Diploma in Professional Legal Practice (DPLP)
Stronachs recruit up to 5 trainees each year. We also run a successful summer placement scheme.

Excellent training and prospects are available to ambitious candidates who are seeking to gain in-depth experience in corporate, energy, commercial property, employment, private client and dispute resolution.

Successful trainee applicants receive a payment upon joining to help offset the costs of the Diploma in Legal Practice.

The closing date for applications for traineeships commencing in September 2018 is Friday 21st October 2016.

The closing date for applications for placements for summer 2016 is 31st March 2016.

Application forms are available to download at WWW.stronachs.com/careers

The School of Law at the University of Aberdeen has time-honored foundations that go back to 1495. It is one of the four ancient universities of Scotland.

In order to practice law and become enrolled as a solicitor in Scotland you will need to gain your Diploma in Professional Legal Practice. At the University of Aberdeen, we believe you need to choose the ‘where’ very carefully. Aberdeen Law School is proudly committed to providing the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice and we believe the DPLP is a vital springboard to the rest of your career and one that you want future employers to see as a strong choice.

Building on our strong links with the legal profession, we see the Diploma as the crucial bridge from your law degree to the world of practice. We are totally committed to making sure that all our students leave Aberdeen completely ‘fit for purpose’ as a legal trainee, ready to rise to the challenges of practice from day one.

Our students enjoy smaller, more tightly-focused groups than most Diploma Programmes and we work hard to nurture a strong collegiate spirit that helps everyone bond quickly and learn fast.

We add other learning activities designed to expose you to the real world of practice and to bring the courses to life and add substance to your learning. We will equip you with the skills and knowledge to prepare you for the challenges of work in the modern legal profession.

Dr Susan Stokeld, Director of DPLP, University of Aberdeen

www.abdn.ac.uk/law/courses
Our Programme.

Programme Overview
Our programme structure is the framework of learning which is essential. But at Aberdeen, we add other learning activities designed to expose you to the real world of legal practice. It’s this that helps bring the courses to life and adds substance to your learning. We focus on nurturing a strong collegiate spirit that helps our students bond quickly and learn fast.

Our focus is on ensuring our students leave Aberdeen with the necessary skills to start work as a legal trainee and prepared for the challenges for their traineeship from day one. Aberdeen DPLP graduates have a very high level of success in securing traineeships. A significant number of our students are offered positions in Edinburgh and Glasgow as well as with local firms and we are confident that firms are impressed by the high quality of training and preparation we deliver on the DPLP course.

Our vocational postgraduate programme is designed to meet the aims and outcomes of Professional Education and Training 1 (PEAT 1) as prescribed by the Law Society of Scotland as required for admission to the solicitor and advocate branches of the legal profession in Scotland.

The course starts on 5th September 2016 with an Induction week programme of presentations, workshops and activities all designed to introduce you to the new skills and practical approach to learning that are fundamental to the DPLP at Aberdeen.

In the first semester our teaching focus is on the compulsory core subjects prescribed by the Law Society. Students consolidate the learning and experience of the first semester across 4 elective courses in the second semester.

We currently offer a choice of 10 elective courses across commercial, private client and litigation specialisms:
• Negotiation
• Dispute Resolution
• Family Law
• Energy Law
• Advanced Civil Litigation
• Contracts
• Corporate Finance and Acquisitions
• Public Law and Administration
• Advanced Criminal Litigation
• Employment Law: Tribunal Practice and Procedure

We are particularly fortunate in being able to draw on the expertise of the Law School’s Centre for Energy Law and the strong presence of firms in Aberdeen specialising in the energy sector to deliver a unique elective on Energy and Renewables.

A presentation session in November attended by the senior tutor from each course offers students an opportunity to find out more about the elective courses before making their choices.

TERM DATES
Semester one teaching: 12th September - 2nd December 2016
Semester two teaching: 9th January - 31st March 2017

COURSE TIMETABLE
All classes are during business hours between 9.00am and 6.00pm.
Teaching is conducted in weekly 2 or 3 hour seminars with some additional lectures.

The course programme is supplemented by a range of presentations from external speakers from across the profession.

Assessment
There are no written exams on the DPLP course at Aberdeen. Assessment is based on a combination of written summative assignments, skills based oral assignments and online and multiple choice tests.

Actors are used as mock clients to give students as wide and realistic an experience as possible in interviewing clients.

In Criminal Litigation and Advanced Criminal Litigation students participate in presenting pleas in mitigation and conducting criminal trials before a Justice of the Peace.

In the Civil Litigation and Advanced Civil Litigation courses students role play in a court debate and a mock proof.

Assessment submission dates are staggered throughout the week to encourage good time management skills.

Compulsory Courses.
All our core and elective courses adopt a transaction based approach to learning. The course content is centred on activities which are undertaken by the students in interactive seminars, including role play and group activities.

Please note there may be some changes to course content. We constantly review the course content and introduce new materials to address topical issues where appropriate.

Induction
The course starts in September with a week-long induction programme of events that includes a wide range of presentations and interactive workshops with a strong emphasis on skills based exercises including negotiation, communication, interviewing and team working.

The week includes a visit to Aberdeen Sheriff Court with talks by a Sheriff, Fiscal and members of the profession as well as the opportunity to attend court proceedings.

Conveyancing
The course will cover: registration of title system in general and specific aspects of registration of title in particular; the steps involved in selected types of conveyancing transaction; selected aspects of leases and related matters including tax, ethical, practice management and client care aspects of conveyancing.

Key skills covered: communication with clients, drafting, negotiation, and transaction based research.
**Compulsory Courses.**

**Private Client**
The course will cover: taking instructions for a will; drafting testamentary documentation; practical issues concerning intestacy; executry administration; trusts; incapacity; investment and tax planning advice; and related matters including tax, ethical, practice management and client care aspects of Private Client.

**Key skills covered:** communication with clients, drafting and transaction based research.

**Litigation**
The course will introduce both Criminal and Civil Litigation and will cover: the Criminal Legal Aid scheme, the rules of criminal procedure and appeal routes, the conduct of pleas in mitigation, intermediate diets and trials, the funding of civil procedure, the concepts of specification and relevancy in civil procedure, Court of Session procedure and processes, actions competent in the sheriff court and appeal routes, client interviews, drafting pleadings, the conduct of an options hearing and a proof; settlement issues and related matters including client care aspects of litigation.

**Key skills covered:** communication with clients, drafting, advocacy, and transaction based research.

**Reflective Diary**
An important feature of the Diploma is learning from experience. This involves a process of self-appraisal and reflection which is a skill that is developed through the reflective diary. Assignments and tasks will be assigned each week that will involve some analysis and critical self-appraisal linked to a topic covered in one of the core courses each week. The reflective diary is completed online and is assessed each week with constructive feedback.

**Business Environment and Ethics**
The course is divided into two parts.

**Part 1** will cover: business structures and investment; the regulatory and fiscal framework within which business operates; a team working exercise which involves the set-up of a virtual law firm and construction of key business and practice policies and documentation; management of time and risk capability in legal transactions/matters; company accounts analysis; loan finance; financial advice for companies and individuals including the tax implications; financial services such as mortgages, insurance and pensions. An Investment Game runs throughout the first part of the course where each student manages a share portfolio.

**Part 2** will cover: the ethics of creating and managing a client relationship; confidentiality and conflict; and duties and discipline.

**Key skills covered:** communication with clients, team working, drafting, and transaction based research.

**Elective Courses.**

**Students must study 4 elective courses in the second semester. A presentation session in November attended by the senior tutor from each course offers students an opportunity to find out more about the elective courses before making their final choice.**

**Advanced Criminal Litigation**
The course will build on the knowledge and experience students gained from the core Litigation course. The course will cover: the conduct of two case scenarios which will involve preparation and conduct of both a debate and a proof; client interviews; precognition taking; preparation of different types of civil pleadings; students will practice by role play the skills required to prepare and conduct civil cases in the sheriff court; summary cause and small claims procedures.

**Employment Law: Tribunal Practice and Procedure**
The course will cover preparing and representing clients at Employment tribunals, and to develop advocacy and communication skills in dealing with and representing clients involved in employment disputes.

**Key skills covered:** communication with clients; client and witness interviews; advocacy skills; drafting, negotiation, and transaction based research.

**Family Law**
The course will cover: taking part in role play scenarios relating to disputes involving divorce, cohabitation and parental rights; taking instructions in a family law dispute; writing positional letters; drafting appropriate court documentation; negotiations which involve the parties and solicitors; interim interdict hearing; and child welfare hearing.

**Key skills covered:** communication with clients, client care, drafting, negotiation, and transaction based research.

**Negotiation** (Now for 2016/2017)
The course is centred around practical exercises which are undertaken by the students with feedback being provided in interactive seminars. The course will offer an in depth examination of the processes and procedures of a range of negotiation strategies and processes.

**Key skills covered:** required to prepare and conduct a negotiation process on behalf of a client and the ability to prepare and disseminate information and share as appropriate in advance of a negotiation will be addressed.

**Contracts**
The course will cover: contractual drafting; contracts of sale; consumer contracts; Heads of Terms and offers; common law and implied terms; Share Purchase Agreement and Boilerplate clauses; Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006; intellectual property; warranties and indemnities; Bribery Act 2010; assignment, novation and variations; exiting commercial contracts.

**Key skills covered:** communication with clients, analysing key risk areas in relation to technical and legal matters, drafting, negotiation, and transaction based research.

**Advanced Criminal Litigation** (New for 2016/2017)
As an elective choice the course will attract students wishing to pursue a legal career in this area of specialism either in private legal practice, in public legal services or the Crown Prosecution Service. The design of the course is to deliver teaching in a small interactive group where participation, role play and verbal feedback are key features. Video recording will be used as a key teaching tool.

**Key skills covered:** opportunities for students to observe and critique demonstrations of advocacy skills.
Elective Courses.

Energy Law
The course will cover: the oil and gas licensing regime; the broader context within which the oil and gas industry operates; Joint Operating Agreements; exclusivity agreements; Joint Bidding Agreements; exclusion/indemnity clauses and risk allocation; access to infrastructure; renewable and planning issues; servitudes; health & safety and the environment qualifying disclosures and protected disclosures; the legal framework concerning decommissioning; the role of the media with particular reference to the Brent Spar incident; the regulatory issues and responsibilities in the event of an oil rig disaster.

Key skills covered: communication with clients, drafting, negotiation, and transaction based research.

Public Law and Administration
The course will cover an overview of the institutions of Public Law; an examination of planning law; issues dealing with education, housing and social work; an examination of Equality and Human Rights law. The course will include a themed case study (e.g. Gypsy Travellers) which will be reviewed throughout the duration of the course.

Key skills covered: communication with clients, drafting, negotiation, advocacy skills and transaction based research.

Dispute Resolution
The course will develop knowledge and understanding of a range of available approaches to dispute resolution and consider the strengths and weaknesses of the different forms of dispute resolution in practice; scoping the dispute and the client's attitudes to its resolution; development of a planned style and strategy for negotiation, conduct of a negotiation, mediation, expert referral, arbitration, enforcement in dispute resolution.

Key skills covered: interviewing, listening, advising, persuading, processing conflicting information, client care, drafting and transaction based research.

Corporate Finance and Acquisition
The course will cover: a role play scenario where students will work in groups acting for the purchaser and seller throughout the key stages of an acquisition transaction; drafting preliminary documentation; creation of a company as an acquisition vehicle; financial aspects of the deal; diligence and disclosure; the Share Purchase Agreement; the completion process including a mock completion meeting and post completion matters.

Key skills covered: communication with clients, drafting, negotiation, and transaction based research.

For More Information

New Courses
www.abdn.ac.uk/law/courses/programme-91.php

Fees (Reviewed Annually)
www.abdn.ac.uk/law/courses/funding-information-96.php

Term Dates
www.abdn.ac.uk/law/courses/semester-2-369.php

How to Apply
www.abdn.ac.uk/law/courses/application.php

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With 17 offices across Scotland, Aberdeen Considine is one of the country’s fastest growing law firms. Be part of our journey.

Search ‘Aberdeen Considine Traineeships’.
Student life in Aberdeen.

Aberdeen is situated in one of the most dynamic, prosperous and beautiful regions of the UK. Known as the Granite City for its abundance of impressive granite architecture, it is the perfect centre for work, leisure and play, offering a lively combination of historic charm, thriving economy and friendly, cosmopolitan community.

Home to 250,000 people, Scotland’s third largest city has something for everyone – from the vibrant city centre of Europe’s energy capital to the rugged coastline and beautiful countryside boasting glorious ancient castles, picturesque fishing villages, whisky distilleries and an abundance of golf courses. As the cultural centre of the north-east of Scotland, Aberdeen caters for all tastes in arts, culture, leisure and entertainment. Communication and travel links are excellent, which means getting around the rest of Scotland and the UK is easy.

What else goes on.

DPLP Competitions
Each year we compete in both the Diploma Client Counselling and Negotiation competitions and enter a team to compete against the other Diploma providers. In 2015 the team from Aberdeen won the national final of the negotiation competition and represented Scotland in the International competition held in Dublin.

DPLP End of Year Reception
The Society of Advocates and the Law School jointly host an end of year reception in April in the Society of Advocates library to mark the end of the Diploma course.

Law Society at Aberdeen
There is a very active Law Society at the University of Aberdeen that has dedicated DPLP representatives who oversee a very full and varied social and sporting calendar culminating in the end of year DPLP Ball.
DPLP Graduate Destinations.

What do Diploma graduates do?
Diploma graduates from the University of Aberdeen over the last few years have been successful in securing traineeships in a range of firms and organisations including the GLSS, local authorities, the large central belt and Aberdeen based firms and smaller local firms. A proportion have also succeeded in securing graduate training positions in the large professional services companies like EY.

The following chart shows the overall percentages for the destinations of Diploma in Professional Practice (DPLP) graduates from 2014, captured 6 months after graduation. We know from continued contact with our graduates that a much higher proportion are in traineeships after a year of graduating.

Employability.
In the Times Good University Guide 2014, the Aberdeen Law School ranked an impressive 12th out of more than 90 law schools. We also achieved a student satisfaction rate of 95%. Moreover we ranked in the top 5 for graduate prospects with more than 80% of our DPLP graduates securing traineeship in practice. The Law School’s excellent reputation is reflected in our employment figures.

In 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 many students who started the Diploma without secured traineeships were successful in gaining positions in Edinburgh, Glasgow, London and Aberdeen reflecting that firms are impressed with the quality and diversity of work and skills we cover on our programme and reinforcing the confidence felt by employers that our students are well prepared for the challenges of work as a legal trainee.

Should I do the Diploma if I don’t have a traineeship offer?
Your decision about whether to take the Diploma is an important one, and there are many factors to consider such as finance, career possibilities, career direction and level of interest and motivation. Whether it is right for you is a personal decision, and you are welcome to discuss your individual circumstances with the Law Careers Advisers at the University of Aberdeen. It is worth being aware of some of the facts to help you in your decision.

1. Many of the largest law firms now recruit at different points in time in line with their changing business needs and often recruit a number of trainees from the DPLP year.
2. Small to medium sized firms are most likely to recruit trainees from the DPLP year.
3. Local authorities typically recruit trainees from the DPLP year.
4. Firms are generally open to applications from the DPLP year for starting dates the following year. If successful, their start date can sometimes be brought forward.

What can I do to maximise my chances of success?
Gain experience - to see what types of legal work you enjoy and decide which organisations most interest you. Make a positive impression and you also increase your chances of securing a traineeship.

Discuss your application strategy - to make sure you are aware of the breadth of opportunities available across the diverse legal sector. Ensure you understand the many ways you can identify and apply for opportunities in law firms and organisations. Useful places to find out about law firms and organisations include the Law Society for Scotland website (www.lawscot.org.uk), using the ‘Find a Solicitor’ search and Legal500 (www.legal500.com) to search and research firms worldwide by area of practice and location.

Invest time in your applications - use the Careers Service website (www.abdn.ac.uk/careers) to view a range of example CVs, find out how to answer competency based application questions, target your covering letters and much more. Once you have drafted your application(s), get some feedback from the Careers Service before submitting to ensure it is the best it can be.

Practice your interview technique - to make sure you are well prepared and make the best first impression on the day. This can be arranged in the Careers Service with the Law Careers Advisers by calling reception on 01224 273601.

Make your contacts count - making use of existing contacts, and seeking new contacts can give you in depth insight into the areas of practice you are considering and can lead to vital information about future opportunities for work experience and traineeships. Complement traditional methods such as writing targeted letters and telephone calls with developing contacts online via LinkedIn.

Guides on using this site are available here: http://students.linkedin.com/uk.

Manage your online presence - make sure you manage your privacy settings to ensure you are happy with the results of a google search of your name. Increase your chances of being found by recruiters online by building a professional profile on LinkedIn.com.
What our students say...

Latifa el Shafei (DPLP 2014/15) Brodies 2015
The range of subject choices has allowed me to study the subjects I wanted to in more detail. The way the Diploma at Aberdeen is delivered, organised and the support provided has been exemplary. The work has been practical, useful and prepared me for my traineeship in the best possible way.


g

Kieran McLaughlin (DPLP 2015/16) Brodies LLP 2016
The Diploma at Aberdeen University is very much focused on business and industry giving students a real in depth insight to the practical problems that can arise. Seminars are taught by a wide variety of legal experts many of whom are practicing solicitors. Overall this is key in building and growing a professional network. The Diploma is heavily focused on group work and discussion; this has been a great way to meet and get to know people within the year and has led to a real family atmosphere amongst students.


g

Christy Ward (DPLP 2015/16) Laurie & Co 2016
Studying the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice at Aberdeen provides you with an excellent opportunity for practical learning from local solicitors to build a strong foundation for the beginning of your legal career. It is different from anything you will experience on the LLB but really puts you in the mind-set of being a practicing solicitor. The vast choice of courses will cater for everyone, regardless of your preferred area of interest. The DPLP class becomes a big, very sociable family and we celebrate our year together with the Diploma Ball!


g

Craig Wilson (DPLP 2015/16) DLA Piper 2016
Unlike other institutions, the University of Aberdeen does not have a single exam at the end of each course. Instead, smaller, practical assessments are provided to students on a week-by-week basis which sustains students' interest throughout the entire semester. There is fantastic pastoral support available for all DPLP students; from careers guidance and support for those without traineeship to coaching and mentoring in the various nationwide legal competitions which run throughout the Diploma year. There is an excellent choice of elective choices available to students in the second semester, including Energy Law for those entering the realm of oil and gas. I came from Edinburgh University and the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice at Aberdeen kicks off with a very useful student Induction Week period which allows you to acquaint yourself with a new university city and make new friendships for the academic year ahead.


g

Samir Younes (DPLP 2014/15) Maclay, Murray and Spens 2015
I already studied at Aberdeen University for the past four years and nonetheless decided to come back for a fifth year due to the great reputation the Law School has and the dynamic and different elective courses that are offered here. The Diploma at Aberdeen is completely different from the undergraduate law degree. The social aspect of the course is fantastic and you have the chance to network frequently with legal professionals. Group work is a key aspect of the Diploma at Aberdeen and it is really encouraged. I especially enjoyed the ‘virtual law firm’ task where we worked in groups and had the opportunity to create our law firms and market this to a prospective client. Taking part in mock criminal trials and civil proofs was fantastic.
A global firm of 59 offices. Headquartered in the City with training locations in London, Bristol, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Opportunities abound for top quality training, global secondments and to work with sector specialists so that your career can thrive in our Top 10 Global Elite firm.

Global Graduate Opportunities | www.cms-cmck.com/graduates