

SOLICITOR

What is your job title?

Solicitor in Private Practise

What route of education and qualification did you take to get to your now chosen career position?

When I finished my leaving cert, I studied Arts at NUIG and I chose French and Legal Science as my degree subjects. I enjoyed studying Law and when I finished my Arts degree I went on to complete my Law degree at NUIG. During my final year at NUIG I decided that a career in Law was what I wanted and the summer after I finished my final exams I gained some work experience in a solicitor's office which I really enjoyed. I had a particular interest in Human Rights and European Law at NUIG, and I decided to study for a Masters Degree in European Law at UCD while also studying for my Law Society Entrance exams. I felt that studying for the Master's degree would enhance my prospects of employment in what was at the time a very competitive market for getting an apprenticeship.

Ultimately I secured an apprenticeship with a commercial law firm in Dublin and during the course of my apprenticeship I worked in the Employment, Litigation and Property departments of that firm. During my apprenticeship I was lucky enough to gain exposure on a wide variety of cases and practice areas.

How much variety is there in your work?

I work as a solicitor and I practice mainly in personal injury litigation and employment law. I work mainly on the defence side of personal injury cases and most of the injuries are sustained by persons in road traffic accidents, at work, or as a result of assault or injuries sustained in public places. The work environment is very busy and involves working with clients, barristers and other professionals such as guards and engineers to help build the best defence possible.

What are your roles in your job?

As a solicitor, my main duty is to take initial instructions from clients and try to assemble as much information as possible to decide the best way to run the particular case before instructing a barrister who will ultimately present the case in court. The work can be demanding but the cases I deal with are very interesting, very enjoyable and involves being able to deal with and manage people to achieve the best solution possible for the client.

As well as dealing with personal injury cases, I also work with clients who have employment related issues, and I advise them on their rights and obligations and assist them through the various processes in place to help them seek resolution to the problems encountered in the workplace.

What do you love about your job?

The work as a solicitor can be very interesting and can be quite varied depending on the practice areas you choose to work in. Some practice areas are more “people” focused than others such as employment or family law, other areas such as financial services and corporate are more suited to people with good business and financial minds. Ultimately what is required, regardless of what practice area you chose to work in, is common sense and an ability to make decisions.

How would you recommend your career choice to others?

Studying law and practicing law are quite a different experience. For anybody who is considering a career in law, I would advise them to try to get summer jobs or work experience in a solicitors practice to get a sense of what the work involves. Nowadays and owing to the increased number of newly qualified solicitors and barristers , starting your career in law can be very long, expensive and competitive but if it is something you really want to do, and something which you are willing to work hard at, I would recommend it.