MILLS & REEVE

Achieve more. Together.

Frequently Asked Questions

Our trainee recruitment process

What are the key dates I need to know?

- Applications open: 1 October 2021
- Applications close: 4 January 2022
- Assessment centres: February 2022

Vac schemes

- 20 June to 1 July 2022 (Birmingham and Cambridge)
- 27 June to 8 July 2022 (Leeds, Manchester and Norwich)

What does the end to end process look like?

1. Complete an application form here (applications open 1 October 2021).
2. We use the Watson Glaser critical thinking test with our applicants. You can take a practice test here. The link gives you a chance to understand the format of the test and questions and get some feedback on how you performed. We take candidates forward who achieve in the 71st percentile and above. There are also some useful tips on the best approach when taking the test here.
3. Applications are shortlisted by HR and then there is further shortlisting by a group of lawyers.
4. Shortlisted applicants are invited to a half-day assessment centre, including an opportunity to meet trainees. You undertake a group exercise, a written exercise and an interview with a partner and principal associate.
5. Offers for our vacation scheme are made within two weeks of the interview.
6. During the vacation scheme, you will work with a variety of teams, moving every few days to see how we work.
7. You will be assessed during your summer vacation scheme for a training contract and will be notified of the outcome within 3-4 weeks of the scheme.
8. Before starting your training contract with us, you will be introduced to others on the same course, sent newsletters, invited to introductory events and have an "open line" to our Graduate Recruitment team.

Do you offer sponsorship for studies?

We provide sponsorship for the PGDL/LPC/SQE plus a maintenance grant for each course.

Do you sponsor international students to work in the UK?

Yes, we do. If you'd like more information on this, please contact the Graduate Recruitment Team.

What are your plans in relation to the SQE?

We have an SQE steering group who continue to meet and make recommendations for our approach to the SQE. We are recruiting the following positions from our summer vacation scheme:

Training contracts to start in 2023 - 2 positions in Leeds
Due to firm growth, we are looking to recruit our inaugural cohort of trainees in Leeds, to start in September 2023. These trainees will be sponsored to continue with the LPC route to qualification, and so we are looking for final-year law students, law graduates or non-law graduates with the GDL.

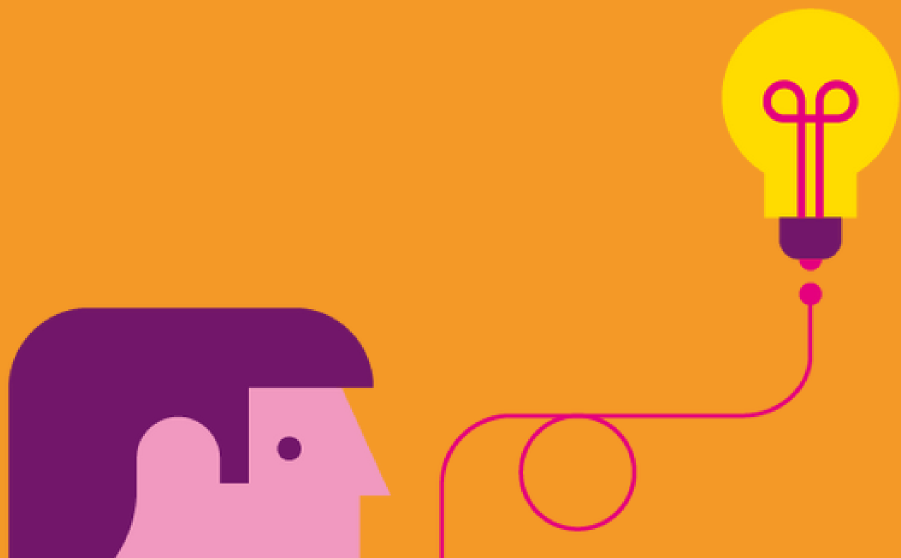
Training contracts to start in 2024 - c.25 positions across Birmingham, Cambridge, Manchester and Norwich
For our 2024 intake, we will sponsor candidates to qualify via the SQE route and we will welcome applications from penultimate-year/final-year law students, final-year non-law students and graduates (any discipline). We will sponsor non-law candidates to undertake the PGDL before any SQE courses.

We are likely to ask SQE candidates to complete their SQE prep courses at one of a preferred list of course providers.

Navigating the process successfully: hints and tips

Application forms

- Read the questions and follow the instructions provided! It sounds simple, but you'd be amazed at how many people get it wrong. Check and check again...
- Sometimes it is good to make a note of the question and copy and paste it into Microsoft Word, so that you can plan and edit your answer before submitting.
- Make sure you check your spelling, grammar and punctuation. You might want to ask someone else to check this as well.
- For any open questions e.g. "Tell me about a time when you have been part of a team", draw upon examples from your work experience, academic experience or any extra-curricular activities. Showcase what the example was, what your role in it was, what the outcome was and if you were to be faced with the same situation, is there anything you would do differently.
- If there is a word count, make sure you take note. If we are asking an open style question about your skills, we want more than a one sentence response.
- Show that you have done your research and, where you can, intertwine it into your responses.
- Try and avoid submitting your application form on the last day - there may be technical issues!



Assessments centres: what to expect

- A welcome talk – providing you with more information about Mills & Reeve and what you can expect from the day.
- A group exercise – a discussion or practical task designed to test how you interact with other people in a team.
- There may be some instances where you say something and an assessor will write something down. Try and ignore them.
- Psychometric, aptitude tests or in-tray exercises - these might be online or pen and paper tests designed to test your ability.
- A written exercise – you might be asked to write a brief report or analyse some information given to you.
- Ensure you know what the assessors are looking for. Make sure you know what the role of a trainee solicitor and have thoroughly researched the firm.
- Be aware of the time, wear a watch or look where the clock is in the room. Tasks wills always have strict deadlines and you will likely be assessed on your time management skills.
- Participate fully in the tasks by giving your thoughts and suggestions. If there is someone in the group who appears quiet make sure you include them in the conversation and ask what their thoughts are.
- Refer back to the instructions and make sure you have covered everything you have been asked to cover.

Interviews

- Check where the interview is being held and plan your journey ahead of time. Try and arrive at the location 10 minutes early. If the interview is via video call, check the connection and technology beforehand and log on a few minutes early.
- Start to think about examples you might be able to give that demonstrate you have the skills and qualities we are looking for.
- Make sure you have done your research and you know why you want this specific role at Mills & Reeve specifically.
- Make sure you have prepared some questions that will make you look committed to the role. It might be what the interviewers like about the firm or it might be to get more information about something you have seen on the website.
- Finally, make sure you phone is on silent or off for the duration of the interview.

Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing at Mills & Reeve

Diversity and inclusion is a key strand of our 2025 vision. At Mills & Reeve, we recognise the foundation of the firm's success is our people. Our aim is to ensure that everyone working for or with us feels valued and supported, not only for how they perform in the working environment but also for who they truly are.

- We are committed to being a fair employer, which recruits, develops, promotes and retains a diverse and talented workforce.
- We recognise the need to provide an inclusive and positive workplace where people are able to do their best work.
- We recognise we cannot achieve our vision as a Firm without developing and implementing best practice in diversity and inclusion, not only as an employer but also as a provider of legal services, as a purchaser of goods and services and in our wider role in society.

We have the following objectives for the Firm to help us achieve our goals:

- Achieve a more diverse workforce by identifying and communicating a number of diversity and inclusion workforce profile goals.
- Embed good equality, diversity and inclusion practices into our daily activities and decision-making processes.
- Celebrate, communicate and promote equality, diversity and inclusion both within and outside of the firm.

Diversity, Inclusion and Well-being initiatives

We believe that embedding diversity and inclusion creates a positive workforce environment. It will make us a better law firm and helps us to attract the best talent, drive innovation, and deliver the best experience for our employees and clients. We have a number of initiatives in place to support us to embed Diversity and Inclusion practice.

For more information, please visit our website here.

Supporting employees' wellbeing

We know that our business can only be successful if we support the health and happiness of our employees. We have a range of wellbeing activities in place to address mental, physical, digital and financial wellbeing.

Initiatives include:

- Weekly wellbeing catch ups for teams
- Wellbeing supporters (Mental Health First Aiders)
- Employee Assistant Programme (EAP)
- Support and learning via the Firm's 'Learning Hub' – this includes awareness regarding sleep, nutrition, managing wellbeing, wellbeing webinars.
- Nudge – financial health wellbeing programme/app
- In house yoga
- 'Zoom-a-ccinos' – random coffee catch ups for groups of colleagues who may not know each other (adapted from 'Share-a-ccinos when we were all office based!)
- Individual wellbeing support by the HR team and Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing lead
- Managers are also provided with line manager guidance and training to support their team's wellbeing.

What is the firm doing to become more sustainable?

We are always looking to improve our environmental performance. This includes reducing our energy consumption, recycling and reusing, promoting sustainable travel and procurement. We are longstanding members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance and have recently signed up with Net Positives to work towards improving and enhancing the positive impacts of our social and economic activity as well as our environmental ones.

We are in the process of setting up a sustainability committee consisting of staff from all offices to further improve our sustainability working practices. Working with the LSA, over the last five years we have reduced our Carbon emissions by 48% (2252 to 1167 tCO_2e). This has been achieved by working with staff and suppliers to reduce waste, energy usage and non-essential travel along with other initiatives, such as:

- Our procurement policy takes into account the environmental impact of purchased goods and tenders are submitted by electronic portals instead of paper and post. All performance reviews, Payslips and total reward statements are all online.

- We have a fully electronic filing system, Worksite and are reducing our paper file storage. Our paper usage in all our offices has reduced over the last 5 years from 165 tonnes to 92 tonnes. No waste from any of our offices go to landfill and we have removed all single use plastics from our catering provisions.

Innovation and Technology

There is no doubt that the way legal services are delivered is changing, requiring lawyers and trainees to adapt their skill sets to catch up. Clients wants their lawyers to be more like business partners and for them to guide them commercially and holistically through their challenges (legal or otherwise!). In order to do that, lawyers need to be skilled in:

Legal technology and innovation – Lawyers needs to be tech savvy and constantly innovating and evaluating what they do and how they do.

Data Analytics – Much of what lawyers do at the beginning of a transaction is looking at data and making sense of it, making it structured, so we can add the value, the expert judgment, spotting trends and providing pro-active advice.

Design thinking and creativity – Lawyers need to be able to be part of the solution of their client's problems and help design solutions to those problems, which can include a change in process, people, technology or something more radical or sometimes less radical.

Process mapping and Project management – Lawyers need to be able to map out the transactional process from start to finish and then ensure they are working to the optimum at every point. Alongside this lawyers have to be able to project manage transactions to a successful, on time, on budget, conclusion. As a trainee, you can add a huge amount of value by providing clear project management support.

Mills & Reeve use legal technology

We use it a lot! Some of the technology we use is to make our internal processes more efficient, and a proportion is used by clients to make transactions more streamlined. Examples include:

Project management andclient collaboration platforms – to help us manage our clients' matters, documents and projects.

Document automation – automate the creation of legal documents

Transaction management – to manage delivery of transactions, particularly conditions precedent in banking transactions

Electronic disclosure platforms – for litigation based support and services (processing the data, filtering it though to review and categorisation of large volumes of documents).

Post completion support – to produce electronic bibles and to redact sensitive data as appropriate.

Are you looking for trainees who can code?

Absolutely not! We're looking for lawyers who understand how technology can complement and add value to legal services delivery. We want individuals who can 'think outside the box' and question processes and ways of doing things if they can see a better way. That's not to say that if you have coding stills and are keen to show them off, we don't want to hear about them.

Please tell us and we may well be able to put them to good use!

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Get in touch

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