



BIRMINGHAM LAW SOCIETY

one profession • one region • one voice

Diversity Inclusion Scheme 2021



Our Aim

Birmingham Law Society (BLS) is pleased to launch its first Diversity Inclusion Scheme 2020 (DIS) in conjunction with University of Law; University of Wolverhampton; Gateley Legal and Harrison Clark Rickerbys who will be supported by Pinsent Masons. The scheme is aimed at helping talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups to pursue a career in law.

In addition, the scheme aims to help these young people reach their potential without being limited by disability, ethnicity or socio-economic; educational; or personal obstacles.

About the Partner Law Firms

Gateley / LEGAL

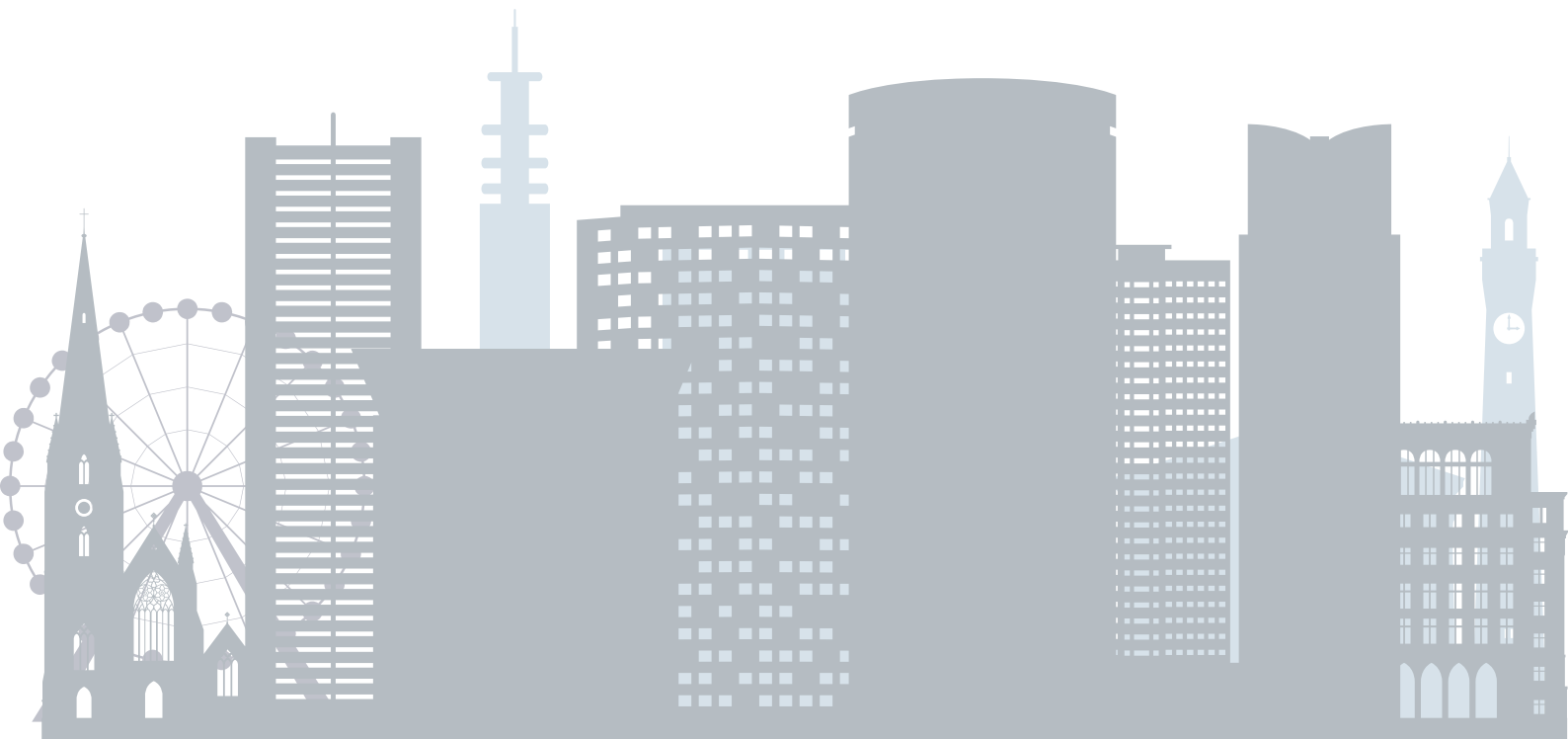
Gateley Legal is the legal business at the heart of professional services group, Gateley. We offer services spanning commercial and corporate law, dispute resolution, property, human resources, banking, litigation, restructuring, pensions, regulatory, private wealth, family and more.

Founded in Birmingham in 1808, we have provided commercial legal services to individuals and businesses over the last 200 years. Since arriving as the new kids on the block all those years ago, we've earned our stripes in the legal industry, building a leading name and a revered reputation.

Providing excellent client service to individuals and businesses across the UK is fundamental to our ethos of being forward thinking and straight talking.

We have over 580 professional advisers and employ over 1,000 people across ten offices located in Belfast, Birmingham, Guildford, Leeds, Leicester, London, Manchester, Nottingham, Reading and Dubai.

In 2015, we were the first commercial UK law firm to list on the London Stock Exchange's Alternative Investment Market (AIM). The bold move to go public embodies our forward thinking ethos. Our strategy is to differentiate ourselves in a crowded market, incentivise our people to retain and attract the best talent in the industry and diversify by acquiring complementary business services.



Diversity and inclusion at Gateley Legal

Diversity, inclusion and well-being is an important part of our culture and the values that drive our Gateley Team Spirit. With employees from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, over seven different religions and belief systems, and a diverse gender split, inclusion is at the heart of all we do. Each year we ask our employees to complete a diversity survey; this helps us to understand the make-up of our organisation in more detail.

We are committed to a fully inclusive, diverse and healthy working environment where our people have 'room to breathe', a key element of our Gateley Team Spirit. We want our people to feel that they can be 100% themselves at work. We use our four internal networks to provide this support; Pride, Inspire, Unity and Thrive.

Our Pride group help to raise awareness of LGBT+ issues across the Gateley group; provide opportunities for internal networking; and to develop and maintain relationships with external LGBT+ groups and networks. We are proud to be a Stonewall Diversity Champion.

Our Inspire network group has been set up to nurture, develop and provide support to all of our talent across the Gateley group with a particular focus on career milestones, enabling our people to carve the careers they want successfully and to promote diversity and inclusion.

Our Thrive network supports the health and wellbeing of all employees to promote high levels of performance both physically and mentally across the group. The Thrive committee runs a series of events and training programmes throughout the year to raise awareness and to inspire our people to take care of themselves and those around them.

Unity recognises, celebrates and supports employees from all different cultures, religions, backgrounds and those with disabilities.



As an award winning Top 100 UK law firm we provide the full range of services. Our sector experts provide specialist advice nationally and are leaders in their field, recognised with industry award nominations and for their contributions to national conferences.

Our firm is entrepreneurial and fast moving which means we can connect quickly with our clients to make sure that we provide a really good legal service. Our commitment to you is reflected by being responsive and flexible in the way we work. Clients value our honesty, commercially focused advice and hard work. They find us friendly and caring, with expertise and integrity. People are our passion.

Diversity and Inclusion at HCR

Whether it's through recruitment, retention, career progression or training and development, we are committed to improving opportunities for people in the legal profession, regardless of their background or circumstances. HCR is part of the Law Society Diversity and Inclusion Charter which is a public commitment by legal practices to promote the values of diversity and inclusion throughout their business.

We participate in the bi-annual diversity survey and all employees are asked to participate. The results and data are provided to us by an independent party to help in our thinking, planning and development of policies throughout the business including how we recruit and promote diversity across the firm. We also hold an Investors in People Award of which ethnic diversity and equal opportunity forms part of the standards.

All of our Partners attend recruitment and unconscious bias training. Our employees are required to attend mandatory Equality and Diversity training to develop a deeper understanding of where bias comes from and how we can all manage our bias day to day in our work lives and beyond.

At HCR we sponsor a large number of training contracts alongside other routes to qualification including CILEx and Apprenticeships to offer an academic and vocational route to the legal sector enhancing diversity within our emerging talent.

About the Partner Universities



The University of Law is one of the UK's longest-established specialist providers of legal education. We can trace our origins to 1876 with the formation of leading tutorial firm Gibson & Weldon and, in 2016, we opened our leading Business School.

In 2006 we were the first-ever independent institution to be granted degree awarding powers and not long after, in 2012, we gained university title.

We are at the heart of legal education as the acknowledged leader in innovative, professional legal education for prospective lawyers and professional development training for those already qualified. Over the years, we have worked with many UK law firms to help to meet their training and development needs, with many firms sending their trainee solicitors exclusively to us. We have built our Business School in this same image, with a focus on applied, industry relevant and professional education and training.

We also have many international partnerships that allow us to provide a rounded, global outlook to business and law - and why employers of all types want to meet our students. We are ambitious and growing. In 2019 we opened our first international campus in Hong Kong. In the same year we launched our 10th UK campus in Nottingham and we continue to grow recruitment into our Business School hub in Berlin. We are driving international growth through new campuses and partnerships. This provides rich opportunities for our students to rotate across our global network and benefit from learning in diverse cultural and business contexts.

Over 300 of our faculty are qualified lawyers and business professionals, and all have extensive practical experience which they are able to pass on to our students. We focus on practice-based training and give our students access to our expert Careers and Employability Service and database as soon as they accept a place with us. Students also benefit from our pioneering and award-winning pro bono programmes, which allow them to gain valuable work experience by helping real clients from the local community.

Diversity and inclusion at the University of Law

The University of Law is proud of its rich and diverse student population, people come to study with us from many different communities and walks of life. We recognise that there is no such thing as a 'typical' student and, as such, our programmes and modes of delivery are designed to meet the needs of today's scholar and their lifestyle – teaching is delivered part-time, full-time, evenings, weekend, on-line, streamed and blended.

Our commitment to widening participation and accessibility for all to study legal education is ingrained in our ethos, and but, equally, we recognise that we need to do a lot more. We are currently recruiting for a Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion who will work directly with the Vice Chancellor and lead our important work in this area. We are delighted to support this very important initiative and are committed to continuing to support greater diversity in and access to the legal profession.

Benefits

Successful applicants will receive the following support:

1. A university scholarship on the post-graduate law course;
2. Advice on CV writing
3. Interview coaching
4. Training on presentation skills
5. Mentoring
6. A place on the vacation scheme/Assessment Centre
7. The selection process will include a team from BLS together with our partners who will shortlist and interview the successful applicants.

Application criteria

Applicants must demonstrate that they really want to pursue a career in the legal profession together with the basic ability and commitment to becoming a solicitor.

Applicants for 2021 must confirm that:

- They are currently studying at a UK university towards a qualifying law degree;
- They attended a non fee-paying junior/secondary school;

Where candidates are unable to confirm at least one of the above criteria, they should include any exceptional circumstances that make it particularly difficult to pursue their ambition to become a solicitor. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Gender/gender identify
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Health
- Disability
- Responsibilities as a carer
- Education
- Other personal obstacles

Timescales

Deadline for submissions: **30th July 2021**

Decision made: **24th August 2021**

Formal notification: **31st August 2021**



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hcr
harrison clark
rickerbys solicitors

The
University of
LAW

The Diversity Inclusion Scheme Application Form 2021

Section 1: Personal details

First Name

Surname

Address and Postcode

Mobile

Email

Section 2: Financial circumstances

Living expenses are not provided as part of the scheme. You will need to be able to demonstrate that you are able to meet all living expenses during the period of study

2.0 Please confirm your personal status/accommodation details:

Where will you be living during your study?

Please provide details of anyone who will be financially dependent on you during your studies.

Section 3: Education

3.0 Higher education

Please provide details of any qualifications gained in higher education (degree and above) including expected grade for current studies.

Institution	Qualification/Subject	Grade (achieved/expected)

3.1 Results

Please note that it is not a requirement for you to have achieved or for you to be predicted to achieve a 1st or 2:1 degree. Please describe below any difficult circumstances that you experienced that prevented you from achieving your academic potential:

Section 4: Personal Statement

Please use this space to tell us more about yourself (maximum two sides of A4) including:

- Why would you like a career in law? Please also include how motivated and inspired you currently feel about becoming a lawyer?
- Your biggest achievement in life so far?
- How will this scheme help you?
- If relevant, what obstacles have you had to overcome to get to this stage?
- Any other relevant information you would like to share to support this application.
- Please discuss a recent news story explaining how it is relevant to an area of law that you are interested in.

Section 5: Eligibility and criteria

5.0 Your background

Please tick the statements that apply:

- a) I attended a non-fee paying school; and/or

- b) I am part of the first generation in my family to attend a higher education establishment; and/or

- c) I was eligible for free school meals whilst at secondary school.

5.1 Exceptional circumstances

If you do not fulfil at least two of the criteria under 5.0, but you currently face or have faced significant challenges in pursuing your education and career due to your culture; race; gender; sexuality; health; religion, disability or another significant reason, you may still be eligible to apply for the scheme.

Please list below any such challenges:

5.2 Experience

Please indicate how experience gained through the list below has helped you to develop relevant skills towards becoming a solicitor, particularly in the area in which you are interested in working. (Include any experience obtained outside of the legal profession).

- Voluntary work,
- Vacation placements;
- Internships;
- Paid employment; or
- Personal commitments

600 words max

5.3 Debts

Please confirm the value of your total debts

Credit card(s)/store card(s)	
Overdraft	
Personal loans	
Student loans	
Other debt (please specify)	

Section 6: Post Graduate Course details

6.0 Do you have a confirmed place on an LPC course of study for the academic year 2020/21?

Yes

No

If you have ticked yes, please provide the details below:

Institution

Start date

Full time/part time?

Total course fees (if part-time indicate the fees for both years)

£

Total amount of fees applying for (up to the full course fees)

£

Why are you applying for this amount?

If you have ticked no, please provide the details of your preferred institution and course details below:

IMPORTANT: please note that if you are awarded a DIS scholarship, Birmingham Law Society may require you to attend an alternative institution

Preferred Institution

Intended Start date

Full time/part time?

Total course fees (if part-time indicate the fees for both years)

£

Total amount of fees applying for (up to the full course fees)

£

Why are you applying for this amount?

Section 7: Training contract/risks

As you can appreciate, applying for a training contract is extremely competitive because training contact places are limited. Please therefore carefully consider the risks involved in taking the LPC.

7.0 Please indicate whether you have received a formal offer of a training contract? If yes, please specify the name of the firm including start date. Please also confirm the contact details of the person at the firm who can verify this information:

7.1 Please list below all organisations to which you have applied for a training contract. Include both successful/unsuccessful outcomes together with those from which you are awaiting a response:

Organisation applied to?	Outcome

7.2 *Please confirm below that you have considered the risks involved in starting the LPC without a training contract and your reasons for wishing to do so. (*you must respond to this question if you do not have a training contract. Failure to do so will result in the automatic disqualification of your application)

7.3 Legal Partners

If you are awarded a DIS scholarship, you will receive work experience and mentoring from one of our legal partners: Gateley Legal and Harrison Clark Rickerbys. Please therefore list below something that you like about what each firm is able to offer?

7.4 How did you hear about the scheme? (Please tick all that apply):

Birmingham Law Society

University (via posters; leaflets or through a lecturer)

LPC Provider (via posters; leaflets or through a lecturer)

Social Mobility Foundation

Newspaper advert

Twitter/Facebook or Instagram

Other: (please specify):

Section 8: Research and written skills – essay

“What is GDPR and why it is relevant to the role of a solicitor”?

(Max. 750 words on a separate A4 sheet – not including references)

Please note that this will be used to assess your ability to:

- research, understand and present complex issues concisely
- assembling a coherent argument
- offer a clear conclusion

Section 9: References

Please provide the names and contact details of two referees in support of your application should you be shortlisted. One of the referees should address your academic ability. The other referee should be a professional contact who can confirm your ability to solve problems and present arguments clearly. *(References will not be accepted from family members or friends)*

Referee 1

Title and full name

Job title

Organisation

Relationship to you

Email address

Contact number

Referee 2

Title and full name

Job title

Organisation

Relationship to you

Email address

Contact number

The completed form should be sent to: dis@birminghamlawsociety.co.uk

