

A day in the life of a Law Student



LECTURES & TUTORIALS



HELPFUL TIPS



SOCIAL LIFE



POTENTIAL CAREERS



Contact us
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Choosing Law

CAO
www.cao.ie

With the **CAO closing date** fast approaching on **1st February**, many students are weighing up their options and asking a very fair question: what is it actually like to study law?

Choosing a course isn't just about points or titles, it's about **understanding the reality** of the workload, what college life looks like, and the opportunities a degree can open up after graduation.



Whether you are considering law, criminal justice, or a related course, understanding the **day-to-day experience** can help you decide whether it's the right fit for you.



What to expect?

One of the biggest **surprises** for many new students is that college timetables are a lot more spread out than secondary school. You may not be in lectures all day, every day, but that doesn't mean you're not busy!

Law courses usually involve a mix of:

- Lectures
- Tutorials
- Independent study and reading

This flexibility is one of the positives of studying law, but it also requires good time management and self-discipline.



EXAMPLE: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LAW STUDENT



9:00 – 10:00 AM | LECTURE

The day starts with a lecture, perhaps in Criminal Law. Lectures introduce key legal principles, case law, and concepts that you will explore in more detail later through reading.

10:00 – 11:00 AM | BRUNCH WITH FRIENDS

There are often gaps in your timetables. Many students use this time to grab a coffee or food with friends on campus. Law can be intense, so these social breaks are an important part of student life.

11:30 – 12:30 PM | STUDY AT THE LIBRARY

This is where law really differs from some other courses. A significant part of your workload happens outside the classroom. In the library, you might read assigned cases before a tutorial, highlight key judgments, take notes on legislation or prepare questions for classes

1:00 – 2:00 PM | TUTORIAL

Tutorials are smaller, interactive classes. This is where you can discuss upcoming assignments, ask questions, clarify key concepts, and take part in group work or presentations.

AFTER 2:00 PM – SPARE TIME

Once classes are finished, students often go to the gym, take on part-time work, attend society events (Law Society, debating, volunteering), or catch up on reading or revision. Law is demanding, but there is still room for balance and a social life.

What to know before choosing law:



Reading Is a Big Part of the Course

Studying law involves a lot of reading! Homework is often reading cases, legislation, and academic commentary. Regular reading helps you understand key legal principles, and recognise patterns in how the law is applied, which is helpful when it comes to assignments and exams.



It's About Thinking, Not Just Memorising

Many students worry that law is about learning off rules. Yes, there is some memorising but In reality, it's about reasoning, argument, and applying principles to real situations.



The Responsibility Is On You

With fewer contact hours than school, law requires a high level of independent study. It's up to you to put in the time to keep up with reading, review lecture notes, and prepare for tutorials. This level of independence suits students who are organised, motivated.

LEGAL LANGUAGE



Getting familiar with “legal language” early on makes the course feel more manageable and helps you engage more confidently with the material. Below are some key terms students commonly encounter when studying law:

JUDGMENT

A judgment is the written decision of a judge in a court case. It sets out the outcome of the case and explains the legal reasoning used to reach that decision.

LEGISLATION

Legislation refers to laws passed by the Oireachtas, such as Acts and statutes. These are a key source of law alongside court decisions.

PRECEDENT

A precedent is an earlier court decision that influences or guides how later cases with similar facts are decided.

RATIONALE

The rationale refers to the reasoning behind a court decision.

RATIO DECIDENDI

The ratio decidendi is the core legal principle or rule established by a court's decision. This is the part of a judgment that can become binding precedent.

Advice from a past student:

Hi, I'm Kelly, the Office Manager at LawEd. I studied Criminal Justice at the University of Limerick and graduated with a 1.1 honours.

My biggest piece of advice to students considering law related courses is to stay on top of your academic reading. Regular reading helps build a deeper understanding of legal principles and makes it much easier to engage with cases, tutorials, and exams.

Equally important is building connections with people in your course. Making friends and forming study groups was one of the things that helped me most throughout college. Learning alongside others, discussing material, and supporting each other made a real difference!



CAREER OPTIONS WITH A LAW DEGREE



Solicitor

Barrister

Judge

Court Clerk/
Registrar

Legal
Secretary

Paralegal

Legal content
creator

Policy
Advisor

Data
Protection
Officer

EU Legal
Advisor

Legal
Journalist/
Researcher

Human
Rights
Lawyer

Garda
Liaison
Offier

Law
Lecturer

Roles in
Department
of Justice

Policing
roles

Policy
Advisor

Legal tech



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a law degree.

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