

From medicine to law: Gaveena's journey

10 February 2025  Gaveena Shergill

When I started year 12, I was set on pursuing a medical degree. Fast forward two years, and I've just completed my first year as a solicitor degree apprentice at Browne Jacobson—a decision I couldn't be happier with! This article takes you through my journey, from discovering this alternative path to where I am today. If you're exploring career options or curious about legal apprenticeships, my story might introduce you to possibilities you hadn't considered.

Rethinking my path

At the start of sixth form, I was convinced medicine was the right path for me. I chose biology, sociology, and psychology for my A-levels, along with the extended project qualification. At that point, I hadn't even heard of degree apprenticeships.

As year 12 progressed, I realised most medical schools required chemistry A-level, a subject I hadn't taken and wasn't keen on. This was a turning point for me. Rather than forcing a career choice that no longer aligned with my interests, I reassessed what I truly wanted.

Discovering law

By January 2023, I was applying to universities for Law LLB programmes. With predicted grades of AAA* and an additional A in my extended project qualification, I submitted applications to five universities. Law appealed to me particularly because I could still combine it with my interest in medicine through clinical negligence law.

It was only after submitting my university applications that I learned about the solicitor degree apprenticeship through a guest speaker at my school. Despite previous work experience, I hadn't come across this route before, especially in the legal sector. As I researched, everything about the apprenticeship aligned perfectly with what I wanted: I'd get six years of hands-on experience, a fully funded degree, and real-world legal skills.

The application process

Soon after discovering what a solicitor degree apprenticeship was, I continued to research and applied for work experience during sixth form. This led to me completing Browne Jacobson's virtual work experience, where I found out that they were recruiting degree apprentices. The firm's values really resonated with mine and I was excited to get the same law degree I had planned to study at university while gaining practical experience.

The application process for the apprenticeship involved submitting my CV and answering questions about my interest in law and Browne Jacobson. This led to a telephone interview, online assessments (evaluating grammar and writing skills) and an in-person assessment centre. Balancing this with my A-level exams took careful planning, but I was determined to give both my best effort.

The in-person assessment included a group task and a detailed interview exploring my experience and aspirations. Unlike the initial telephone interview, this was more in-depth, allowing me to discuss my motivations and enthusiasm for law in greater detail.

Accepting the offer

That summer, I received the call I had been hoping for — an offer to join Browne Jacobson as a solicitor degree apprentice. I accepted without hesitation. 18 months into my apprenticeship, I've developed skills I don't believe I would've gained in a traditional university setting, from drafting court documents to delivering presentations. I've also found that in the future there could be an opportunity for me to do a seat in clinical negligence, blending my original interest in medicine with my passion for law.

Looking back, choosing this path has been transformative. The combination of practical experience, academic learning, and professional development has been amazing. If you're considering your options after sixth form, I encourage you to explore alternatives beyond the traditional university route, you might just find the perfect fit, as I did.

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