

# Becoming a Solicitor

Solicitors are professionally trained to provide clients with **skilled legal advice** and **representation** on all legal matters such as buying and selling a house, family law, commercial law, aviation, wills, inheritance, medical negligence, trespassing, negligence, sports law, fashion law, media law, entertainment law....



Solicitors have a very wide range of different functions:

A solicitor may give legal advice on matters such as..

- buying a house
- drafting a will
- taking or defending a case. If you have been involved in an accident, for example, a road traffic accident or an accident at work.
- Your solicitor may offer legal advice and represent you in relation to a dispute or disagreement that you have with another party, for example, a family dispute or a dispute with your employer or your neighbour.
- If you are involved in a court case, your solicitor will manage the case and represent you when dealing with the other party.
- If it is necessary to involve a barrister in the case, your solicitor will "brief" the barrister by sending him/her all of the necessary documents and information.
- Your solicitor may also actually represent you in court, although in the High Court and the Supreme Court, a barrister will usually be engaged.



# AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT

Unlike barristers, solicitors are allowed to join together to form partnerships and they are allowed to advertise their services.

Other areas where solicitors may be employed include:

**The Director of Public  
Prosecution's (DPP) Office**

**EU trained solicitor**

**As a defence solicitor  
(working with  
defendants)**

**In-house solicitor in a firm**

**The Attorney General's Office**

**Acquisition**

**Anti-money Laundering**

**Risk and Compliance**

**Finance**

Solicitors do not have to wear any special clothes when in court. If there is a barrister involved in the case who needs a matter to be clarified, he or she can lean over to ask the solicitor.

The Law Society of Ireland, Blackhall Place, Dublin is responsible for the education and training of solicitors. Blackhall Place runs the Professional Practice Course, parts I and II, which forms the solicitor's essential training. Completion of the Professional Practice Courses, plus a traineeship with an approved solicitor leads to qualification as a solicitor.



# STEPS TO QUALIFICATION



You can qualify as a solicitor without having a legal background.

**For nongraduates:** Your first step is to take **the Preliminary Examination**. This examination is held once a year, usually in March. The examination consists of the following three papers:

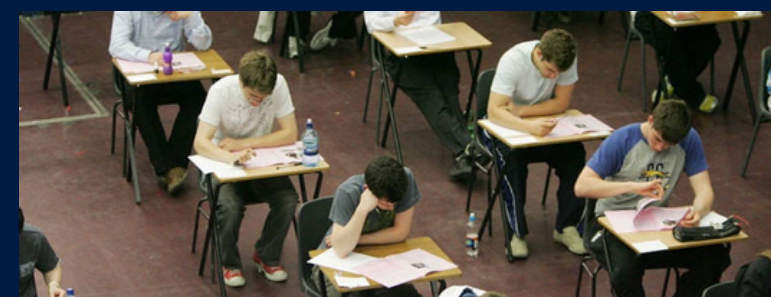
- English
- Irish Government and Politics
- General Knowledge

## STEP 1



Sit and pass the Law Society entrance examination, the Final Examination – First Part (FE-1). Exams are held twice a year, in autumn and spring, and there are eight papers on core legal subjects.

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1. Company Law</b>        | <b>2. Constitutional Law</b> |
| <b>3. Law of Contract</b>    | <b>4. Criminal Law</b>       |
| <b>5. European Union Law</b> | <b>6. Equity</b>             |
| <b>7. Law of Property</b>    | <b>8. Law of Tort</b>        |



These exams ensure that trainee solicitors, who come from different educational backgrounds and third level studies of all disciplines, whether in arts, humanities, engineering, or science, commence their practical training in the Law Society with a consistent standard of knowledge in those eight subjects.

## STEP 2

Secure a **two-year training contract** (Indentures of Apprenticeship) with an eligible solicitor who has been practising for at least four years. An eligible solicitor must be a partner within a firm or a sole practitioner.

## STEP 3

Apply to start **Professional Practice Course I**. Courses run in Dublin and Cork and start in September, running through to April–June when examinations are held. The Professional Practice Course (PPC) is a full-time training course. The PPC is practice-oriented and throughout the course you will learn how to do the work of a solicitor.

## STEP 4&5

Begin **24-month training contract/ apprenticeship**.

Return to Law Society for Professional Practice Course II. Courses start in April and last for 12 weeks, with final examinations in June.

## STEP 6

Return to training solicitor to complete **in-office training** (usually 2 years). Training solicitors are required to provide you with reasonable and appropriate instruction and experience in three distinct areas of legal practice. When you have successfully completed your PPC examinations and in-office training, you may **apply to have your name entered on the Roll of Solicitors**.



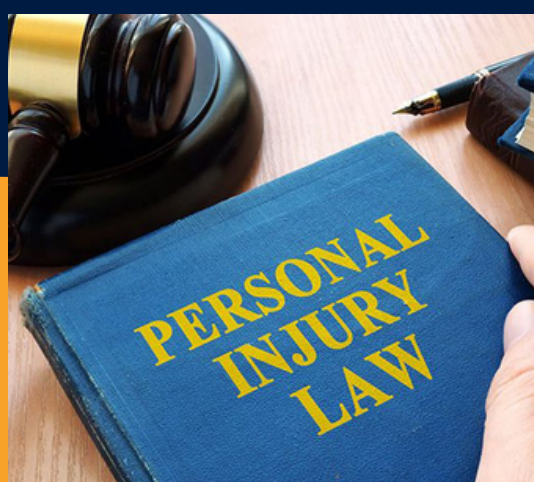
## Qualities every good solicitor should have

- 1) Good communication skills
- 2) Judgement - The ability to draw reasonable, logical conclusions or assumptions from limited information is essential as a good lawyer.
- 3) Analytical skills
- 4) Research skills
- 5) People skills
- 6) Perseverance

## INTERVIEW WITH A SOLICITOR

### *Why did you become interested in legal work?*

I don't come from a legal family, but I do remember as a teenager enjoying the idea of having a job which was always changing and one had to engage intellectually, problem solve and be a good communicator. Looking back now, I realise I was always attracted to the law as a tool protecting rights and as a framework within which we regulate our inter-personal and business relations. Knowing the rules of engagement seemed a sensible thing to do.



### *How do you handle having multiple cases to work on?*

I have multiple cases that I have to work on at once, I'd start by setting my priorities and setting deadlines for each task. I'd make a schedule and ensure I stick to it. If there're tasks, I could multitask, I'll do that to save time and energy. If the case requires more time, I'd be willing to spend more hours at work to complete the projects.

### *What do you do to keep up to date with new developments in law?*

I believe that changes and new developments are good for any field. To keep abreast with the current issues, I attend law conferences and workshops to interact with other solicitors and learn from them. I also have subscriptions to various law journals and magazines to help me stay current with what's happening in the industry.



### *What makes a good solicitor?*

I think a good solicitor should be able to communicate effectively, analyse situations and solve complex problems. Also, competent solicitors should build a strong relationship with their clients based on mutual respect.



### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Just over half of all practising solicitors in Ireland are women.