

2026 SMILE Programme FAQs

Am I eligible to apply for SMILE 2026?

You can apply for our 2026 SMILE programme if you meet our enhanced PRIME criteria, which can be found [here](#).

What are the key dates for SMILE 2026?

- **Applications open:** 17 November 2025
- **Applications close:** 19 January 2026
- **Interviews:** Week commencing 16 February 2026
- **SMILE Programme:** 30 March – 7 April 2026 (excluding Easter bank holiday weekend)

Do I have to be interested in law to apply?

While you will experience the firm as a whole (including our business services teams), SMILE is primarily designed for students interested in pursuing a career in law.

Do I have to be studying A-Levels to apply for SMILE?

We welcome applications from anyone in Year 12 studying A-Levels or equivalent qualifications (including BTEC courses).

What happens if my application is unsuccessful?

If your application is unsuccessful, you will be invited to an online workshop focused on application writing skills. If you are unsuccessful after the interview stage, you will be invited to an online workshop focused on interview skills. If you need help completing the application form, you can view our application tips [\[here\]](#).

Will SMILE impact my studies?

Applications open before the Christmas holidays, interviews take place during February half term, and the SMILE week runs during the Easter holidays to minimise disruption to your school or college studies.

Which offices will you be running SMILE in?

SMILE will run in all seven of our offices across the country.

Which office should I apply to?

You should apply to the office closest to your school or college. If you are unsure, please contact us and we'll help you choose the most suitable office.

Will I get paid?

You will receive a bursary of £250 for the week.

What qualities are you looking for?

We are looking for individuals who are passionate about pursuing a career in law and who demonstrate curiosity and a willingness to learn. We value qualities such as good communication skills, teamwork, and an openminded and proactive attitude.

Should I inform my school that I am applying?

We would strongly encourage you to let your school know you are going to apply for SMILE. They will be able to offer advice and guidance with your application.

I am a careers lead, and I would like my setting to be involved with SMILE, how do I go about this?

We are keen to build strong connections with state schools in all our office localities and would love to hear from you. We have a range of materials to support you and your students and you can reach out to Lizzy-Ferguson@birketts.co.uk.

Who can I speak to if I have more questions?

If you have further questions that haven't been answered about SMILE, please contact Lizzy Ferguson – Lizzy-Ferguson@birketts.co.uk.