



Training



Southampton's premier law firm - providing a full range of legal services to individuals and businesses across the Solent region for over 190 years.

Our aim is simple...

“To recognise and respond to our clients’ needs with prompt, clear and practical advice, based on a thorough knowledge of their situation.”

Who we are

Paris Smith is one of Southampton's leading law firms. Although based exclusively in the City, the firm's client base covers much of central southern England. The firm has a proud history in the city going back over 200 years.

The firm currently has 27 partners and around 72 other fee earners (solicitors, legal executives, paralegals and trainees) and together with other staff we total approximately 200 people.

Paris Smith offers a comprehensive range of commercial and private client services. The firm is structured as 7 specialist departments, namely Company Commercial, Commercial Property/ Planning, Residential Property, Employment, Family, Litigation and Tax & Estate Planning.

The firm's size has doubled in the past five years, its reputation attracting new work as well as continuing to serve longstanding clients. The firm is proud of its extensive private and corporate client base. We act for a range of private and public companies and authorities, as well as for a large number of families in the region. The firm took on new office space in 2006 as part of its continued growth.

We consider that we can provide a high level of legal services to both private and commercial clients. Several members of the firm are recognised by independent assessors as leaders in their field and independent guides such as the Legal 500 and Chambers describe Paris Smith as "first-rate". Prospective trainees may be interested to read the entries in the current edition of the Chambers Student Guide or the Training Contract and Pupillage Handbook.

The firm's long term focus includes continuing to develop and value our staff and use of the latest information technology. Our forward looking approach is reflected in being among the first law firms nationwide to obtain and retain quality accreditations from Lexcel (the Law Society's quality mark) and Investors in People. One third of the firm's current partners and associates trained with the firm.

What we are looking for

We currently recruit three trainees each year. Applications are welcome from students who intend to take the conversion course following a non-law degree as well as those who have studied law.

We operate an equal opportunities policy. In considering applications we take account of academic achievements and the standard of degree likely to be obtained. We also look for a genuine desire for a career in the profession and an interest in working and living locally. We place great importance on good interpersonal skills in the context of both the work place and client care.

We are looking for trainees who combine intellectual ability with practical common sense. Our aim is to recruit trainees who on qualification will wish to continue as valued members of a team.

What training we provide

During the training contract at Paris Smith, our trainees spend approximately six months in four seats from Company Commercial, Commercial Property, Residential Property, Family, Tax, Trusts and Estate Planning, Employment and Litigation although this is flexible and tailored, as far as possible, to each individual trainee. Our training principal supervises the trainee and is regularly available to our trainees. The firm as a whole operates an open door policy and trainees and work experience students often comment on our informal, friendly and approachable culture at all levels of the firm.

During the training contract we ensure that trainees learn to apply their knowledge on a practical basis. From the start of the contract a trainee is considered a full member of the team. They are involved in client matters as fully as possible and are expected to undertake work under supervision assuming increasing responsibility as training progresses.

The firm's training is highly regarded by those responsible for ensuring that we meet Law Society's guidelines. Trainees are given wide experience including meeting clients, dealing with Counsel, technical experts and opposing lawyers, attending court, drafting and research. We have

an extensive library and on-line research facilities. We also ensure that our trainees receive the ongoing training required by the Law Society and are given study leave for examinations.

Money matters

The firm pays its trainees more than the minimum required by the Law Society. We also make a one off contribution towards the legal practice course related fees, payable within 4 months of commencement of the training contract.

Social life at Paris Smith

Part of the culture at Paris Smith is that employees are expected to work hard but the firm also recognises that there should be a work/life balance. From the day that trainees join Paris Smith they are encouraged to participate in social activities. We have various sports teams including football, cricket and netball. The firm's Social Committee organises various events such as a summer barbeque, quiz and bingo nights, and in addition to seasonal events for the whole firm each department has regular social events. There is also a strong informal social life, particularly among the younger members of the firm.

How to apply

Application is by curriculum vitae and covering letter, which is accepted by either post or e-mail. In accordance with the Law Society guidelines, we recruit no earlier than two years before the training contract starts.

The deadline for applications is the 31st July each year. The interviews take place in September and we aim to send invitations to interview by mid August.

Applications should be directed to:

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For more details about the firm see our website at:
www.parissmith.co.uk

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