bought you a bun, which unknown to him, contained a stone. He gave it to you to eat and you broke a tooth. Could you sue anyone?
 - Do you feel racism, misogyny, and homophobia, exist in the Police Force?
- Remember at an interview you will need to demonstrate:
 - Academic ability
 - Capacity to deal with the rigours of the course
 - Commitment to a career in law
 - Logic and reasoning ability
 - Knowledge of current affairs, especially those concerning the law.

Read the invite carefully, locate any documents that you might need

- Contact the Law School immediately if there are any issues
- Check the location, the campus and travel directions
- Travelling on the day? Have you allowed for travel delays?
- Create a file to take to interview:
 - Copy of original email letter inviting you to interview
 - Emergency contacts for the Law School
 - Original certificates and/or copies
 - Photo ID
 - Work experience log book / diary.

Key Advice

Start Early

- Interview preparation starts with your **work experience**. Identify what you want to achieve from it and reflect on what you did achieve (record in diary).
- Talk to law students, open days, taster days, summer schools, online forums
- Developing confidence
 - Being well prepared
 - Activities to develop depth of thinking and response.

Example: consider the following questions. Can your response demonstrate an understanding of law as a career as well as your skills and aptitude for the subject and profession?

- During work experience what was the most important thing you learned about yourself?
- Why did you choose the Law School and university?
- What element of law particularly interests you? Criminal Law, Corporate Law, Family Law, Commercial Law, Media Law?

A skill that is required for a successful interview is ACTIVE LISTENING

- Hearing what is said
- Interpreting the message
- Evaluating the message
- Responding to the message
- Whole body listening
- Controlling emotional triggers

The Interview

Interviews can be a structured panel interview or a more informal one to one interview.

Interview day

- Make sure you know the venue and arrive early
- Smart but comfortable clothes; if dress code follow it
- Listen carefully/ follow instruction
- Try to relax and be yourself
- Demonstrate appropriate body language
- Be calm, appropriate preparation means you have a good chance
- Be respectful
- Reflect
- 'Competition'
- Awaiting results

Post Interview

Students often have to wait until March before receiving the outcome of their interview. This is due to the Law Schools' policy to interview all their selected students before making a decision.

The Sixth Form team will support you throughout the process.

Career Note

Training places for bar and solicitors' examinations remain extremely competitive. There are alternative legal careers such as legal journalism, patent law, legal publishing and teaching.



Personal Statement by law applicant

While media coverage in the UK is predominantly focused on the current economic climate and the COVID-19 pandemic, it also highlights their impact on the problems of antisocial behaviour. There are many questions that can arise from seeing how deterrents are used to uphold the law. The brutal death of PC Andrew Harper while on duty has provoked reaction to the killer receiving a verdict of manslaughter. His widow is now campaigning for 'Harpers Law' in order to change the legal outcome. As a young person who is motivated to create a fair society, I hope my degree choice enables me to contribute to the justice system.

Studying Psychology gives me a unique insight of human behaviour. The topic of social conformity facilitates my ability to grasp why certain people would act in a way that might go against the harmony of society. It allowed me to comprehend how those under dictatorships as in North Korea conform psychologically. The subject also enables me to discern the different psychological factors that would come into play when one would be committing a criminal offence and whether there is such a thing as having a deviant inner psychology and question whether those who commit crime are those who have an authoritarian personality? These are all concepts that a degree in criminology would help me to develop an answer to. Reading 'Jigsaw man' by Paul Britton, the UK's first criminal psychologist, gave me an insight on criminal profiling, which is now a prevalent use in policing.

Philosophy and Ethics has influenced my capacity to understand how society is run through the unspoken laws like those which are in religious scripture. Religion is an eternal part of society and one which cannot be ignored regardless of one's religious or secular orientation. The rules are often found incorporated in legislation worldwide. I have developed my analytical skills in reviewing philosophical arguments of a priori and a posteriori perspective and can draw my own conclusions effectively. English Literature a level has reinforced my ability to think critically and communicate ideas within a structured essay format.

Watching the documentary of 'Women on the frontline' produced by E4 exploits the reality of what it is like to be a police women. It helped me understand the selfless service given to society by police officers and encouraged my interest in pursuing such a career after graduation. The Future Learn course 'From crime to punishment' gave me an understanding of how the law and legislation works together and the effectiveness of institutions including police, lawyers and courts. I am an active member of my school community through volunteering as a guide for open evenings as well as giving my time to help at St Jude's Care Home. My interpersonal skills have deepened with supporting younger pupils in English classes. My leadership skills are used in my part time job as a lifeguard at the local leisure centre. My role requires initiative and to be alert to emergency situations, ensuring all health and safety protocols are followed. I have acquired lifesaving qualifications.

Furthermore, the role of a lifeguard gives me an understanding of having the responsibility of the well-being of others. I enjoy playing netball for the team Henley so I can recognise the importance of teamwork for a successful game. As an active member of my liturgical community I read at services throughout the year. I have an inner drive which means that I have a passion for society to be a place of justice and for that to happen I need to nurture my understanding of the legal procedures as well as the understanding of criminal and deviant behaviour which this degree would provide. Unfortunately, my work experience with Birmingham Magistrates court has been postponed until the end of the year. Nonetheless, I am looking forward to undergraduate study

Personal Statement by law applicant

What fascinates me about Law is the endless legal arguments that are used and how they can affect individual cases. The decision of a Judge and a Jury are often controversial; sometimes leading to appeal after appeal through the higher courts which may view one decision differently to another. Attending two lectures on a Cambridge Law Taster Day reinforced the controversy that can arise. The lecture on Constitutional Law by Dr Stark increased my awareness of civil liberties and human rights. Likewise Dr Williams' presentation on police negligence was thought provoking and raised questions about the behaviour of police which linked well to current issues in England and the US. My work experience at Purcell Parker Criminal Law Solicitors in Birmingham, gave me an insight into the challenges and rewards of being a criminal barrister or solicitor. I was able to sit behind the barrister in the Queen Elizabeth Crown Courts and a solicitor in the Birmingham Magistrate Courts during the trials and hearings. It was really helpful to give me an understanding of the difference between the two. Before a hearing I was able to listen to the discussion between the legal professional and their client. I observed how to structure such an interview and give advice objectively. I became very aware of the financial barriers of Legal Aid. I shadowed Barrister Joseph Keating who praised my understanding of complex areas of Law and encouraged me to pursue my degree application. I undertook further research by visiting Leamington Crown Courts to become more familiar with the courtroom procedures and protocols. I would particularly look forward to being involved in moot courts at University to gain experience of participating in a simulated court case. I have read the second edition of 'What About Law?' by Catherine Barnard, Janet O'Sullivan and Graham Virgo which introduced me to Contract Law. It motivated me to explore 'Learning the Law' by Glanville Williams 15th edition. The Netflix Documentary 'Making a Murderer', gave me a view of the American Legal System. It illustrated how the police can be both negligent and possibly corrupt in some way but also how even top lawyers do not always achieve their expected outcome. A Level English Literature has developed my analytical skills in reviewing texts and constructing essays to convey a coherent balanced argument. Reading Khaled Hosseini's Kite Runner, presented a back drop to the civil liberties and basic human rights of the Afghanistan people during the abusive Taliban regime from 1996-2001. It made me question why some countries aren't protected in their struggle for Human Rights. Similarly studying American Civil Rights has given me a historical perspective of how the often flawed Constitution has hindered the progress of groups gaining their basic rights. The right to bear arms also continues to be a problem in endangering rather than protecting citizens. Comparing the USA to the UK highlights the fundamental differences between the American and British political systems. Participating in the HE+ programme has given me online resources and workshops to attend, which have helped me prepare for University study. Enrolling on the Future Learn course 'Law for non-Lawyers' by Monash University will give me further opportunities to consolidate my understanding of the 7 key areas of law. As an active member of the school community I have enjoyed captaining the football team and managing younger year groups. Welcoming parents and prospective students to Open Days also gives me the opportunity to meet new people. As a member of the Sixth Form Leadership team I have taken responsibility for fundraising and social events which aim to make sixth form life less stressful. It is an honour for me to be a part of this team and know that I contribute to school life. My goal now is to achieve the qualifications to secure a place at university and become a successful undergraduate.

Personal Statement by law applicant

The law both governs and steers the everyday working of society and has a profound effect on the life of every individual. This ever changing system has improved my life which initiated my desire to study law. Personal experiences I had as a child have been a prominent and driving factor as to why I want to pursue a career in the legal profession. Growing up in Hillfields, Coventry, I witnessed acts such: GBH, abusive relationships and even kidnappings. This led me to question why elements of humanity deem it acceptable to commit crimes and disturb the peace. However, instead of instilling within me a lack of faith in the legal system, these experiences empowered me to want to understand it and improve it. I thus believe that studying law at university can significantly enable me to achieve these objectives.

One of the factors which has contributed towards my interest in Law developed from the 'Pathways to Law' programme, sponsored by the Sutton Trust. Through this I have been fortunate to develop my analytical skills. In taking part in a moot competition with peers, I was able to assess a fictional case and formulate a logical line of argument from studying sections of Human Rights law. We explored the public safety in regards to rights such as freedom of expression when dealing with crimes that are committed via social networking. This enhanced my knowledge of how the law is embedded in the simplest of day to day activities and the importance of it is increasing faster than ever with new technology evolving.

This experience built on my ability to scrutinise evidence which has further been enhanced by studying History, English, Philosophy and Ethics at A Level, all of which require fluent communication and articulate arguments. Particularly when considering Ethics, I have developed a vital ability to be able to succinctly analyse written materials by various philosophers. The essay writing demands cross referencing from various scholars, consequently expanding my capability to methodically examine evidence which will be useful for studying law at degree level.

I have also obtained first-hand experience of the legal profession at Pinsent Masons Law firm in Birmingham. Working alongside trainee lawyers gave me an insight into commercial law. From producing documents, such as leases, it was possible for me to learn how to decode the complex language of law, whilst absorbing new information.

Taking part in 'The Challenge', a three month programme powered by the NCS, was extremely rewarding. Producing a video for the Solihull Young Carers Association enable me to meet some of the young carers who seemed to lead the life of an adult whilst being in a child's body. This experience was extremely thought provoking and it was harrowing listening to their care responsibilities. It posed questions such as: Is this breaching human rights? Should it not be the child who is cared for? Is this a crime? These ethical and moral issues motivated me to want to learn about medical and criminal law. Through the research and technical skills acquired, my team successfully produced a piece of media to raise awareness of the support available to young carers; my personal role was researcher and presenter.

As a strong believer in the power of the legal system to protect the rights of all, I feel that training to be a lawyer and ultimately, a barrister, would suit my deep drive and desire for justice within our world. It would allow me to set an example to others. The law is something so vital that without it society would become chaotic; there would be no sense of moral obligation and basic human rights would be challenged. The power and authority of the law is fascinating and this is something that I passionately want to be involved with. These are a few reasons as to why I would be honoured to have the opportunity to gain a Law degree and be the first in my family to go to university.

Personal Statement by law applicant

During work experience at a Criminal Law firm, my appreciation for the law and those who enforce it grew. Shadowing one of the partners presented me with the opportunity to attend the Magistrates Court and observe the different cases. A little naive, I expected to be watching cases of petty crimes, but a hearing of careless driving that led to a death demonstrated how the facts were clearly explored by the defence solicitor. The emotive response made me realise the wide-ranging impact that such an offence had on so many people, while illustrating the Magistrates power to give a custodial sentence. The placement developed my understanding of the law, gave me a first-hand insight into how a courtroom runs and revealed how much preparation is needed by a criminal law solicitor to ensure the legal rights of the client are protected. Being present in confidential interviews between a lawyer and their client gave me a deeper understanding of the circumstances of the alleged offence and the various issues which may affect the outcome of the case. For example, how a disability could mean a person is unable to complete community service or how previous convictions can be used to create a 'bad character' application that highlights a person's criminal habits. It was explained to me how legal aid can be imperative for a fair and equal access to justice. The whole experience inspired my determination to pursue a career within the legal profession.

Studying English Literature has prepared me with the skills to analyse texts and write structured essays, presenting arguments clearly. Interestingly, 'The Great Gatsby' by F. Scott Fitzgerald portrays the inferior status of women in the 1920's, displaying a clear contrast to life in the 21st century where situations for women have changed dramatically. However, I am still aware of injustices throughout the world that continue to put certain social groups at a disadvantage. The book 'Just Law' by Helena Kennedy has acknowledged unjustness that remains in the modern world and has highlighted the need for equality and fairness. A FutureLearn course I am involved in, 'Law for Non-Lawyers', is also providing an approach to law that stresses the importance of having a legal system. The fact that society is subject to the same rules ensures that punishment cannot be random. To have the knowledge of the legal process in order to represent a person in need of advice encourages me in further study. Through Philosophy and Ethics, I have an increased awareness of moral issues, one being war. I was particularly interested by the 'Just War theory' that originated from Augustine's philosophy, that there needed to be a just cause when going to war. After reading Peter Vardy's article on the Iraq war, it became clear that there was neither a just cause nor a proportionate reason for the British to wage a war. It is evident for man to feel that other underlying motives were apparent, including the control of Iraq's oil. Discussing these ideas has strengthened my debating skills and I am able to use a variety of ethical theories to approach moral dilemmas from different perspectives.

My confidence in public speaking and communicating with different audiences has been boosted by participating in career sessions that required me to speak to Year 9 students and support them with their research. I assisted in the Humanities Days, where Year 6 students and their teachers visited the school. I also performed in charity fashion shows in front of large audiences, to raise funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

Being the first in my family to apply to university is as much exciting as it is motivating. Fully committed to studying and meeting new challenges it will bring, I look forward to gaining the qualification to become the solicitor I aspire to be.

Personal Statement by law applicant

Law fascinates me and I am intrigued by the way English Law has developed over time and how it is regarded across the world by the way it protects our rights as citizens. My interest in law lies in the nature of serving justice. Whilst studying psychology I was fascinated by the explanations behind criminal behaviour. I believe the law can sometimes be manipulated and serve unjust consequences which is something I wish to explore and help prevent in the future. I find criminal law especially interesting. An article in The Guardian regarding the case involving Kevin Lane underlined the issues behind a murder investigation and the legal response to new evidence that may reopen the case. It showed that once a verdict by a jury has been made it can be re-examined and brought back to court. However, it particularly highlighted how even the most skilled of investigators and legal teams still get challenged and not every case is solvable, even with modern technology.

Work experience at Pinsent Mason's International Law firm in Birmingham gave me an insight into commercial law. I benefited hugely from being placed in different departments and learning of services such as, corporate, projects, litigation and property. Through attending meetings, I saw the importance of the collaboration between partners and their legal team. I was also given the responsibility to write letters to the courts on behalf of the solicitor I was shadowing to arrange hearings, as well as letters to clients informing them of progression on their case. This experience was enthralling as I became confident in using legal terminology and learnt the need to draft accurate correspondences. It developed my understanding of the function of a regional law firm and the work ethic that is required to succeed in the profession.

Participating in the Pathways to Law programme at Warwick University has introduced me to the academic environment. Attending lectures with the Faculty of Social Science and shadowing a law student has helped me to understanding the many aspects of the legal profession. One particular lecture by a professor outlined the legislation to protect children and ensure their wellbeing; I found it amazing how every child in the UK is protected under the law. The current refugee crisis has made me aware that many of the human rights of children are overlooked by the circumstances they find themselves in. During the programme I was given the opportunity to take part in a mock trial. I took on the role of prosecutor in a divorce case set in the 18th century, meaning I had to quickly analyse the facts to create a strong argument backed up with compelling evidence to achieve an outcome in my favour. A skill I had already acquired in essay writing. I was able to communicate clearly and succinctly to the jury to summarise the case. This developed my ability to speak with greater confidence and was something I particularly enjoyed.

To research further into the everyday hearings that come to court, I attended Coventry's Magistrates Court for a week to witness the proceedings there. I was captivated by witnessing the due legal process, particularly observing defendants each day and the special relationship with their solicitor. I experienced the atmosphere in a courtroom and learned how respected the magistrates are within the proceeding of a case.

I am an avid reader and have found 'Criminal Law, Text, Cases and Materials' by Jonathan Herring valuable in helping me understand the concepts of law that is put into practice every day. Through my sixth form studies I have obtained the ability to work independently, think laterally, challenge myself and manage my time effectively to ensure all work is done to the best of my ability. I very much look forward to be given the opportunity to fully apply and immerse myself into degree studies which will give me the qualification needed to join the legal profession.

Notes

