# Top Law Schools in the UK: 2026 Rankings

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Choosing the right law school can shape your legal career, influencing your job prospects, salary potential, and professional network. If you are looking for the top law schools in the UK, this guide will break down the best universities for law, rankings, and admission tips.

Deciding what you want to do post-graduation is critically important when choosing the right UK law school to study. Many people study law with no intention of becoming a solicitor or barrister. You must also decide if you intend to combine your law degree with another subject. For those who wish to become solicitors or barristers (or advocates in Scotland), choosing the right law school in the UK is critical, and there is a lot of choice.

**Remember to sign up for Clio's Academic Access Program.** This program provides law students with a head-start on their legal practice by introducing you to the opportunities available through cloud-based practice management software.

## What are the top law schools in the UK?

Cambridge and Oxford at the very top or high on the listof law school rankings. London-based universities also feature well, with University College London (UCL), London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Kings College, London, and Queen Mary University of London.

In the UK, 114 Universities offer a law course, compared to almost 200 law schools in the US.

With such a wide range of options from which to choose, it is important to make the right decision on where to study. There are many factors you will need to take into account. From a financial standpoint, how much are the tuition fees? What career do you want to pursue, and will the law school or university you choose allow you to do that? What are you likely to earn as a first-year lawyer? The law societies in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have recommended minimum salary guidance for trainee lawyers for their first and second years out of university. However, these are minimum guidelines to expect to have to negotiate your package when you start your legal career.

Before deciding which law school, thoroughly review your options and what the top universities delivering law courses provide.

# Top law schools in the UK

If you're wondering which is the best university for law UK or looking for a law school that provides the most prestigious education, the universities listed below rank highly across various metrics, including faculty quality, research impact, and employability. These institutions are also frequently ranked among the best universities for law in UK in the latest legal education reports.

If you want to find the best law schools or universities for law in the UK, check out the table below. These top institutions offer a variety of law degrees, including undergraduate and postgraduate programs, with unique features such as study abroad opportunities and personalised support. Cross-reference this with the QS World Quality University Rankings results, filtered for law and UK, will give you a comparable view.

When you start your investigations into the top UK law schools, you will quickly find several university law schools that regularly feature in the top ten in each of these rankings.

# Clio UK law school rankings 2025

| | UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE |
|---|---|
| 2 | University College London |
| 3 | London School of Economics and Political Science |
| 4 | University of Oxford |
| 5 | King's College London |
| 6 | Durham University |
| 7 | University of Glasgow |
| 8 | University of Bristol |
| 9 | The University of Edinburgh |
| 10 | University of Nottingham |

# Law degree options in the UK

The UK offers diverse law degree options, catering to various interests, career aspirations, and academic backgrounds. Whether you want to understand the legal system or specialise in a particular area of law, there is a course to suit your needs. Here are some of the most popular law degree options available in the UK:

- **LLB (Bachelor of Laws)**: This three-year undergraduate degree provides a thorough grounding in the legal system. It covers essential areas such as criminal law, contract law, and constitutional law, preparing students for a career in the legal profession.
- **LLM (Master of Laws)**: A postgraduate degree that allows students to specialise in specific areas of law, such as corporate law, international law, or environmental law. This degree is ideal for those looking to deepen their knowledge and expertise in a particular legal field.
- **Joint Honours**: This degree combines law with another subject, such as business, politics, or history. It offers a multidisciplinary approach, allowing students to explore the intersections between law and other fields.
- **Law with a Year Abroad**: This program allows students to spend a year studying law at a university abroad. It provides an international perspective on legal systems and practices, enhancing students' global understanding and employability.
- **Law with a Placement Year**: This degree includes a year-long placement in a law firm, barrister's chambers, or other legal organisation. It offers practical experience and insights into the legal profession, bridging the gap between academic study and professional practice.

These options ensure students can tailor their education to their interests and career goals, making the UK one of the best places to pursue a law degree.

Learn more about the educational requirements for law students in the UK here.

# Top law schools in the UK – different regions

If you intend to practice law in a specific part of the UK, be it England and Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, you must select a law school that can deliver a legal education pertinent to your chosen jurisdiction. Of course, some universities offer cross-border law courses, which will extend your options for employment once you graduate.

The reputation and strength of the law department in these regions are crucial factors to consider, as they often reflect the academic excellence, diverse course offerings, and strong faculty-student interactions that can significantly impact your legal education and future career prospects.

## The best universities for law in England and Wales

Eight of the top universities in England and Wales offer law degrees, three of which are in London.UCL is second,LSE is third, and King's College London is fifth.

At the top of the list is the University of Cambridge, whilst theUniversity of Oxford is fourth.

The remaining top ten universities in England where you can study law are Durham University, which takes sixth place, the University of Bristol, which takes eighth, and the University of Nottingham, which takes tenth.

These universities are renowned for their unique approaches to teaching law. For instance, University College London focuses on legal innovation, while the University of Cambridge has a historical tradition of law education.

All the top ten universities for studying law have international reputations. They offer excellent educations and demand high entry standards.

## The best universities for law in Scotland

Two Scottish universities make it into the top ten, with the University of Glasgow placing seventh and the University of Edinburgh ninth. There are eleven universities at which you can study law in Scotland. TheUniversity of Dundee, ranking sixth in Scotland and twenty-eighth overall, offers interesting cross-border LLB options, most notably the Scots and English Dual Qualifying with Energy Law LLB.

These universities offer comprehensive undergraduate law degree programs that cover foundational subjects such as constitutional law, criminal law, and contract law, with opportunities for specialisation in energy law and international law.

Suppose you intend to practise law in Scotland as a solicitor or advocate. In that case, you will need a degree containing the required courses for entry to the profession as a solicitor or advocate as specified by the Law Society of Scotland and the Faculty of Advocates, respectively.

Read more: Emerging Areas of Law in the UK: The New Opportunities for Legal Professionals

## The best universities for law in Northern Ireland

Two universities in Northern Ireland offer a law course. They are Queen's University Belfast, which comes in eleventh place in the overall performance table, and Ulster University, which comes in thirty-six. Interestingly, Ulster University offers a law coursewith an Irish LLB (Hons), which uses Irish as the primary means of communication.

Queen's University Belfast is the first university on the island of Ireland and the second in the UK to achieve thegold institutional Athena Swan Award.

# Factors to consider when choosing a law school

When choosing a law school to study, it is essential to set your priorities. Much will depend on your aims and objectives. Importantly, geographical considerations will likely help you focus on available options. For example, suppose it is your ambition to practise as a solicitor in Scotland. In that case, you will need to focus on universities which provide subjects required for admission as a solicitor by the Law Society of Scotland. If you intend to practice law in England and Wales, a Scottish University is unlikely to be your first choice.

Reputation of the university law school matters, not only for your education but for your prospects. University law schools at the top end of the league tables are the most prestigious, but is it practical for you to leave home and study in London if you aim to practice as a solicitor in Bradford?

You must also ask yourself if you want to become an academic after completing your undergraduate degree or whether you wish to go into practice, business or government.

## Legal research v graduate prospects

If you aim to carry out legal research following graduation, you might be surprised at the reordered list if you sort the league table by the Research Quality option. UCL, which came in second overall, tops the list, followed bythe University of Kent, which did not feature in the top ten, and then the University of Bristol, which does.

If you sort the table by graduate prospects, you will find that the University of Cambridge is at the top, followed by UCL and the University of Oxford. Interestingly,Queen's University Belfast features at fifth for graduate prospects, having just failed to reach the top ten overall and coming in at eleventh place.

## Course content and specialisation

Another option you must consider is whether you simply wish to study for law degree or combine your studies with another subject. Many universities offer combined law and language degrees. However, there are some unusual options available to prospective lawyers. For example, LSE offers a joint honours degree inAnthropology and Law MA (Hons). King's College, London, offer a range ofcross border law degree options of English Law and French Law, English Law and German Law, English Law and Hong Kong Law and English Law and Spanish Law. In addition, it offers a degree course inPolitics, Philosophy and Law LLB (Hons).

The University of Edinburgh offers a Law and Celtic LLB (Hons) coursewhich combines the study of law alongside the history, languages, literature and cultures of the Celtic world.

You can take a wide range of combined business and law courses at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. TheirBusiness Enterprise & Business Law BA (Hons) course has been designed for students who want to start a new enterprise, acquire an existing business, or are aiming for a leadership position.

Queen Mary University of London offers year abroad and year in industry options. These provide students with invaluable experience that enhances their academic and personal growth.

## Campus facilities and student support

All universities strongly focus on student wellbeing and providing facilities to ensure the student experience at university is memorable. By researching each university, you will find a diverse range of information, from the types and costs of accommodation you might enjoy at a collegiate university to the number of pubs on campus and within walking distance of the university.

All universities have student associations and clubs that students can join—from political organisations to theatre groups. The famous Footlights is a student sketch comedy troupe based at Cambridge University that has helped launch many British comedians' careers.The Oxford Union claims it is the world's most prestigious debating society.

You will find sports clubs and facilities alongside cultural groups and recreational activities. These are all geared to support students when they are not studying and to help them overcome the challenges of university life.

## Networking and internships

Attending university law school allows you to quickly build up a network of friends and contacts, most of whom have similar interests. Making friends with other students will allow you to discuss not only common interests but also complex concepts and legal topics that are the subject of assessment or exams. You will meet fellow students, lecturers, and tutors at the university who may be able to help you in your future career and, perhaps, open doors that might otherwise be closed to you.

If you have an opportunity to get an internship, take it. It will provide valuable experience, usually in a working legal environment, which no amount of theory can give you. An internship will also help you build valuable contacts that might help your future career. It will also help you understand the practicalities of the theories of law you are studying at university.

# Scholarships and funding

Financing a law degree can be a significant concern for many students, but various scholarships and funding options are available in the UK to help alleviate the financial burden. Here are some of the critical funding opportunities for law students:

- **University Scholarships**: Many universities in the UK, including top institutions like University College London and the London School of Economics, offer scholarships to law students. These scholarships are often based on academic merit or financial need and can significantly reduce the cost of tuition.
- **External Scholarships**: Organisations such as the Law Society and the Bar Council provide scholarships to law students. These scholarships support students with exceptional potential and commitment to the legal profession.
- **Government Funding**: The UK government offers funding for law students through the Student Loans Company. This includes loans for tuition fees and maintenance loans to cover living expenses.
- **Bursaries**: Some law firms and barrister's chambers offer bursaries to law students. These bursaries can provide financial support and may include internships or work placements.
- **Scholarships for International Students**: Many universities and organisations offer scholarships for international students pursuing a law degree in the UK. These scholarships can help cover tuition fees and living expenses, making it more feasible for international students to study in the UK.

Additionally, some universities offer scholarships for students focusing on specific areas of law, such as environmental law or corporate law. These targeted scholarships can provide additional support for students pursuing specialised legal careers.

By exploring these funding options, law students can find the financial support they need to pursue their studies and achieve their career goals.

# Career opportunities with a UK law degree

A law degree is an excellent one, and although many law graduates do not go on to become legal practitioners, there are many options for those with one.

For example, the Labour Party Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, was a lawyer and was Director of Public Prosecutions before entering politics. Following the July 2024 election, he was joined by four more Cabinet members who hold law degrees.

Of course, not all of them are business or political options. Former model and actor Gemma Chan studied law at Worcester College, Oxford and trained as a solicitor before pursuing her acting career. Gerard Butler, another prominent actor with a law degree,

studied law at the University of Glasgow. John Cleese also holds a law degree, which he obtained at Downing College, Cambridge. Actor, comedian and TV presenter Bob Mortimer holds a law degree and practised as a solicitor in Peckham.

Some law students have no intention of ever practising law, preferring to remain in academia once they graduate. A law degree is the first step for aspiring academics who might never practice law or step foot in court. Lecturing and tutoring at university while conducting research can be most fulfilling to academically minded students.

Many law graduates enter the Civil Service, and every year, there is a Civil Service Fast Stream, allowing final-year students to apply for a position. Then, some are engaged in business, commerce, and industry, acting in a legal and advisory capacity or as directors or executives of corporate organisations.

Charities and not-for-profit organisations also need legal counsel to advise them across their activities.

Finally, although you gain your law degree from a UK law school, it is recognised internationally as an excellent qualification for any career!

As you can see, the opportunities are endless. You have to focus on your objectives and take the first step in deciding which university best suits your needs.

# Final notes on law school rankings

Law school rankings are valuable when deciding which law schools to apply to. Ultimately, different considerations apply to other students when deciding on the best law schools for them. That's why university law school rankings are key.

Wherever you choose to apply to the top law schools in the UK, good luck with your applications. Remember to sign up for Clio's Academic Access Program. **Sign up for Clio's Academic Access Program here.**

# Frequently asked questions about studying law in the UK

## What are the admission requirements for entry to a UK law school?

Entry requirements for the very top university law schools in the UK are at least three A Levels with at least one A* and two additional A grades. Notably, the University of Durham requires, in addition to A Level qualifications, aLaw National Aptitude Text (LNAT) before admission. The A Level qualifications are expected to be in traditional or core subjects such as English, Mathematics, History, the Sciences or a Language, although other subjects may be taken into account.

Learn more about law school education requirements here.

## How do you get into a top law school in the UK?

If you're wondering how to get into top law schools in the UK, follow these steps:

1. Academic Excellence
   - High GPA and strong standardised test score

2. Standout Personal Statement
   - Clearly outline your passion for law, career goals, and unique qualifications.

3. Strong Letters of Recommendation
   - Obtain references from academic professionals or legal professionals who know your capabilities well.

4. Relevant Work Experience
   - Internships, moot court experience, and legal research can strengthen your application.

5. Extracurricular Activities
   - Leadership roles in student organisations, volunteering, and pro bono work demonstrate commitment beyond academics.

## What is the best school for law in the UK?

The University of Cambridge ranks as the best law school in the UK for 2025, according to the Complete University Guide. Known for its rigorous academic standards and historical significance in legal education, Cambridge consistently attracts top-tier students and scholars. Cambridge provides a solid legal foundation that covers essential areas like criminal law, contract law, and constitutional law, making its graduates highly competitive in the legal profession. Oxford, UCL, and the London School of Economics (LSE) also rank among the top choices for legal education in the UK.

## Which law school is most prestigious?

The University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge are often viewed as the most prestigious law schools in the UK. Oxford's long-standing reputation for producing influential legal professionals, academics, and politicians enhances its standing globally. Cambridge follows closely, boasting a history of legal education excellence and a broad range of law degree options. Both institutions' rigorous academic environments and world-class faculties contribute to their unmatched prestige.

Outside of Oxbridge, institutions like UCL, LSE, and King's College London hold significant prestige, particularly in specialised areas like corporate law and international law.

## Which is the best graduate LLB in the UK?

The University of Edinburgh offers one of the top-rated graduate LLB programmes in the UK, particularly its two-year accelerated programme tailored for students who already hold an undergraduate degree. This LLB programme is highly regarded for its comprehensive coverage of foundational legal principles while allowing students to specialise in areas like Scots and English Dual Qualifying Law. Other strong contenders for graduate LLB programmes include the University of Glasgow and Queen's University Belfast, which offer excellent pathways to legal practice in their respective jurisdictions.

## How much are tuition fees to study law?

Most universities in England set a maximum of £9,250 for students wishing to study law. In Scotland, Scottish students do not need to pay tuition fees. However, students from England wishing to study at a Scottish University are likely to face tuition fees of £9,250.

## How much is student accommodation?

How much it will cost you to attend university to study law varies greatly. For example, if you attend a university close to where you live, you might stay at home whilst attending university thus avoiding accommodation and some living costs.

If you intend to live away from home, much will depend on which university you attend. Collegiate universities often provide accommodation for all or part of the course. The accommodation charges tend to be cheaper than equivalent private rented accommodation.

Other campus universities may have student accommodation available for those attending their courses. Some of these are subsidised.

If you cannot secure university-supported accommodation, you will be left with the vagaries of the private rented sector where it may be sensible and more cost-effective to rent with fellow students to share the accommodation costs whilst attending law school.

## How can you fund tuition fees, accommodation and living costs?

Many students depend on their parents to support them when they attend university law school. Others take out a student loan to cover tuition, accommodation, and living fees. Some grants are also available if students are eligible.

There are also a limited number of scholarships available to students who study law at a UK university law school. Some scholarships are means-tested or have qualifications before being awarded. The non-financial qualifications might range from being the first member of the family to study law to the place where you live or your background and means.

## What are the best sources of law university rankings in the UK?

For those researching law university rankings, official rankings from QS World Rankings, The Times Higher Education (THE), and The Guardian provide annually updated lists of the best law schools.

## Selecting the right law school for your legal career

Selecting the right law school is crucial for your legal career. If you're aiming for a top law school in the UK like Oxford or Cambridge, thorough research and preparation, including studying our comprehensive top law schools guide above, can increase your chances of admission.

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### About Clio

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