

“Law in Practice” paid placement degree option ([M130: Law in Practice](#)), FAQs

Who should apply for the “Law in Practice”, a degree option with a paid year of work experience in the third year?

1. I am undecided whether or not I would like to pursue a career as a solicitor or barrister, or in a different role such as legal operations. How will this placement help me?

The placement is valuable in gaining legal work experience which is widely applicable. The experience currently offered in most years is within a solicitors’ firm, the in-house legal department / legal operations team of a corporate business, or in a charity’s legal team. This breadth of employer opportunities allows you to apply your academic legal knowledge in a practical, commercial environment. You will be fully immersed in day-to-day activities of what solicitors do.

Many of the skills you will gain are extremely transferable to a career as a barrister or in legal operations also. For example: communication skills, the ability to summarise complex arguments coherently for a client, attention to detail, and developing client service skills, to name just a few!

For those of you specifically interested in a career as a barrister, you may know that barristers work in some City solicitors’ firms, again emphasising how the skills gained on the placement will be applicable to different career pathways in law. There are opportunities for those who qualify as solicitors to carry out tasks which barristers do, and some solicitors take later the qualification called “[Higher Rights of Audience](#)” which enables the solicitor to represent clients in court.

So experience at the different employers with whom we partner can give you skills relevant to a career pathway as a solicitor, barrister, or in legal operations, and assist you in deciding which pathway you might want to take in the future.

2. Where do the placements take place?

Many placements with partnering firms, companies and charities (listed below) advertised by Queen Mary University London (QMUL) are only for QMUL students. However, there are some employers on the list below who offer their placement opportunities to students at other universities also (so QMUL students are competing for those placements with students from other universities). The number of placement vacancies can vary from year to year. Currently placements take place at the following employers:

- [BCLP](#);
- [Bindmans](#);
- [Bross Bennett](#);
- [CHANEL](#);

- [Mishcon De Reya](#);
- [Paul Hastings](#);
- [Reed Smith](#);
- [Simmons & Simmons](#) and
- [Z2K](#)

We are constantly talking to other employers so, in each year, there may also be new opportunities at different employers.

3. What different types of legal experience can you gain during the placement?

The types of departments / practice areas where you gain experience (and the number of “seats” through which you rotate over the year) will differ based upon the employer where your placement takes place. For example;

- BCLP – students gain in-depth experience in one core department of the firm (e.g. Real Estate or Finance), but this work usually includes cross-department matters and projects.
- Bindmans – students gain experience in one of the firm’s core practice areas such as the team working on “Actions against the police and state”.
- Bross Bennett – this placement focuses on family law, and will involve assisting fee earners with the progression of cases, attending court hearings or conferences with barristers, drafting letters/divorce petitions, and potentially liaising with courts.
- CHANEL – students will be working with the in-house legal team (the legal department of the business) on different areas of law related to the CHANEL business and legal operations.
- Mishcon de Reya – you will spend 5-month “seats” in two legal departments/ practice groups of the firm (e.g. Corporate, Litigation, or Family Law).
- Paul Hastings – the placement is based on the firm’s global “practice innovation” team working on how the firm’s practice groups can utilise new methods (and technologies) in delivering their legal work to clients.
- Reed Smith – currently student interns spend the first six months in one department/ Practice Group “seat” (e.g. Corporate, Real Estate, Media, Transportation, Energy & Natural Resources) and thereafter you will be involved in an Innovation project related to that practice group.
- Simmons & Simmons – students get the rare opportunity to spend half of their year in the firm’s technology team, and then apply this knowledge to client work in the firm’s Fintech legal practice for the remainder of the year.
- Z2K – this placement is a very “hands-on” experience in the legal team of this anti-poverty charity, and will give the student exposure of direct client interaction, support and coordination of pro-bono work, and a chance to attend Welfare Benefit Tribunal hearings.

*At most firms there is also the possibility of pro bono work.

4. Are the placements paid?

Yes. As well as gaining valuable experience, you will also be paid as an intern. The salary offer is set by each employer but will be no less than London Living Wage (the equivalent of £23,302.50 per year currently).

5. Can the placement lead to a training contract?

In some employers, yes. One of our objectives in beginning the placement programme back in 2014 was to support students in gaining graduate work opportunities, in particular the sought-after solicitor training contracts at law firms through a successful placement. To date more than 80% of students who have gone on placements at firms have gained training contracts.

6. What help will I receive whilst on placement?

Students are very well-supported whilst on placement. You will receive regular communication and “check-in” meetings from QMUL faculty and staff throughout the year. Within the employer, mentors and “buddies” are assigned to support students, and regular training and feedback is given.

Applying for a Law in Practice placement

1. Do I need to have achieved specific academic grades in my first/second year degree modules at QMUL to apply for the “Law in Practice” degree option?

To apply, and to be considered for the placement year, you must (i) have passed all your first-year modules, and (ii) have taken (and pass) your second-year modules in the standard (May/June) second-year examination period. This is because we need to know that you will be progressing (from a university regulations perspective) to the “third year” of your degree before August of your second year. If you will need to re-sit, or if you delay, any second-year examinations (and will only receive those results in August/September at the end of your second year, or later), this will be too late to undertake the “placement year”. More information can be found in section 4.28 of your Student Handbook [Academic-Regulations-2023-24.pdf \(qmul.ac.uk\)](https://www.qmul.ac.uk/student-handbook/academic-regulations-2023-24.pdf)

2. How and when can I apply?

Firms recruit during the **second year** of your studies; information sessions will be held for various employers starting as early as October.

Note: As noted above, for all employers where placements take place, the placement itself is **always in the third year** of your studies (and the whole degree becomes a 4-year “Law in Practice” degree).

3. How long will I have to apply?

The recruitment timeline is defined by each employer, and will be clearly explained at each employer's "Information Session" and/or when we circulate the placement opportunity to you all by email. Some employers will give you as little as two weeks to apply whilst others may give more time.

Applications are usually made via the employer's HR team, or using their online graduate recruitment portal, details of which we will circulate.

4. Is the application process challenging?

The placements are popular and so the application process is competitive. Also, employers will assess you with exercises similar to those used for paralegals, vacation scheme or trainee solicitors – so there are high standards and you need to take the process very seriously.

As with any application process, some key pieces of advice include:

- Research the employer, and be able to explain in your application why that employer interests you specifically: don't just "Save as" an application you are using for many different employers.
- You need to be honest and think about your transferable skills when answering questions – being honest will help to ensure that, if you are successful, you will fit well within the employer's legal team.
- When dealing with case studies:
 - keep answers simple;
 - use your overall commercial awareness and experiences (these exercises are usually not testing only your legal knowledge – they want to see how you spot issues using your commercial awareness);
 - develop a communication style which avoids technical legal jargon: imagine you are explaining things to a non-specialist; and
 - think about the people involved in the case study and what they want to achieve.
- Attending the Reed Smith Business Master class sessions (either in your first year or second year, prior to any potential placement).
 - the hugely popular four-part Reed Smith Business Skills programme gives you a head start in developing your skills beyond academic and into professional life.
 - find out where your strengths are and which working environment will help you thrive; how to work effectively with colleagues and how to manage your time effectively.
 - there is a Certificate for attending all 4 sessions, and you will learn some great tips about communication skills.

You are strongly encouraged to attend all 4 sessions in preparation to commencing any placement with the Law in Practice degree programme.

5. Can I apply if I am on one of the QMUL dual degree (or the Senior Status) QMUL programmes?

If you are studying on one of the QMUL dual degree programmes (e.g. English and European Law, Global Law, Law and Politics, Law with Business) you are eligible to apply for the Law in Practice programme.

Unfortunately, Senior Status students are not eligible for the Law in Practice programme as firms advertise placements during the second (final) year of your study, and the placement regulations state that the placement can only be the penultimate year of degree study.

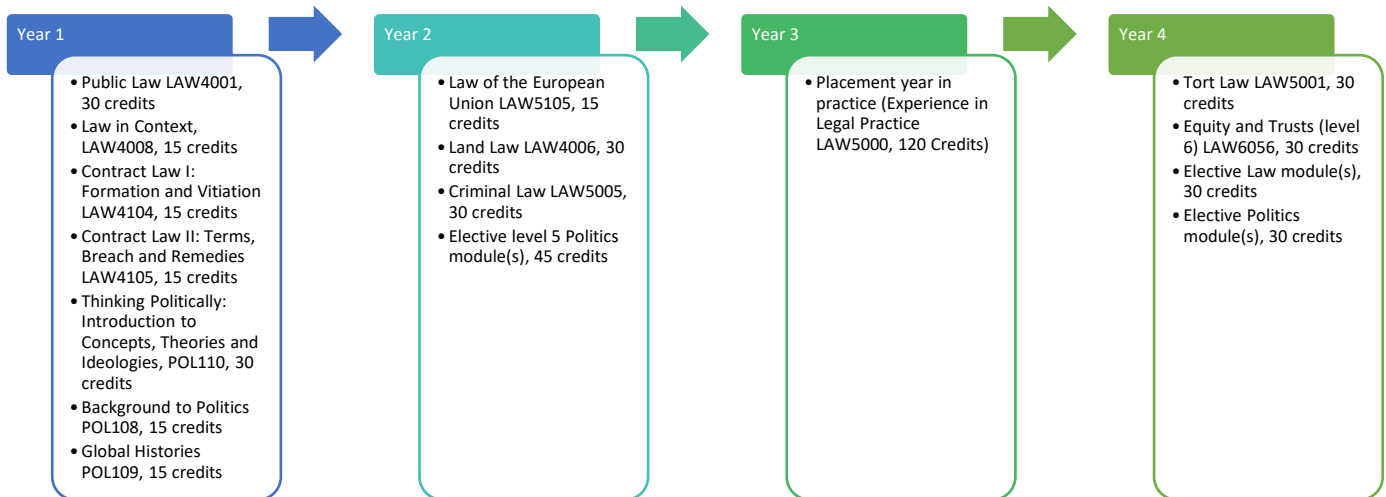
6. What changes for me if I transfer from a dual degree to the Law in Practice degree?

If you would have studied abroad for a year on your original programme, the year working in the employer as part of the Law in Practice degree takes the place of this year studying abroad. You will select your module options in April (whilst you are on placement) for your final year 4, please keep a look out on QMplus for this prompt to do so.

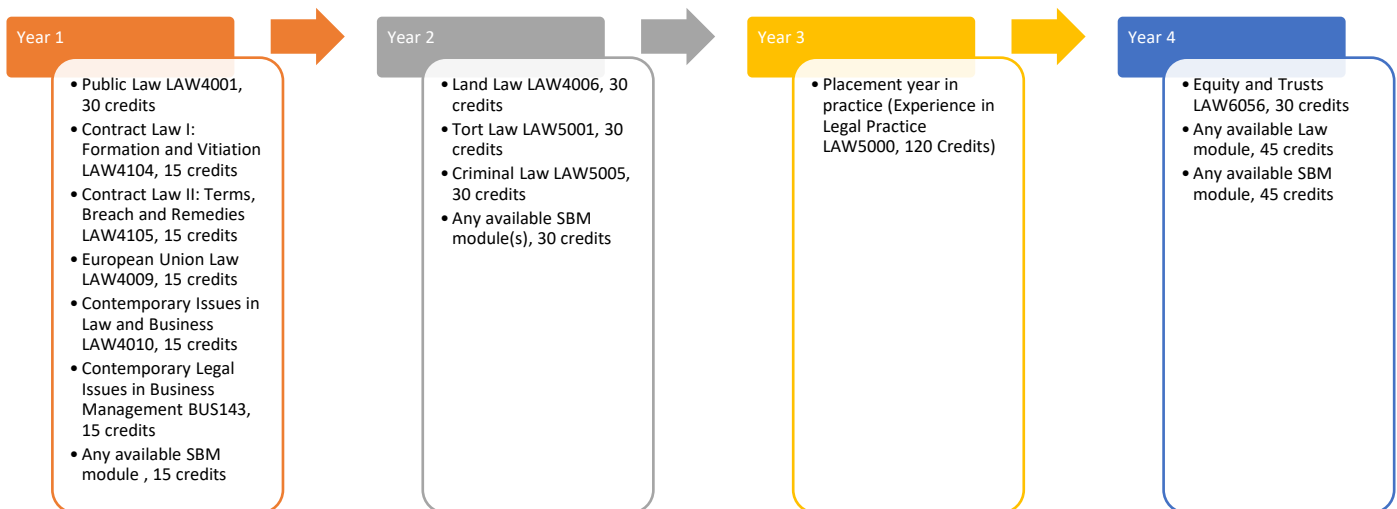
Double degree students (e.g. Law and Politics, Law with Business), please note: if you gain a placement at a firm and transfer onto the Law in Practice degree, this will impact your future module choices. For example, if you were originally on a dual degree (where, in your first 1-2 years, you took fewer Law modules than those studying for a LLB in Law) you will need to take some specific Law modules in your fourth year after the work placement.

In your fourth year (for example), dual degree students may need to take Equity and Trusts and/or Tort (as well as choosing other law modules). This requirement would mean that you would then only have 30 credits (Law and Politics) or 45 credits (Law with Business) of other fourth-year options (see the diagram below).

Typical route a LLB Law and Politics student will take if they transfer onto the Law and Politics (with a year in practice) (ML14) route.



Typical route a LLB Law with Business student will take if they transfer onto the LLB Law with Business (with a year in practice) (ML15) route.



7. Can I apply if I am an international student on a Tier 4 visa?

Students on Tier 4 visas are eligible to apply for the Law in Practice programme, and we have had many students on such visas participate in the scheme over the years. You will need to work with the QMUL Visa team to ensure that your visa can be extended to cover the additional year(s) of the (four-year) Law in Practice degree programme.

8. If I don't have previous experience within a law firm or other legal services employer, will this disadvantage my application for a Law in Practice placement?

No. All types of work experience are welcome and valuable, and there are no set criteria (for work experience) which law firms and other placement employers are prioritising within their recruitment process. As many of the employers state when we run sessions to communicate the placement opportunities, any type of previous job can build relevant skills which they seek: commercial awareness, being organised and professional, customer service, planning and managing your time.

Assessment for degree purposes of your "Law in Practice" placement year

1. How is the "Year in Practice" assessed for degree purposes when I am at the employer?

The 120-credit degree year during which you are working in the legal team of the employer is assessed as a "pass"/"fail" overall grade for the year (not as a 1st, 2:1 etc). The assessments are through a reflective portfolio and a presentation made towards the end of your placement year to QMUL Faculty.

2. What does a typical Law in Practice portfolio look like?

See attached [Reflective Journal document](#) (for internal use only at QMUL) as an example portfolio submitted by one of our recent Law in Practice students.

3. What are the expectations for my assessed presentation?

The presentation (held between May and June, towards the end of your placement) is intended to 'bring to life' the portfolio submitted, explaining your learning journey as you reflect on your year; what you learnt about legal practice, what skills you built, aspects you tried and found to work (or not!) and how you adjusted your approach to legal practice.

The presentation lasts for 25 minutes (either online or in person) with a 5 minute Q&A from two faculty assessors.

Accepting a placement made to you, degree title, and the administration required to change your QMUL degree programme to the "Law in Practice" degree

1. Accepting placement opportunities

An important note for those applying / going through the interview process / considering offers for **Law in Practice placement year opportunities** at any of the employers organised by QMUL.

We appreciate that the selection process at different firms/companies is happening in parallel, and that many of you may be applying to different firms to maximise your chances of obtaining a Law in Practice placement at one of the employers.

Important point please: if you are fortunate enough to be offered, **and you accept**, a Law in Practice placement at one of the firms/companies, you must **immediately**:

- **Notify Mohammed Uddin/ Nigel Spencer with which firm/company you have accepted a Law in Practice placement** (email: law-hub@qmul.ac.uk); and
- **As a matter of the professional courtesy, immediately let any other firm/company know** which has invited you to interview for their own Law in Practice placement year, or where you are still being considered for their Law in Practice placement, **that you will be unable to continue with that interview process**, because you have accepted a placement offer at another employer.

2. What happens after you are offered, and accept, a “placement year” at one of our Law in Practice degree employers

- Once you formally accept the placement offer from the employer, you will be contacted by Mohammed Uddin to complete the important “Change of Programme” form which must be submitted to the Law Undergraduate Office.
- You may also have to check your Visa status with the University Visa team and also any issues regarding tuition fees to the Finance team. Click on the following link for more information [CHANGES TO YOUR PROGRAMME OF STUDIES AT QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON - Advice and Counselling Service \(qmul.ac.uk\)](#)

3. Will transferring to the Law in Practice programme change my degree title?

Yes, your degree title will change to ‘Law in Practice degree’ (for LLB students), to ‘Law and Politics (with a year in practice)’ (for Law and Politics students), and ‘Law with Business (with a year in practice)’ (for Law with Business students).

4. Will my tuition fees (during the placement year) be covered by my employer?

No. As you are still a student of QMUL during your placement period, all payment terms and conditions of tuition fees still apply and are payable by you, the student. For more information, contact the fees department fees@qmul.ac.uk

5. What happens if I am unable to start my placement?

If due to any exceptional circumstances you are unable to start the placement, or the employer is unable to fulfil the placement as scheduled, do not worry; there is still time to revert to your original degree path. Please notify Mohammed Uddin/ Nigel Spencer as soon as possible. You will then need to resubmit the Change of Programme form to the undergraduate office before the start of the academic year and notify student finance of the change in circumstances.

Post placement support

1. Will there be any support in my final year after the placement?

Yes. You will automatically be enrolled onto the “**Skills Booster**” program, which usually runs in November (in your final year) whereby you will be building your “story-telling” skills to create career opportunities and sell yourself better in situations such as interviews and at networking events.

The “Skills Booster” programme is a series of 4, one-hour online skills sessions, run by award-winning internal and external facilitators. You will have access to a learning platform with a range of learning resources.

At the end of the series, you will receive a branded Certificate of Completion, if you have attended in full and engaged with all the learning activities.

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