



# | Early Careers

hcr law

# THE LAW FIRM WITH A PASSION FOR PEOPLE

## Our *commitment* to your growth is unwavering

As the Managing Partner at HCR Law, I understand how crucial it is for you to make the right choices at the start of your legal careers. The path you choose in law will shape your professional future, so it's important to select a firm that not only offers quality training but also the opportunity to grow in a supportive and dynamic environment.

We truly believe that our trainees are the partners of the future and are highly valued members of our team.

We are committed to supporting the growth of HCR trainees, not just during the training contract but throughout their entire career. With a robust learning and development programme, including access to SQE preparation courses, we ensure that all our trainees - regardless of their qualification route - are fully equipped for the challenges ahead. This is complemented by the support of our experienced partners, who act as mentors and advisers, guiding you through each step of your journey.

HCR is an award winning Top 60 UK law firm, and we provide the full range of services that you would expect to organisations, business leaders and individuals. Our full service offering ensures that trainees have the opportunity to gain exposure to different fields of law.

With offices across England and Wales, you'll have access to a vast network and the chance to explore various specialisms, from corporate law to litigation, employment, and real estate.



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We are passionate about developing talent at HCR and recognise that when selecting our trainees we really are selecting HCR's future partners. So, we make sure our training programme covers everything our clients expect from our lawyers...the best

**Rachel Turner, Training Principal**

Our firm's infrastructure is designed to support your growth, whether you aim to qualify in a specific practice area or are open to discovering what excites you most. We are committed to fostering talent and offering trainees a seamless transition from education to a full career in law.

Choosing the right firm is critical - it's the foundation for everything that follows. With us, you'll find not only a place to learn but a platform to build the career you're passionate about. We look forward to helping you take the first step towards a rewarding and successful legal career.

*Rod Thomas*

Managing Partner



# Facts about HCR Law

When you join HCR you will be taking the first steps on your legal career path, where you'll be part of a dynamic, entrepreneurial, and committed team as diverse as our clients. Together, we make a difference—to our clients, each other, and the communities we serve.

- ◆ A **Top 50** UK law firm
- ◆ More than **1,100** people
- ◆ **175 plus** Partners
- ◆ **13 offices** across England and Wales
- ◆ **£2m** raised for local charities
- ◆ We're recognised as the **UK's leading legal adviser** for M&A transactions by Experian in their annual review
- ◆ We help over **5,000 private clients** with the moments that matter to them each year
- ◆ We are **independent** and financially **strong**

Once you qualify, we offer the chance for our junior fee earners to participate in a secondment, in Ireland, Spain or Australia, with more locations to come! This is a great opportunity to practice in a different jurisdiction, expand your network and see the world with the continuing support of HCR.





# Will the reality live up to *your* expectations?

At HCR, our dedicated 'PT Group' - a team of enthusiastic Paralegals and Trainees - play a key role in organising fundraising and educational events for the firm. They also come together regularly for firm-sponsored socials, giving you the chance to build connections and strengthen your network across the business.

We believe a healthy work-life balance is essential. That's why we offer plenty of opportunities to get involved in activities beyond your day job. Whether you're a star in the kitchen, a quiz master, or a sports enthusiast, there's a packed calendar of fundraising events to dive into. We support both national and local charities, and together, we've raised over £2 million for causes close to our hearts.

We encourage you to connect with and learn from your peers, offering plenty of opportunities to do so. During your training contract, you'll be invited to our Trainee Away Day - a two-day retreat focused on team building, professional development, and strengthening friendships away from the office.



Our investment in your development begins from day one with our comprehensive onboarding programme and will continue throughout your career. Our early careers programme offers a supportive environment for those who successfully pass our assessment centre to learn and grow. You will receive support from our Trainee Mentors throughout your training contract.

Trainees attend workshops to hone their drafting, presentation, and networking skills. You will also have access to on-demand learning to help support you in your role and your personal development, including:


- Financial Skills
- People Management
- Understanding Neurodiversity
- Nutrition



**45** trainees we currently have in rotation across our **13 offices**



**82%** our retention rate of trainees over the last two years. Highlighting our commitment to leading training and our '**passion for people**' culture



**10** apprentices across the business, including Paralegal Apprenticeships, Solicitor Apprenticeships and Licensed Conveyancers



Funded or part-funded courses - we provide professional qualification sponsorship, including in the **PSC, SQE, STEP, CLC and CILEX routes**



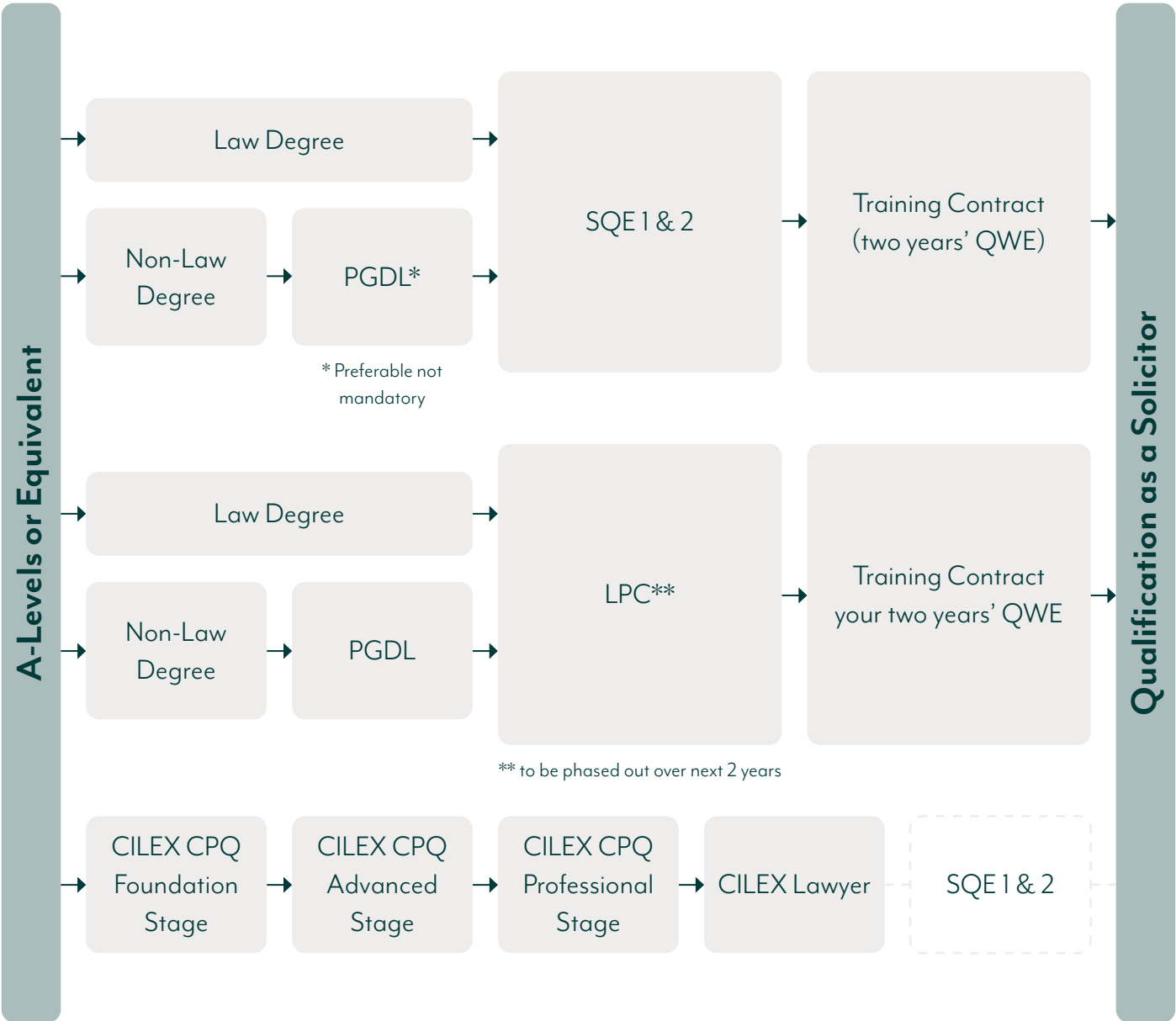
study days to support you during your **ongoing learning**



# What will *your* path to becoming a lawyer look like?

We want to attract, develop and retain the best talent from all backgrounds. Our aim is to promote an inclusive culture where everyone feels respected and has the opportunity to grow and develop in a supportive environment. Many of our employees have chosen different paths to become a lawyer – each route suited to their unique circumstances. If your goal is to have a career in law, it's good to know that there is more than one option available to you. Whether you prefer full-time study or earning and learning at the same time through a legal apprenticeship, there is a route that works for you.

Whether you prefer the more traditional training contract route, the flexibility of an apprenticeship, or pursuing a CILEX qualification, there is something for you at HCR. We are committed to providing tailored opportunities that support your ambitions and professional goals. Our training contract offers access to both practical experience and structured development, while our apprenticeship and CILEX routes provide alternative, supportive pathways for those looking to qualify in a way that suits their personal and professional circumstances.





# Training Contracts

As a full-service law firm, we offer our trainees a diverse range of seats throughout their training contract. You'll have the opportunity to work across various areas of the business, gaining hands-on experience and developing essential client-care and communication skills. HCR Trainees will have the opportunity to experience four different practice areas, rotating every six months throughout the two-year training contract.

Our training contract is designed to challenge and support junior lawyers, creating an environment where you can thrive. Whether you've completed the LPC or the SQE, at HCR, your qualifying work experience (QWE) is your training contract. Over two years, you'll rotate through four six-month seats in both contentious and non-contentious practice areas, as well as a mix of legal services for individuals and business services.

We are committed to providing market-leading training - after all, we're preparing you to be the future leaders of the firm. You'll work under the supervision of experts in their field while handling a diverse and interesting range of clients.

Online  
Application Form

First Stage  
Interview

Psychometric  
Testing

Assessment  
Centre







## What are the entry requirements for a Training Contract at HCR?

We're looking for individuals who have achieved (or are on track to achieve) a 2:1 undergraduate degree. If there are reasons why you've not achieved this, please let us know in your application so that we can take this into account.

Non-law students must take either the PGDL or SQE Law Essentials Course.

We also welcome applications if you have completed (or are studying towards) the SQE1 and SQE2 exams. Your training contract will not be able to start until you have your LPC or SQE1 and SQE2 results.

During your Training Contract you'll receive wide programme of support including additional learning opportunities, workshops and away days. You will also be allocated a mentor and gain valuable client experience whilst also being provided with time to study.



### Hear from Charlotte Thornton-Smith

Charlotte Thornton-Smith, Partner and Head of Office for our Worcester and Central England offices, originally joined the firm as a Trainee in 2001. She was offered a position in the Corporate team when she qualified as a Solicitor and was instrumental in establishing the firm's specialist healthcare sector which has continued to evolve into the national sector it is today.

"I would say that I had a traditional route into law, having studied a law degree at Cardiff University and subsequently completing my LPC there. I worked as a legal assistant in the remortgaging team for a national law firm before starting my training contract."

"It is true to say that the continued growth of the firm has created many of the opportunities which have led to some of my additional roles that I have at HCR and which provide me with an interesting and varied career. I would encourage others to take them where presented - you might not know what you are yet capable of!"

Charlotte has two children and added: "It has been hard work and challenging at times to juggle the work-life balance, but I can honestly say that I have never looked back. I count myself fortunate that I have never felt that I needed to join another firm to fulfil my career ambitions."

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I count myself fortunate that I have never felt that I needed to join another firm to fulfil my career ambitions.





#HCRLife

## Hear from Chris Finch

Chris joined HCR at 18 years of age as a paralegal apprentice in the family law team in Worcester. He shares his story of qualifying as a lawyer via an alternative route and his journey from apprentice to Partner.

“I had just completed my A-Levels at Hereford Sixth Form College, and whilst I was in receipt of offers to start at university in September, I was eager to get some real-world experience under my belt before embarking on a degree. My initial plan was to defer my place and impress the partners so that I would have a foot in the door after university and completion of my studies to get a training contract (which were and continue to be fiercely competitive). However, I never left!

I was persuaded to stick around and was told about the CILEX route to qualification; something my mentor had done many years before. HCR invested in me by sending me to college in Worcester to study the CILEX level 3 and level 6 diplomas in law and practice. I attended college one day a week while doing my level 3, and then went on to night school for my level 6. Alongside the level 6 diploma, I also studied additional modules to earn the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL). After the GDL, I went on to study the Legal Practice Course (LPC) at the University of West England. I qualified initially as a Chartered Legal Executive, before being admitted to the roll of solicitors on the completion of my LPC and PSC modules.

After my qualification as a solicitor, I had experience and knowledge that belied my age and PQE. Those around me continued to push and motivate me, and I was promoted to associate in 2021. After my promotion, and to recognise my career journey so far, I was put forward for the HCR ‘Fast Track’ promotion scheme. I was promoted to partner in 2024, becoming one of the youngest partners at the firm.

My route to qualification was somewhat unorthodox and didn’t come without sacrifice; whilst stressful at times, it was also a lot of fun!

Where you train and who you train under is such an important factor in building the foundations for a successful career in law, and I was so lucky to learn and work alongside some of the very best family lawyers in the business. As we know, family lawyers are all big characters, so there was rarely a dull moment!

It did, however, also give me a unique and advanced skill set that put me well ahead of those around me in terms of age and PQE. I am a big fan of vocational learning and advocate for routes such as CILEX and the solicitor apprentice scheme.

I think one of the main messages that I want to get across here is that there are now so many different ways you can go about your chosen career, whether that is in law or something else. It’s important to play to your strengths, but also don’t be afraid to step outside your comfort zone and the perception of what you should do next. Do something that drives you and keeps you motivated and engaged!”





# Supporting your career, *whatever route you take*

Whilst a more traditional trainee programme may work for some, this isn't the only option and many of our colleagues have benefitted from alternative routes. We actively encourage you to choose the right career path for you.

## CILEX

The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX) route to qualification is popular with school leavers, legal support staff, mature students, career changers and those with family commitments. It allows you to receive both on-the-job and off-the-job training in your chosen practice area whilst earning a salary.

To qualify under CILEX, you must complete the CILEX Professional Qualification (CPQ), which has three stages; Foundation, Advanced and Professional. The CILEX Professional Qualification (CPQ) is completed at your own pace and, on average, it takes five and a half years to become a CILEX Lawyer. If you hold a Law Degree, you are exempt from the Foundation Stage so your route to qualification may be slightly shorter.



You need to work within your chosen discipline throughout your studies to qualify and CILEX is currently available in the following practice areas at HCR:

- Dispute Resolution
- Residential Conveyancing
- Commercial Conveyancing
- Employment Law
- Business and Commercial Law
- Family Litigation
- Probate and Private Client
- Immigration Law.

## Licensed Conveyancers

If you have a passion for property law and supporting clients through one of the biggest decisions of their lives, a career as a Licensed Conveyancer might be for you! You will deal with all aspects of the buying and selling process in both residential and commercial property. By completing the CLC qualifications and gaining hands-on experience, you can qualify whilst working.



# Apprenticeships

If you feel that the degree route is not for you, or if you're interested in working whilst you study, we offer a range of apprenticeship options.

## Business Administrator Apprenticeship

- Provides the skills needed to manage resources in line with business objectives whilst developing verbal and written communication skills
- Gives you transferable knowledge, skills and behaviour which are relevant to any organisation and career
- Completed over 18 months.



## Paralegal to Apprenticeship

- Designed to provide you with the experience, knowledge and qualifications you need for a career as a paralegal including legal research, drafting documents, communication and analysing information
- Choose to specialise in Civil Litigation, Commercial, Family, Property, Employment or Probate. Practice completed over two years.



## Solicitor Apprenticeship (Level 7)

- Qualify as a solicitor by undertaking on-the-job training while studying one day a week for a law degree and the Solicitors Qualifying Examinations (SQE)
- Completed over a six-year period which includes the SQE and taking part in our two-year Training Contract
- When completed you will be a qualified Solicitor.



## What are the entry requirements for an apprenticeship?

To be considered for an apprenticeship, you must:

- Be aged 18 or over
- Have five GCSEs including Mathematics and English. These must be:
  - Grade C or above (or equivalent) if you received your GCSEs before 2017
  - Grade 4 or above if you qualified after 2017
- Have three A-Levels (or equivalent), minimum grade C
- Have not completed any prior undergraduate degree
- Be living in England.

If you are interested in a Solicitor Apprenticeship, you must have completed a Level 3 Paralegal Apprenticeship first.







#HCRLife

## Hear from Elaine Haines

Business Director, Elaine is based in our Worcester office, and leads the firms Group Services team. From joining as the Business Development & Marketing Director, Elaine shares her experience and progression at HCR.

I remember in my early days, the Managing Partner telling me he was sure that during my time at HCR I'd feel every emotion going, but I'd never be bored. He was right, and as someone who has historically outgrown previous employers, I have thrived at HCR where the pace is as fast as in high growth start-ups, with change constant and progressive.

I joined as BD and Marketing Director in 2017. One thing that struck me back then was how open and friendly everyone was. I was actually a bit suspicious! But I was wrong to be so and ever since, have experienced kindness and humanity I will never forget.

I was backed from the start – even when I wanted to take risks and try new things. When occasionally, an idea has not gone to plan, I'm encouraged to carry on without losing confidence. One of my first objectives was to develop a marketing team with the skills and experience needed to support a firm of HCR's size and ambition. I was given the freedom and resources to deliver for the firm, and this included recruiting a 'number 2' for me, so I could expand my role beyond marketing, as Head of Sectors.

In my view, the only limit on your personal development at HCR is your own ability to grow and adapt. I'm now in the position of Business Director, leading Group Services who share the aim of making the lives of our legal teams easier. Our relentless focus on working collaboratively to improve quality and consistency means our lawyers can get on with their day job of supporting clients.

If you want to work somewhere that encourages ideas, is laser focused on growth, and will support your personal ambitions, HCR is the smart move for you.

## Hear from Khalid Ahamed

Khalid took part in our vacation scheme, experiencing what it is like to work in a law firm before successfully applying for a training contract with us.

"Joining HCR Law as an external candidate has been a transformative experience, bridging the gap between my aspirations and experience. My journey began with a vacation scheme in June 2022, where I had the opportunity to work in the Corporate, Commercial, Family Law, and Restructuring and Insolvency teams. This experience provided me with a diverse and comprehensive insight into the firm's practice areas and a firsthand understanding of the collaborative nature that defines HCR's culture.

What made HCR stand out from the beginning was their belief in my potential, even though I joined without prior legal experience. The firm took a risk on me, recognising my determination and enthusiasm, and provided me the opportunity to prove myself. This trust and encouragement were pivotal in my decision to pursue a career with HCR.

The recruitment process at HCR further reinforced my decision to join the firm. From the interview stage to the assessment centre, I was impressed by the variety of exercises designed to showcase a range of skills. The structured yet inclusive environment enabled me to demonstrate my abilities while developing an appreciation of HCR's values, its dynamic culture, and its emphasis on teamwork and innovation. This process was both challenging and rewarding, endorsing HCR as the ideal place for me to grow professionally.

After securing a training contract, I joined the firm's London office as a Private Client Paralegal to gain valuable experience before beginning my formal training. The role has been instrumental in preparing me for the progression from paralegal to trainee solicitor. HCR has been supportive during my position, offering me mentorship and resources to develop my skills and confidence. Through firsthand exposure to client contact and the preparation of complex documentation, I have gained the practical knowledge necessary to transition seamlessly into my training contract.

What I value most about HCR is its entrepreneurial spirit and the autonomy it grants its people. As a paralegal, I have been entrusted with responsibilities, empowering me to develop problem-solving, organisational, and analytical skills. These experiences have bolstered my confidence and reaffirmed that I am on the right path.

For those considering a similar route, my advice is simple - embrace every opportunity to learn and grow. The journey from paralegal to trainee is an invaluable phase that builds resilience and a profound understanding of the legal profession. At HCR, you are not just part of a team—you are part of a culture that celebrates innovation, collaboration, and progress.

As I look ahead to starting my training contract, I am excited about the opportunities that await and confident that HCR will continue to support me in achieving my career aspirations."



# Vacation Scheme

There's a good chance you've never experienced a legal environment before. By taking part in our vacation scheme, you'll get a taste of what it's like to work at HCR. You'll meet partners, solicitors and trainees from across the firm as you experience what life as a lawyer at HCR is like. Supervised by an appropriate person, you'll have the chance to get involved in real matters alongside members of the team.

Our Summer Vacation Scheme is a week-long placement in one of our ten offices. The first four days are spent with lawyers in a variety of different practice areas, assisting them with a broad range of activities from researching legislation changes and drafting client letters to attending client meetings where possible. Guided by your supervisor, you will work on real life matters for clients.

On the final day, you will take part in workshops hosted by our Paralegals and Trainees, followed by a mock trial with your peers. Judged by one of our Partners, the mock trial gives you the opportunity to demonstrate some of the skills and knowledge you've learned and is a fun way to end the week.

## What are the benefits of taking part in a vacation scheme?

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The people were all lovely and extremely welcoming, the first day nerves definitely didn't last long! I was treated as an equal rather than as a student which meant I was able to take advantage of the people I was introduced to and their expertise.

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My input was valued and my contributions were sought after.

**Florence Strawford**

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I appreciated the collaborative team environment and the welcoming company culture, which made me feel like a valued member of the team. The diverse assignments and tasks kept the experience engaging and challenging.

**Katie Owen**

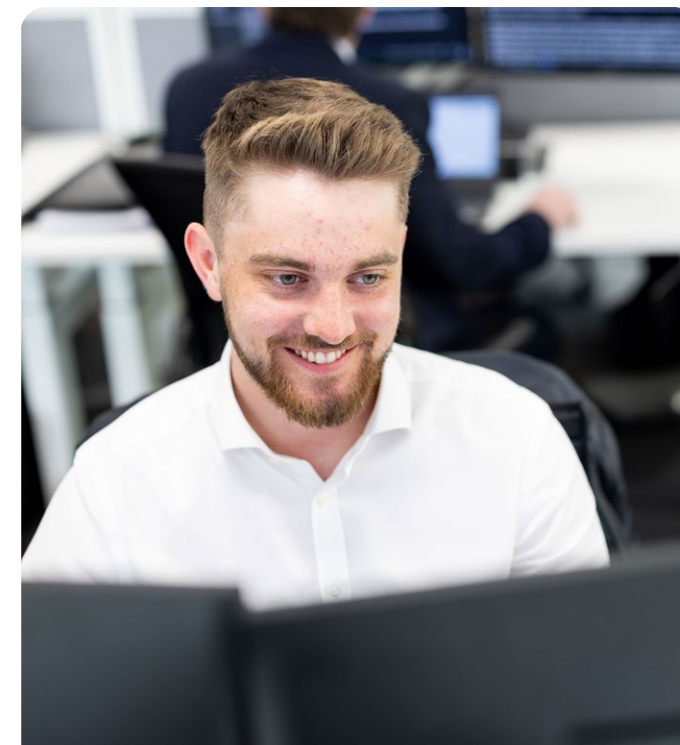
# Supporting your journey

We're passionate about people and our Early Careers and Recruitment team are here to guide you and act as your main point of contact. Whatever role or route you're interested in at the firm, we're on hand to help.

We know you'll have lots of questions on your route to qualification, so we'll support you all the way, making you as comfortable as possible throughout our recruitment process. Here are our top tips to help you prepare for a successful interview or assessment at HCR:

- Be authentic and genuine - this is your opportunity to showcase your talent, unique skills and personality
- Prepare meaningful questions - this is a two-way process, and you should use this moment to really get to know us as a firm

- Make the most of any experiences open to you - take part in voluntary work, attend careers fairs (you may even see us there!) and don't under value any professional working experience. Your experiences of a working environment will set you up for a smoother adjustment into life at the firm
- Enjoy the process - while we admire your appetite to reach qualification, remember to enjoy yourself on the journey. Your experience at the assessment centre and time as a paralegal will play a large part in shaping the kind of solicitor you become
- Understand the firm's culture and values - research the firm thoroughly before the assessment centre. Familiarise yourself with our key practice areas and recent news articles. Demonstrate how your values align with ours as a firm
- Personal preparation - reflect on your previous experiences and provide examples of the skills you have gained and how these will transfer to your career as a Solicitor
- Don't dwell on any mistakes - concentrate on performing well in the next task
- Demonstrate commercial awareness - research recent trends and changes within the legal sector.







#HCRLife

## Hear from Manyara Matambanadzo

Manyara shares her story of started at HCR as a Paralegal, navigating a new role and homeworking before starting a training contract and qualifying as a Solicitor.

“My journey at HCR started unconventionally, with my very first day as a Paralegal within the Dental Corporate team being on the 23rd of March 2020 – also the day that the national lockdown was announced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was my very first legal job, and I suddenly had to navigate the new concept of remote working, familiarising myself with a new role and trying to get to know my team via Zoom calls. Naturally I had concerns about my security within the firm, having been ‘the last one in’. However, my supervisor’s faith in me never faulted remaining insistent that things would eventually stabilise.

Fast forward approximately six months later, and they did! We experienced a sudden boom in activity within the sector, so as a team we were really busy. I was forced into the deep end and had to learn a lot very quickly which was great for my development.

From that point on, my career progression within the firm moved quite quickly. Within a year of being with the firm I had successfully secured a training contract, which was brought forward to start two years following on from my commencement date with the firm. Two years later I had completed my training contract and was delighted be offered a role to qualify as a solicitor into the Commercial team. The decision for me was simple. HCR was a firm that from the start, gave me a chance and supported me. I therefore felt confident that this was the right firm for me to proceed onto the next journey of my legal career with.

Now, nearing my first-year anniversary as a qualified Solicitor and my five-year anniversary with the firm, my sentiments remain the same and I know that HCR is the right place for me. The firm continues to grow and go from strength to strength, however what still stands out is HCR’s culture, vibrancy and energy and the way they value and support their staff.

My route into the firm was not the most straightforward or conventional, however personally it taught me that I am more tenacious and resilient than I thought.

My advice to anyone at the start of their legal journeys and feeling disheartened, is to remain persistent. Don’t give up, keep knocking on every door – as you don’t know if it will be the next door that will open for you!”



# Our departments for seat rotation include:



**Agriculture & Estates**



**Banking and Finance**



**Commercial, IP and IT**



**Corporate**



**Dispute Resolution**



**Employment and Immigration**



**Education & Charties**



**Family Law**



**Insurance, Risk and Regulatory**



**Private Client**



**Real Estate**



**Restructuring and Insolvency**

## What work experience do you offer, and who should I contact?

We offer placements in each of our offices. Please get in touch via our website if you're interested in gaining work experience with us, letting us know which office you would prefer to attend.

## When should I apply to the Vacation Scheme?

Our Vacation Scheme is aimed at students who are either in their:

- Penultimate or final year of studying law
- Final year of studying a non-law degree.

## Who should I contact if I need to make any reasonable adjustments for the Training Contract assessment process?

Please contact the Early Careers Team ([earlycareers@hcrclaw.com](mailto:earlycareers@hcrclaw.com)) to discuss specific adjustments that we can make to the process. We're happy to discuss options to make the process as accessible and inclusive as possible for you.

## What can I expect during the Training Contract application process?

- Applications will remain open until the deadline on our website. After submitting your application, it will be screened by one of the Early Careers team. If successful, you will then be invited to attend a first-stage interview. Following a successful interview, you will be invited to complete the online assessment and then attend the assessment centre in person at one of our offices
- If unsuccessful, you will be notified and will be invited to set up job alerts for future roles at HCR.

## What can I expect at an assessment centre?

Our assessment centre is a one-day, in person process involving a range of tasks and exercises designed to test your suitability for a Training Contract. You will work both individually and collaboratively on tasks including, group discussions, written tests, presentations and interviews.

Our assessors are looking for candidates who meet the standards to be a trainee at HCR, people who are genuine and driven to find a way to 'get things done'.

## I wasn't successful with my last application, can I apply again?

Yes, you can apply for our Training Contracts more than once. However, you cannot attempt our assessment centre more than once.

## Who should I contact with questions?

Please email [earlycareers@hcrclaw.com](mailto:earlycareers@hcrclaw.com) and one of the team will come back to you



# FAQs



# hcrlaw

Birmingham | Cambridge | Cardiff | Central England | Cheltenham | Hereford  
Leamington Spa | London | Norwich | Thames Valley | Worcester | Wye Valley



[www.hcrlaw.com](http://www.hcrlaw.com)