

Overcoming hurdles into law

I am putting together some online resources on overcoming hurdles in the legal profession.

This is strictly my view and based upon my own experiences. I hope it helps you on your journey to a successful career as a solicitor.

The Legal Practice Course

In relation to the legal practice course (lpc), my view is this if you want to work for the city firms, by going to London Metropolitan University (lmu) you are at a disadvantage because none of the city firms recruit from lmu. They go to BPP, The College of law, Kaplan etc (basically the 'traditional schools') when they have their open days.

From the majority of profiles that we see and read in the law magazines there are no students from lmu who are interviewed about their route into law.

However **do not be discouraged**, I think of it as an additional hurdle we must overcome to be considered when we apply to top firms.

Regardless of where you go to do the lpc with self belief, faith, confidence and hard work you will get to where you want to be.

Visit the all schools and don't rush your decision, take time to think things through properly.

- Become a student member of the Law Society/ Solicitors Regulatory Authority or you **cannot** do the legal practice course.
- <http://www.sra.org.uk/students/student-enrolment.page>
- <http://www.tsg.org/student-membership-of-the-law-society.html>
- Central Applications board <http://www.lawcabs.ac.uk/>
- If you are doing the course full time apply through CAB. If you are planning on doing the course part time research or call up the institution.
- Legal Practice Course Providers <http://www.sra.org.uk/students/academic-stage/course-institutions.page>
- If you have to take out a loan for the lpc, shop around **do not** sign up with the first bank that gives you a quote. Shop around to get the best deal.

Events

Start going to events related to the areas of law you are interested in. Search on the law society website, or law firm websites for events, seminars, breakfast briefings and conferences.

Advice sheet 8b Overcoming hurdles into law

Please have a look at the Law seminars advice sheet. There are website links to different firms and organisations. Some have seminars going on some don't. Keep checking each week.

Make yourself a set of business cards, just something simple.

Sign up with the junior division of the law society as well as the other networks such as the international division of the law society or local law society. Check their websites for seminars and conferences and go to them.

<http://www.womensolicitors.org.uk/>

<http://www.blacksolicitorsnetwork.co.uk/>

<http://www.societyofasianlawyers.org/>

<http://www.btla.org.uk/>

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/productsandservices/support.law>

<http://www.ilsa.org/index.php>

Check other university websites for events and go to those as well.

Familiarise yourself with the websites like www.legal500.com, it has a good breakdown of the law firms in your area and across the country.

Law Firm Profiles

Read about profiles of other people and how they got to where they are. Read profiles about law firms that you are thinking about working for. If they run events, go to them, this will help give you an idea of the culture of the firm, and get past the marketing.

Management Structure

Look at the leadership of the firm, this is usually in the 'about us' section of the website. There is usually a management team and/or executive board.

Skill UP

Although we should not compare ourselves to others, as everybody's situation is different. However list your strengths and your weakness. Look at your weakness and see where you need to improve in order to be successful in your field. Learn another language, learn more about the areas of law you want to practice in.

Commercial Awareness

Legal Week <http://www.legalweek.com/>

Financial Times Markets <http://www.ft.com/cms/bfba2c48-5588-11dc-b971-0000779fd2ac.html>

Financial Times Lex <http://www.ft.com/cms/22bb449e-ae79-11de-8464-00144feabdc0.html>

Network

Network, go to events that you have an interest in such as breakfast briefings, seminars, or conferences. You will meet solicitors who can give you advice on the LPC and getting a training contract. You will also meet people who have no interest in helping you progress at all. You will be able to tell when you meet these people or you will learn how to tell them apart very quickly.

Personally I would not drink alcohol even if it is free.

Image

Increase your knowledge of body language and non verbal communication. Read the books below and visit the internet links. Women are generally better than men at non verbal communication so ladies you don't have to worry at all.

Handshakes, eye contact, speech, posture and diction etc all count. Dress code, always go to law events as if you are already a lawyer. Men Suit and tie preferably a blue or red tie. Women trouser suit or skirt and blouse etc.

Applications

A lot of the firms in the city do vacation schemes during Christmas and Summer, apply to them, but apply early. Google, Situation Task Action Result, It's a method of addressing selection criteria (refer to Advice Sheet 8).

Training contracts

Do not put a limit on the firms you apply to, for example don't think I'm not going to apply to a city firm because they only take people from Oxford and Cambridge. If you do not apply you will never know whether you would have got in or not. Nothing ventured nothing gained.

Useful reading

Expect to win by Carla Harris

<http://carlaspearls.com/>

Emotions revealed by Paul Ekman

<http://www.paulekman.com/>

Black letter law by the online BLD

<http://www.onlinebld.com/index.html>

All you need to know about the city by Chris Stokes

The Definitive Book of Body Language: How to Read Others' Attitudes by Their Gestures by Allan Pease and *Barbara*

Check out the annual reports of firms to see how they make their money.