

Exploring Careers Through **Technical** Routes

Legal Secretary



The Industry

A legal secretary provides administrative support and services for lawyers, solicitors and legal executives. Every law firm, financial company or barrister's chamber requires a good legal secretary to ensure the office runs smoothly and efficiently thus enabling employers to focus on serving clients.

Legal secretaries help produce legal documents such as wills, contracts and court papers, deal with enquiries from clients, prepare court forms and statements, deliver and collect documents and attend court or police cells with solicitors.

As well as opportunities to work in solicitors' offices or a barrister's chamber you could also work for law courts, local authorities, estate agents or the police.

If you're working in a small local firm you could develop experience in a wide range of legal matters, however in larger firms you will tend to specialise in one particular area of law.

Institute of Legal Secretaries and PAs (ILSPA)
The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) www.cilex.org.uk

Skills and Requirements

Legal secretaries require general office skills as well as specialised skills unique to the legal profession. These include:

- Experience of office work
- A good work ethic with the ability to handle the pressure of a busy office
- Familiarity with legal terminology, court filing rules, basic legal procedure and law office protocol
- Drive, initiative and versatility with an ability to manage your workload and keep to deadlines
- Excellent computer skills showing proficiency with word processing, spreadsheets, legal research, presentations and time/billing software
- Discretion to handle confidential client files and data
- A pleasant and friendly attitude to people
- Excellent written communication skills with attention to detail e.g. spelling, proofreading
- Compassion as clients will entrust your law firm with issues that are personal or critical

The market for legal secretaries is becoming ever more competitive, and salaries will continue to increase for as long as there is a shortfall. More and more, companies are putting structured progression systems in place to ensure they keep the best staff for as long as possible.

Source: <http://www.hays.co.uk>

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Working and Learning as a Legal Secretary

Job Roles & Progression

Temporary office work is a good way of getting relevant work experience to enter this career

Study Programme

Levels 2 and 3
Business Studies



Further study

Level 2 Legal Secretaries
(legal secretarial skills technical qualification)
Level 3 Legal Secretaries
(to move into the legal field)
Levels 3 and 4
Business & Administration
(to further develop secretarial skills)
Higher Diploma
Administrative & Secretarial
Procedures



Apprenticeships

Advanced Legal Services
(until 2018)
Apprenticeship in Law (Paralegal)
and Apprenticeship in Law
(Chartered Legal Executive)



Career roles

Senior secretary
Personal assistant for a top lawyer
Legal executive, Paralegal or
Licensed Conveyancer
Train as a solicitor or barrister

Calculation including problem solving

Tasks

1. Calculate how long it will take a taxi to get to a court hearing in order to get the lawyer there on time.
2. Plan your daily tasks to ensure all priorities and deadlines are met.
3. Track the total amount of time each lawyer spends on a case and calculate totals for invoicing purposes.
4. Prepare a client's invoice based on the services they have received including VAT where applicable.
5. Estimate the total expenses a lawyer has incurred over a month, and calculate the exact total.

Links to GCSE Maths

1. **Number** (subtraction; multiplication)
Geometry and measure (units of measure - speed, time)
2. **Number** (approximation - estimation)
Ratio (direct and inverse proportion - calculating amounts using proportion)
3. **Number** (whole numbers - addition, multiplication; converting between fractions, decimals and percentages)
Ratio (sharing in a given ratio)
4. **Number** (whole numbers - addition)
Ratio (percentages - calculating amounts using proportions; calculating percentages of amounts, increasing an amount by a percentage)
5. **Number** (whole numbers - addition, subtraction, multiplication; approximation - estimating calculations)

Communication, all forms

Tasks

1. Discuss and prepare the documents your lawyer requires to take to a court hearing.
2. Talk to a bereaved client whilst waiting for the lawyer to be ready to see them.
3. Take accurate minutes at a partners' meeting.
4. Prepare a court form and collect statements from the relevant parties concerned.
5. Research a topic as directed by a lawyer.

Links to GCSE English Language

1. **Spoken language** (speaking and listening - audience and purpose, discussion skills)
2. **Spoken language** (speaking; personal presence - body language; voice)
3. **Writing** (writing non-fiction - minutes; vocabulary - use precise verbs, literary techniques - informative language)
Spelling, punctuation and grammar
4. **Spoken language** (speaking and listening);
Writing (writing non-fiction; vocabulary - to create a particular effect)
5. **Analysing non-fiction** (non-fiction text type; context - examples of context)
Comparing texts (how to compare texts - structuring a comparison response)