

Firm Foundations 2023: The Undergraduate View

Exploring the decision drivers of undergraduates when applying for Training Contracts.



Introduction



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With 9,721 firms to choose from¹, applying for a Training Contract is one of the biggest decisions of today's next generation of lawyers.

Not only do they need to consider the actual work that they will be doing, but add in location, salary, culture and a myriad of other factors, and it is hard to understand what the biggest influences are.

That's why Birketts has commissioned this survey. We've spoken to 500 UK-based second and third year undergraduate students intending to go into law to uncover their decision drivers and motivations when applying for Training Contracts.

What is clear from the insights generated, is that those intending on going into law know what they want from firms as employers and practitioners. As recruiters, we need to fulfil these needs if we are going to continue to attract talent into the profession.

1 SRA, September 2022, https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/regulated-community-statistics/data/solicitor_firms/

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The findings

Executive summary

Job security is high on the agenda

- Over a quarter of respondents selected job security as a reason for working in law

Fewer applications are made per student than expected

- Half of UK-based second and third year undergraduates apply to only three or four law firms for training contracts

University careers services are the most trusted research source

- Just under a third of undergraduate respondents selected them as a research method of choice

Vacation schemes are not the only influential factor

- The majority of those surveyed who have completed a Vacation Scheme said it only influenced their decision a little

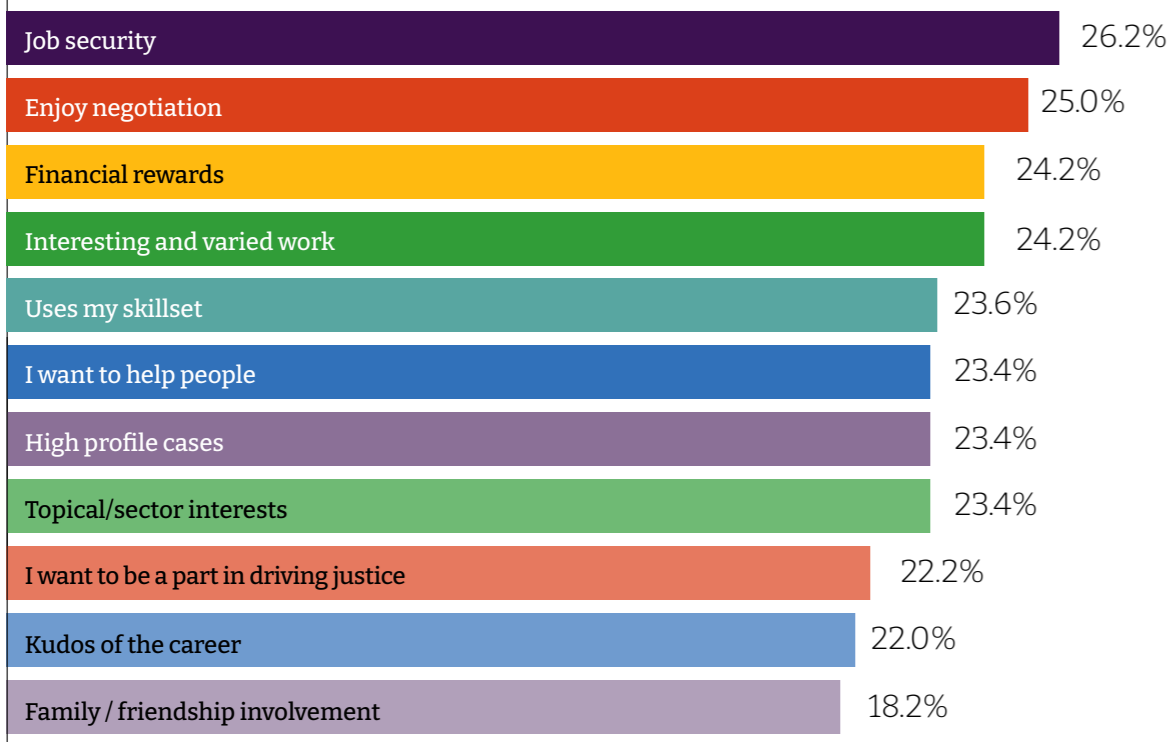
Type of work / type of law practiced is the biggest decision driver

- One in five students surveyed said that this was a decision driver when selecting which law firm to apply to for a training contract

London lives on

- 80% of undergraduates still think it is very or somewhat important for law firms they apply to to be located in London

Influences on decisions to work in law



The biggest influence on undergraduate students' decision to work in law is job security, with just over a quarter of respondents selecting it as a decision driver

Family or friendship involvement is the least influential factor listed for undergraduates' decision to work in law, with only 18% of respondents selecting it as a decision driver

The research phase



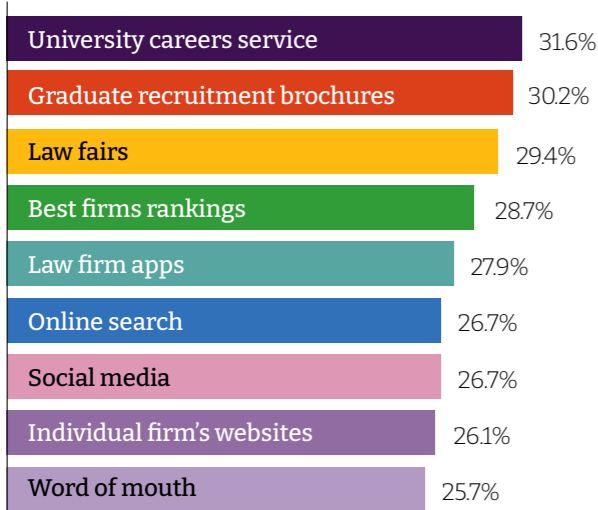
Just under two thirds of undergraduates intending on going into law will complete a Vacation Scheme



Vacation Schemes are not the only influential factor when undergraduate students are deciding whether to apply for a Training Contract with a firm. In fact, the majority of those surveyed who have completed one said that vacation schemes only influenced their decision a little

The research phase

University careers services are the most trusted sources for undergraduates researching which law firms to apply to for a Training Contract, with just under a third of respondents selecting it as a research method of choice



Half (50.2%) of UK-based 2nd and 3rd year undergraduates surveyed apply to three or four law firms for Training Contracts



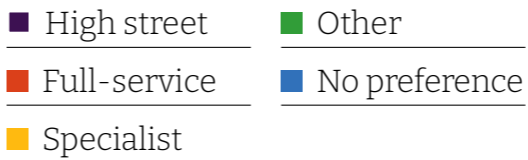
UK-based 2nd and 3rd year undergraduates surveyed apply to an average of 3.43 law firms for Training Contracts

Training Contract applications – the decision drivers

Undergraduate students know what they want, with 80.1% stating all the law firms they apply to for a Training Contract will all be of the same type (full-service, specialist, high street etc.)



A third of undergraduate students intending on going into law surveyed prefer to undertake their Training Contract at a high street firm

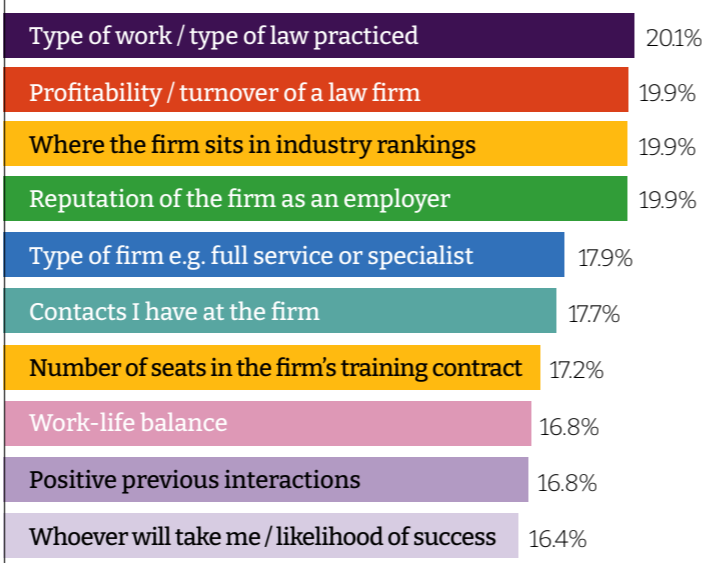


Training contract applications – the decision drivers

Undergraduate students know what they want, with 80.1% stating all the law firms they apply to for a Training Contract will all be of the same type (full-service, specialist, high street etc.)



The top 10 decision drivers for undergraduates when selecting which law firm to apply to for a Training Contract are



Location, location, location

Despite the popularity of hybrid working and dispersion of the workforce, 80.1% of undergraduates still think it is very or somewhat important for law firms they apply to be located in London



16.2% of respondents said location was a top decision driver when selecting which firms to apply to

Undergraduate students intending on going into law would be happy to relocate **55.32** miles on average for a Training Contract



About Birketts

Birketts is a full service, UK top 50 law firm. With a rich heritage spanning over 150 years, the firm has over 850 staff working from five offices across East Anglia and London.

Building on its year-on-year growth, Birketts celebrated a record year in 2021/22, achieving £77.6m total revenue, 12% from 2020/21.

Large enough to provide specialist expertise in most areas of the law, but with a personal and tailored service, Birketts has an unrivalled reputation for providing high quality legal and client services.

Joining Birketts enables Trainee Solicitors to experience variety and responsibility while working alongside specialist solicitors. Based in either our Cambridge, Chelmsford, Norwich, Ipswich or London office, the two-year training contract will involve spending six months in four different practice areas. Trainees may also gain experience (known as a 'seat') in another of the firm's offices, getting involved in additional sector teams and initiatives.

Birketts invests strongly in its trainee lawyers. As well as offering support through the compulsory professional skills course, as required by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, the firm also offers a bespoke trainee content programme. This focuses on the technical, commercial and softer skills being a lawyer, including personal brand, coping with change and client-facing business development skills.

For more information about Graduate roles at Birketts, visit [birketts.co.uk/graduates](https://www.birketts.co.uk/graduates).

”

I have felt welcomed at Birketts from the outset and had the opportunity to work with experts across multiple disciplines all of whom are approachable, supportive and knowledgeable. It is clear that the firm is committed to teaching and encouraging junior lawyers to expand their skillset in order to progress in their career.”

Anastasia Whitlock, Associate, Corporate Team

Where ambition meets opportunity

Apply for our Summer Vacation Scheme or Training Contract

Summer 2023 Vacation Scheme applications are open between 3 November 2022 and 31 January 2023.

2025 Training Contract applications open on 1 February 2023 and close on 30 June 2023.

For more information, visit [birketts.co.uk/graduates/](https://www.birketts.co.uk/graduates/)



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Survey conducted by Opinion Matters on behalf of Birketts, surveying 500 UK based 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students intending to go into law, between 27.09.2022 – 05.10.2022.

Opinion Matters abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society, which is based on the ESOMAR principles.

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