

# sinclairs**law**

in collaboration with



# TRAILBLAZER SOLICITOR APPRENTICESHIPS

SEPTEMBER 2018

**OPEN DAY LAUNCH - Friday 14th July 2017**

Application Process opens Friday 14th July 2017

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## Overview

Trailblazer Solicitor Apprenticeships were announced in September 2016 and provide an alternative to the traditional route to qualify as a solicitor. Previously, to qualify as a solicitor, students leaving sixth form had to go to university to complete a law degree, followed by a legal practice course and then formal training to qualify through a Training Contract. Qualifying through this route meant that the student had debts of around £100,000 and no guarantee of a job at the end. Under the new scheme, a sixth form leaver can sign up straight after school to a six year programme, the completion of which will lead to qualification as a solicitor. They will not have any debt associated with their studies and the option of a job at the conclusion of their training.

The solicitor apprentice will enjoy both on and off the job learning, made up of work-based training with Sinclairslaw and part-time studying provided by City Law School in partnership with CILEx Law School. This combination will mean that the apprentice will be rigorously trained to ensure that they meet the high standards set by the Solicitors Regulation Authority to qualify as a solicitor.

Sinclairslaw is proud to be involved with this initiative as it will provide two students that are selected the opportunity to train as a solicitor without the debt that is associated with full time higher education. The apprentice will be in paid employment with the firm and be given the support to enable them to successfully achieve qualification.

In celebration of the continued growth and development of Sinclairslaw, it shall be launching this initiative at its Open Day on Friday 14th July 2017 which will be held at its new headquarters in Cardiff City centre.

We look forward to welcoming you all there!

## Key Features

- For up to 2\* candidates in England and Wales
- A six year programme combining on and off the job training
- LLB in Legal Practice awarded by City, University of London after four years
- Final assessments in years 4 and 5 for the Solicitors Regulation Authority's qualifying exams
- Online based learning provided by CILEx Law School
- Paid employment by Sinclairslaw throughout the 6 year period
- Apprentice will work from both the Cardiff and Twickenham offices throughout the six years
- All course fees paid by Sinclairslaw and the Government
- Supervision and training provided by Sinclairslaw throughout the 6 year period
- A full day's study leave will be provided each week

\*The Wales placement depends on Welsh Government approval which is yet to be confirmed. Otherwise, both candidates will be under the current English Trailblazer Solicitor Apprenticeship scheme and will have to spend 55% of their time in England with the remainder in Wales. In such circumstances, the candidates will start at different times.

## How does it work?

Apprentices are employed for a six year period where they are a salaried member of staff of the firm. The week consists of four days in the office working and one day on study leave. One of these days in the month will be studying face to face at City Law School in London.

City Law School will be the main academic provider in the 6 years. The apprentice will have an initial induction in September 2018, thereafter attending monthly face to face tuition. This shall combine with distance learning through virtual learning resources which will be provided by CILEx Law School. As a member of City Law School, the apprentice will have access to libraries and will be provided supported by a personal tutor.

The apprentice will obtain a LLB in Legal Practice after the first four years if all modules are successfully completed. They will then prepare for and take the Solicitors Regulation Authority's externally assessed two stage exams during years five and six.

Sinclairslaw will supervise and support the apprentice during this 6 year period to record their training and development in a competence-based portfolio which will be assessed by their internal supervisor. This shall also evidence their experience to external organisations such as the Solicitors Regulation Authority and will become an important document when coming up to qualification.

Training will be provided by Sinclairslaw from both its Cardiff and Twickenham offices\*. Throughout the six year period, the apprentice will benefit from working with the teams based in both of these offices.

\*subject to any jurisdictional restrictions that are placed on this once the Welsh Government has approved its version of the Trailblazer Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme.

## **The City Law School and Crex Law School**

The City Law School and CILEx Law School are established as excellent providers of legal education. In combining their vast expertise, they have formed a partnership to deliver the academic requirements of the solicitor apprenticeship programme and they will do this by delivering a blended online and face to face learning experience.

### **Candidate Selection**

The six year programme will be demanding as it will require the apprentice to manage their responsibilities in the office whilst in the same time ensuring that they are fulfilling their academic obligations.

The apprentice will need to be academically strong and also possess personal characteristics which make them resilient to be considered worthy of long term investment at the point of recruitment by Sinclairslaw.

Therefore, Sinclairslaw shall be assessing candidates through a robust application process which shall begin this summer and conclude in spring 2018. This will provide Sinclairslaw the opportunity to evaluate the candidates fully whilst not disrupting their current sixth form education. Please note that the application process may be subject to change depending on the requirements of the firm.

The minimum entry requirements for candidates are as follows:

- 5 GCSEs at Grade C to include English and Maths; and
- 3 AS Levels achieved at Grade BBB (or equivalent) or be predicted 3 A-Levels at BBB (or equivalent); or
- 3 A Levels (already achieved) at Grade BBB (or equivalent).

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The application process shall be in five stages, outlined as follows:

### **Stage 1 – Open Application**

Candidates are to provide the following documents to the [solicitorapprenticeships@sinclairslaw.co.uk](mailto:solicitorapprenticeships@sinclairslaw.co.uk) mailbox by the deadline of 1st September 2017:

- CV detailing the minimum grade requirements and any work experience/extracurricular activities undertaken by the candidate;
- Two references. One must be from a head teacher or equivalent and the other must be from a professional; and
- A 300 word essay to the following question: “Why do you want a career in the law and why do you want to undertake the solicitor apprenticeship programme with Sinclairslaw?”

### **Stage 2 – Assessment Day**

Shortlisted candidates from Stage 1 will be invited to attend an open day at our headquarters in Cardiff City centre. This day will consist of them sitting a situational judgment test, comprehension test and an informal interview with members of staff.

### **Stage 3 – Formal Presentation**

Successful candidates from Stage 2 will be asked to provide a short 5 minute talk on a business or law related topic. They will prepare handouts for the audience and will be prepared to answer questions. Sinclairslaw will help candidates prepare by providing workshops ahead of this presentation.

### **Stage 4 – Formal Interview**

Shortlisted candidates from Stage 4 shall be formally interviewed by Sinclairslaw CEO Mr Michael Charles and Deputy CEO Mr Gregory Evans. The interview shall last for at least an hour in duration. In deciding which candidate progresses to the final stage, feedback from the interviews along with any information gathered from references provided at Stage 1, feedback from the Sinclairslaw Management Committee and other members of staff shall inform the final decision.

### **Stage 5 – Mooting**

**February 2018** – Training and informal mooting sessions shall be delivered by Sinclairslaw to prepare the finalists for the final to be held in March 2018.

**March 2018** – Final moots shall take place to determine which candidates should be offered the Solicitor Apprenticeship with Sinclairslaw. Feedback from attendees will be taken into account but the final decision shall be that of the Sinclairslaw Management Committee.

## Induction

City Law School will provide the induction in September 2018 which will introduce the apprentice to the working life that they will be expected to live in the 6 years. It will cover both the requirements of the course that the candidate will have to undergo and the commitments that the apprentice will have with SinclairsLaw.

The apprentice will meet their subject tutors and personal tutor who will support them during their course of study with City Law School, as well as broader guidance regarding the support that will be available to the apprentice at City Law School.

The induction will introduce the apprentice to the skills that they will need to be successful on the degree course, including the specific requirements of a part-time distance learning course. Becoming familiar with all resources, including both library and online materials, will help the apprentice plan their part-time study and enable them to combine and manage office-based training.

During the programme, the apprentice will be given the opportunity to meet other apprentices with other law firms and organisations so that they may build their own peer support group.

## Course Details

### **LLB in Legal Practice (solicitor route) – Years 1 to 4**

The LLB in Legal Practice (solicitor route) with City Law School will be delivered across four years on a part time distance learning basis. It will provide the apprentice with the necessary subjects to be able to pass the Functioning Knowledge Test which shall be set by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and which you must pass to qualify as a solicitor.

Once the induction in September 2018 is completed, the apprentice will then be given weekly programmes of work with which the apprentice will receive support from both the City Law School and CILEx Law School. To assist in the study, there will be practical assessments and revision sessions.

Distance learning will be reinforced with monthly face to face tuition to enable consolidation and refinement of knowledge.

In the first three years, the apprentice will study compulsory modules that are necessary to obtain a 'qualifying law degree'. This means that upon completing the degree, the apprentice will be permitted to continue their training to practise as a solicitor.

In years three and four, the apprentice will study the modules necessary to give them a thorough grounding in areas specified in the Statement of Solicitor Competence and the Apprenticeship Standard set by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

**Further details regarding this LLB in Legal Practice can be obtained by sending your enquiries to [solicitorapprenticeships@sinclairslaw.co.uk](mailto:solicitorapprenticeships@sinclairslaw.co.uk)**

## Solicitors Regulation Authority External Examinations – Years 5 to 6

During the last two years, the apprentice will study the subjects and professional skills required to practise as a solicitor and prepare for the Solicitors Regulation Authority's externally assessed two stage examinations.

- 1) **Functioning Legal Knowledge Tests:** Taken at the end of year 5, these will be computer based central assessments which will be conducted by external independent assessment organisations. Apprentices will sit these exams in assessment centre in timed conditions away from the workplace.

A work-based assessment will also be carried out against the Apprentice Standard and Competence Statement, which will be assessed and certified by the City Law School.

The apprentice will receive intense revision sessions to prepare them for both of these assessments.

- 2) **Practical Legal Skills Assessments:** Taken at the end of year 6, this standardised Practical Legal Examination will be conducted by an independent assessment organisation outside of the work place at an assessment centre.

This assessment will take place in the last 6 months of the Apprenticeship and will cover role plays, online case studies and tasks, skills assessed in different practice contexts and unflagged ethical issues will be present to test the understanding of the apprentice.

City Law School will provide intensive revision to prepare the apprentice for this synoptic end point examination.

## What can you expect from Sinclairslaw?

We are committed to ensure that the apprentice is given the best opportunity to learn and develop so that they will be able to achieve their end goal of qualifying as a solicitor. We understand that an organisation is only as good as the people that work for it. We take this ethos seriously and therefore want to ensure that the apprentice is fully supported. This in turn will ensure that the apprentice becomes an asset to Sinclairslaw once qualified.

Our commitments to the apprentice to ensure this is achieved are as follows:

- Supervising and mentoring the apprentice for the duration of the apprenticeship
- Assist the apprentice throughout the apprenticeship to ensure the portfolio is developed and kept up to date
- Provide the apprentice a safe and relevant work based learning environment to reinforce theory in the work place
- Working closely with the City Law School, University of London and CILEx Law School with regards to training and assessments
- Releasing the apprentice one day per week for study leave throughout the duration of the study programme
- Provide the apprentice with sufficient additional release to complete course work
- Releasing the apprentice for annual revision sessions as required
- Releasing the apprentice for annual formal assessments
- Pay the apprentice a salary in accordance with the Apprenticeship Scheme guidelines and not less than the minimum wage
- Pay for costs associated with study in the course programme

Sinclairslaw is committed to Equal Opportunities

## CONTACT

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