

the alternative guide

to training contracts at Fox Williams



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Fox Williams in our own words

This brochure was written and produced entirely by the firm's own trainee solicitors. Fox Williams is an independent City law firm and we believe that aspiring trainees will find a realistic description of what we believe to be an excellent training programme. More importantly we hope that you enjoy reading it and that it puts you in a better position to decide if you would like to join us.

introducing the trainees

Andrew McGlashan, currently sitting in Employment
LLB – Bristol. LPC – University of West of England

Matthew Baer, currently sitting in Dispute Resolution
LLB – Nottingham. LPC – Nottingham Trent

Rebecca Richardson, currently sitting in Commerce and Technology
LLB – Kent. LPC – BPP

Laura Lumby, currently sitting in Corporate Tax
LLB - Bristol. LPC – BPP

Duncan Jones, currently sitting in Employment
Bsc Hons Geography – Exeter. LPC - BPP

Maxine Lavin, currently sitting in Corporate
Bsc Hons Geography – Cambridge. LPC – College of Law

Harry Jefferies, currently sitting in Real Estate
BA Hons Politics - Nottingham, LPC - College of Law

the questions

Why would you recommend Fox Williams?

"The question of which firms to apply to was one which I had anticipated to be simple, yet in reality was something which I devoted a significant amount of my time to at university. From my experience and through observing the behaviour of my contemporaries at university, it was all too easy to assume that the largest City firms were the only ones to apply to. I decided that a more intimate environment would suit me better as it could provide a more personable atmosphere and one in which more time was devoted to me.

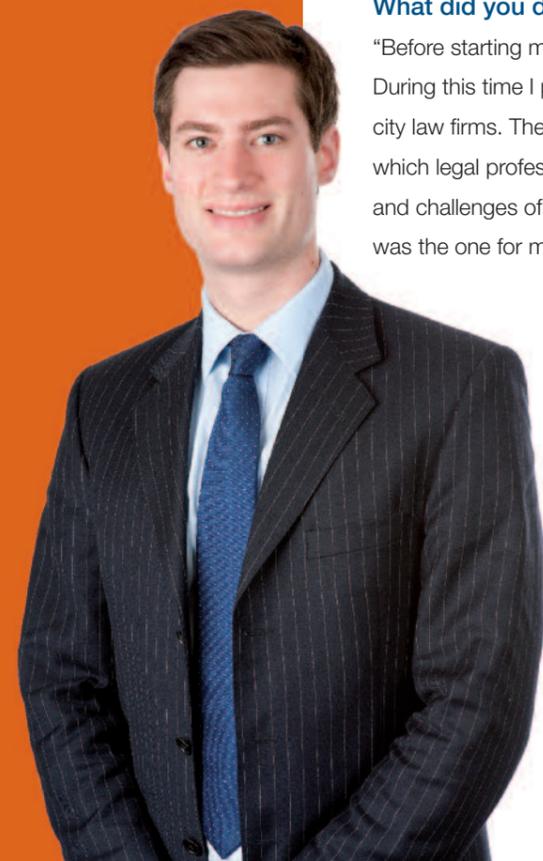
Fox Williams' ability to attract high-profile clients, whilst retaining a welcoming and relatively small size, is what distinguishes the firm within the City. It is an appealing synergy, not only for clients who enjoy the great client service which is offered but also for trainees who get to experience a broad variety of work and responsibility from the outset. Being involved in the completion of an acquisition in my first week, the tax structuring of an acquisition in my third and an IPO in my sixth, bears testament to this.

The small intake combined with the fact that Fox Williams recruits high calibre and committed individuals across the board is conducive to maintaining a stimulating working environment and one in which I feel I can become a well-rounded lawyer."

Matthew Baer

What did you do before you started your training contract?

"Before starting my training contract I studied Law at the University of Bristol. During this time I participated in a mini pupillage and summer work placements at city law firms. These were great experiences as I had previously been undecided on which legal profession I wished to undertake and seeing first hand the experiences and challenges of both professions allowed me to decide that the role of a solicitor was the one for me.



Matthew Baer

I therefore completed the LPC at the University of the West of England before returning home to Swansea to begin my legal career. I worked for a year as a paralegal at a law firm specialising in social welfare and Legal Aid work. It was a steep learning curve into the world of work as I was responsible for over 60 clients but I learned a huge amount and developed many skills.

Following my year in Swansea I joined Fox Williams to begin my training contract fully equipped with the skills and experiences of my time as a paralegal."

Andrew McGlashan

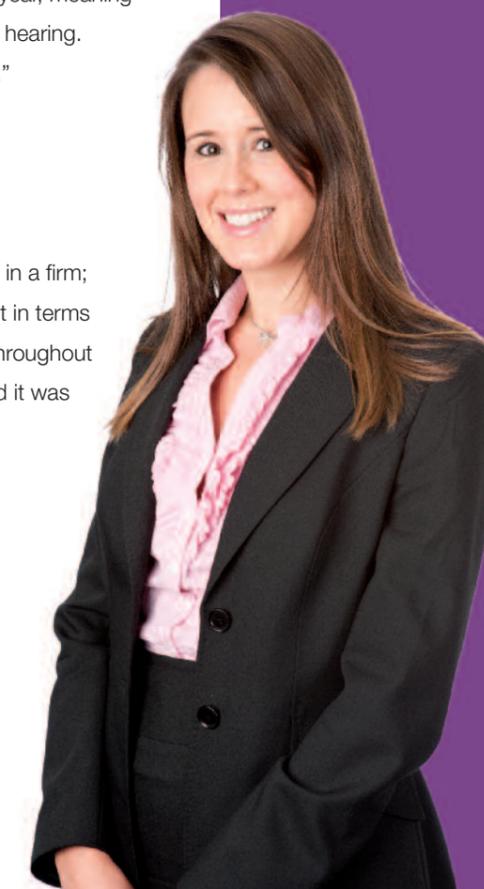
What has been your most memorable moment at FW?

"Despite only being at the firm for a couple of months, one of my most memorable moments to date has been attending two client meetings with a large corporate client. As though this in itself was not scary enough, I was required to take and dictate a full attendance note of each meeting, which would then enable me to produce a first draft of the client's witness statements. I am pleased to have been so closely involved with the work of the department so early on and to be entrusted to carry out work that is central to our client's case. This experience is testament to Fox Williams' approach to training, that is, to involve trainees and treat them as valuable members of the team, not just research tools. Furthermore, I feel fortunate to have been involved in such a large case at the beginning of my first seat, as it is due to be heard at the Employment Tribunal at the beginning of next year, meaning I will have been involved at each stage of the case from instruction to hearing. As such, I am looking forward to what the next few months will entail!"

Rebecca Richardson

What makes Fox Williams different from the other firms you considered?

"I chose Fox Williams because it had all the qualities I was looking for in a firm; it is a friendly, small-medium size firm which punches above its weight in terms of the quality of work that it undertakes. I was also really impressed throughout the recruitment process by the team ethos and values of the firm, and it was this that made me want to work for Fox Williams.



"Fox Williams' approach to training is... to involve trainees and treat them as valuable members of the team, not just research tools."

Rebecca Richardson

“ I am involved in a wide variety of complex matters, from agency law to commercial agreements and IP disputes. I have been involved in “real” work from my very first day, rather than just photocopying and taking minutes. ”

Maxine Lavin



Having started my training contract, the firm is everything it promised to be. I am now sitting in the Commerce and Technology Department (C&T), which is a busy and varied seat. I am involved in a wide variety of complex matters, from agency law to commercial agreements and IP disputes. I have been involved in “real” work from my very first day, rather than just photocopying and taking minutes. I have been able to go to client meetings, draft letters and emails to clients or other solicitors, and have helped out with the drafting of a number of commercial agreements. There is such a range of work in C&T that every day is interesting, and I feel that I am learning new skills all the time.

Everyone I have met throughout the firm has been very friendly but also extremely helpful in terms of my development and training. This support system is very important, as starting a training contract is a daunting process, but my colleagues have made that process a very enjoyable one!”

Maxine Lavin

What challenges are you experiencing as a trainee?

“Sitting in my corporate seat, I have been able to put into practice the theory that I learnt in business law. Applying what I have learnt to real situations with people dependent upon my work has been rewarding and satisfying. The work has been challenging but people have been more than willing to help whenever I have had any queries.

Things that I have learnt since joining FW are the importance of good client relationships and matter management. Being a good lawyer is about more than knowing the law inside out, and at FW there are plenty of good lawyers from which to learn.

I have been fortunate enough already to have covered a broad range of company law work involving directors' duties and responsibilities, board meetings, memoranda and articles of association, company secretarial matters and shareholders' rights. I have also assisted with transactional work such as share purchase agreements.

“ I would definitely encourage anyone who wants to work in a friendly firm with an interesting, varied workload to apply to FW. ”

Laura Lumby

The work is varied. When not assisting an associate or a partner on a client matter, I have written articles to be published in legal and trade magazines. I am getting exposure to a broad range of company law and I have been given responsibilities that many of my contemporaries at other firms have not yet enjoyed. I did not even have to wait a week before getting my first exposure to a client.”

Duncan Jones

Why did you choose Fox Williams for your training contract ?

“I chose Fox Williams as I wanted to work in a City law firm but one that took on a smaller number of trainees, had a strong team spirit and where I would have exposure to good quality work. Right from the start I have been working closely with associates, senior associates and partners in the Employment Department and what has really struck me is the enthusiasm to get the trainees involved.

Being one of six new joiners it is obvious that trainees are hugely valued at Fox Williams. Whilst research inevitably plays a big part of a trainee's workload, I regularly attend client meetings with my supervising partner, draft letters and e-mails to the clients and have been given exposure to a wide range of work. In only my second week at Fox Williams I had the opportunity to attend an Employment Tribunal, meet our clients and Counsel, and see how our case developed. This hands on experience is something that will really benefit me throughout my training contract, and there's always someone to ask if you don't quite understand what you're meant to be doing!

In addition, its not all work! I am a member of the firm's Social & Charity Committee and currently planning events for next year. I am also a member of the HR Law Group and the Fashion Law Group and get to write articles that are published monthly online.

I would definitely encourage anyone who wants to work in a friendly firm with an interesting, varied workload to apply to FW.”

Laura Lumby



“ I have been impressed with the level of responsibility often entrusted to me. ”

Harry Jefferies

What type of work have you been involved with in your first few months at Fox Williams?

I began my training contract in September 2011, and have already been exposed to a diverse range of work involving a variety of different clients. As the sole trainee in the Real Estate department, I have had the opportunity to take on a lot of responsibility from an early stage. I have worked with clients as varied as investment funds, multi-national corporations as well as some high net-worth individuals.

For example, I have helped to write-up management reports for investment funds and draft lease summaries, as well as corresponding with managing agents and clients on a daily basis. I have also been able to put the research skills I developed at law school into practical use, such as liaising with the Valuations Office Agency to find out the rateable values and account holders of leasehold properties and reporting my findings to both clients and Partners.

Similarly, I have had an opportunity to write an article for the quarterly Real Estate Bulletin, which is published online and distributed to clients.

I have been impressed with the level of responsibility often entrusted to me. I am sure that the opportunity to look at information and to give to Partners my interpretation of what action should be taken, would not be so forthcoming at larger firms.

Harry Jefferies



departmental overviews

Corporate

■ **The Department**

Located on the 4th (partnership) and 5th floors (general corporate and tax), the Corporate Department consists of 11 partners, 3 senior associates, 7 associates and 2 trainees. In addition, there is a tax partner and tax associate who work closely with the corporate team.

■ **The Work**

The department can be broadly split between three areas of practice: M&A and private equity, corporate finance and partnership law. The firm has a cross departmental e-business group, which is a growing firm speciality as well as tax.

■ **The Trainee**

You can expect to do work in all areas across the department. Trainees can expect to sit in on client meetings and negotiations giving you real commercial exposure to the work of the department. You will be asked to attempt first drafts of documents and to tailor precedents to the clients needs.

Employment

■ **The Department**

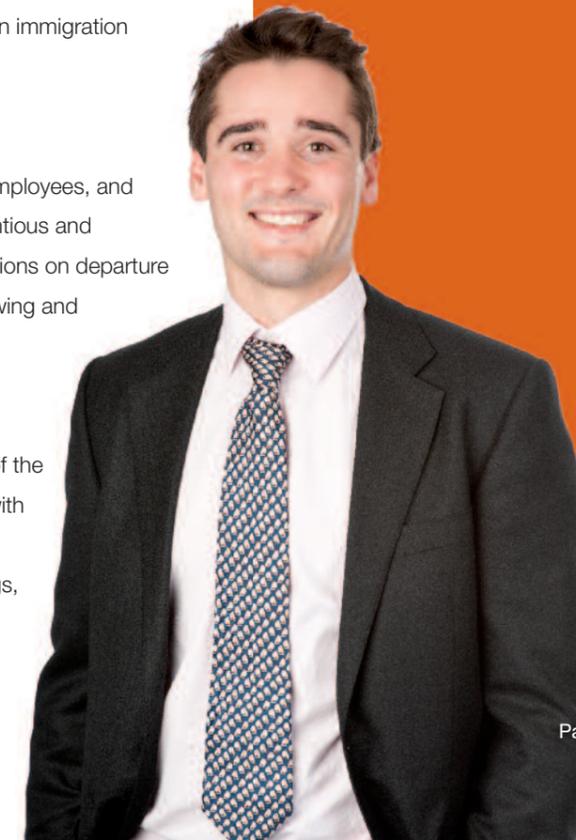
The Employment Department has 5 partners, 4 senior associates, 5 associates and 2 trainees. One of the partners specialises in immigration with an assisting paralegal.

■ **The Work**

The Employment Department advises both employers and employees, and specialises in a full range of employment matters both contentious and non-contentious, from compromise agreements and negotiations on departure arrangements, to contract claims, discrimination, whistle blowing and TUPE claims.

■ **The Trainee**

At FW the trainees are fully utilised and involved in the work of the department. Trainees are taken to client meetings, involved with drafting, research and the analysis of legal questions from an early stage. Trainees also attend employment tribunal hearings, conferences with counsel and will often have a considerable amount of client contact.



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Duncan Jones

“ There is such a range of work in C&T that every day is interesting, and I feel that I am learning new skills all the time. ”

Maxine Lavin

Commerce & Technology

■ The Department

The department is currently composed of 2 partners, 1 senior associate, 1 trademarks attorney, associates and a trainee.

■ The Work

The Commercial Department advises clients in key areas such as intellectual property, trade marks, data protection as well as commercial agreements of all kinds.

The department is also recognised in the market as offering expert advice on fashion law (such as design right infringement) and commercial agency. In fact, there are dedicated specialist teams namely, the fashion law and agent law teams comprising lawyers across a number of departments who have gained experiences in various aspects on fashion law and agent law.

■ The Trainee

Probably viewed as the most varied department in terms of the type of work undertaken, there is no such thing as “a typical day” for a commercial trainee! You can expect to be involved in anything ranging from due diligence review of commercial contracts where you will be mainly acting in a corporate support role to running your own file on an agency law matter.

Dispute Resolution

■ The Department

The Dispute Resolution Department consists of 3 partners, 2 senior associates, 5 associates and 1 trainee. As a trainee you are exposed to a wide range of litigious work. Commercial litigation is a mixed bag so any area of law could land on your desk. The department works closely with other departments within the firm as well as having its own, stand alone, client base.

■ The Work

Our experience of the department has been that you become heavily involved in smaller matters, whilst playing a less prominent, but no less important, role in larger matters. As a trainee, you work as part of team usually consisting of a partner and at least one associate. The nature of the dispute resolution is deadline driven, therefore it is often an exciting and exhilarating department in which to train.

■ The Trainee

As a trainee your work will differ enormously from day to day, and often plans will change at the last minute requiring you to be adaptable and prioritise your workload accordingly.

Trainees are often asked to research various procedural or legal points which will be used to advise clients. Drafting correspondence with the client is also an important role, as is the preparation of court forms and documents.

Trainees in the department are often required to rush down to court at the last minute to issue an application in the Royal Courts of Justice. In addition to issuing applications, trainees are sometimes required to appear, on their own, before a Master. At this slightly nerve-wracking point the practical application of everything you did at law school comes into its own. Providing all goes well it can be a very rewarding experience and one that you won't forget for a while.

The size of the department, and the people who work in it, ensure that a positive working environment is maintained. It is in this working environment that it becomes possible for trainees to get to grips with the fundamentals of dispute resolution.

Real Estate

■ The Department

The Real Estate Department consists of 2 partners, 2 senior associates, 1 associate and 1 legal assistant.

■ The Work

The Real Estate Department has a wide-ranging client base, from multi national corporations and property companies to family businesses and individual entrepreneurs and investors. Their main areas of practice include Investment, Acquisitions and disposals, Business leases, Landlord and tenant issues, Secured lending, and Property aspects of all forms of corporate transactions.

“ I have learnt since joining FW the importance of good client relationships and matter management. Being a good lawyer is about more than knowing the law inside out. ”

Duncan Jones

firm events and benefits

FW has an active Social and Charity Committee, which organises social events for the rest of the firm. This year's nominated charity is Youth-to-Youth. The S&CC run a quiz league, in which teams pit their general knowledge against each other for the Silver (coloured) cup and the ultimate prize of knowing they are the best! Past events include a night at the cinema, lawn bowls and karaoke. There is also the Great Client Service awards every May, end of quarter drinks and a black tie Christmas party. Each separate department also has its own Christmas soirée.

Current benefits include season ticket loans, medical insurance, health screenings and flu vaccinations, eye care vouchers, pension, life assurance and PHI, as well as 2 for 1 theatre vouchers and discounts at certain clothes and jewellery stores! FW offers salaries to trainees, which are competitive with the major City firms.

“ Seeing first hand the experiences and challenges... allowed me to decide that the role of a solicitor was the one for me. ”

Andrew McGlashan



your training contract - facts & figures

- FW is, and prides itself on being, a friendly firm and you will always have somewhere to turn, someone to talk to, and someone to support you.

This could be:

(1) **your buddy** (a fellow trainee from the year above or NQ). Also as FW only takes on approx 3-5 trainees per intake the trainees form a closely knit group. If you are having a problem chances are someone else has been there and done that and can give you some suggestions and advice;

(2) **your room mate** (the lawyer that you sit with). Normally, this will be a fairly senior lawyer, often a partner, who can offer on the spot assistance and guidance;

(3) **your mentor**. This is a senior associate, who acts as a careers coach to help you to think about life as a qualified solicitor; or

(4) **your supervising partner**. In every seat you will be assigned a partner, who will review your performance. In your monthly meetings they will check up on how you are getting on and you can raise any concerns you might have.

- As a trainee at Fox Williams there is plenty of support, both formal and informal, should you require it. It's really just a case of asking!
- Working hours at FW vary enormously. There is no culture of staying late "to be seen" but if you or your colleagues are up against a deadline then you will stay late. In general the hours are not as long as the largest City firms and there are no beds in the offices! However, most of us accepted a long time before Law School that if we wanted to be at home watching Neighbours every day then we should pick a different career.

“ In only my second week at Fox Williams I had the opportunity to attend an Employment Tribunal, meet our clients and Counsel, and see how our case developed. ”

Laura Lumby

further information

If you have any queries contact

Dawn Fazackerley on dfazackerley@foxwilliams.com

or Nicola Gilmore on ngilmore@foxwilliams.com

Fox Williams LLP
Ten Dominion Street
London EC2M 2EE

T +44 (0)20 7628 2000
F +44 (0)20 7628 2100

www.foxwilliams.com