

KIRKLAND & ELLIS



Stand out from the crowd

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Stand out from the crowd



Choosing which firm to start your legal career with is one of the biggest decisions you'll make.

At Kirkland & Ellis we combine the benefits of a small trainee intake with the excitement of being part of a global firm, employing over 3,500 lawyers in 19 offices around the world.

It's the best of both worlds, ensuring you have both the support and space you need to grow.

Talent, drive and enthusiasm.
That's what makes a Kirkland & Ellis lawyer.



Welcome

“Trainees at Kirkland & Ellis seize the opportunity to take ownership of every task and make things happen for their clients and team. We reward them with real responsibility.”

At Kirkland & Ellis, we work on the biggest and most complex global private equity transactions. These are dynamic, challenging and high-profile deals that stretch your intellect and require you to be a business advisor as well as a lawyer. You will meet extremely talented clients from the most successful businesses and financial sponsors on transactions across a diverse range of industry sectors.

Each year we recruit up to 20 trainees who join a team of over 500 lawyers. We look for people who have a genuine interest in private equity and transactional legal work as well as individuals who are self-motivated, driven and ambitious. We have a track record of promoting our associates to partner after six years; our aim is to provide all our lawyers with an accelerated career path, the best technical and deal experience, and client development opportunities.

On top of the essential academic qualifications, we're interested in individuals who can demonstrate initiative and who have the confidence and ambition to thrive in an environment that places no limits on how successful you can be.

At Kirkland & Ellis, we have close-knit deal teams of partners and associates. As such, all our lawyers get the opportunity to work across every aspect of a transaction, right from day one. This will give you full exposure to how deals come together and a greater appreciation of the importance of the tasks that you will be involved in. With an understanding of the big picture, you will quickly become an integral part of the team, putting forward ideas and finding solutions to complex legal and deal issues.

Join a firm that is highly successful, entrepreneurial, energetic and fun. Kirkland & Ellis is a place where individual thinking is encouraged and where the view of each lawyer is respected. Everyone gets fully involved and takes ownership of their work to achieve the best result for the client.

Read on to learn more about the experiences of some of our lawyers, and apply for our Training Contract to experience it for yourself. We look forward to meeting you.

"There's almost no trainee role. You just dig in and do it."

Trainee

Be part of the team from day one



We believe in giving our trainees ready access to associates and partners because it means you hear about the work going on and the role you can play.

You'll be heavily involved with real deals and cases, not just listening and learning but relied upon to make a valuable contribution to the team.

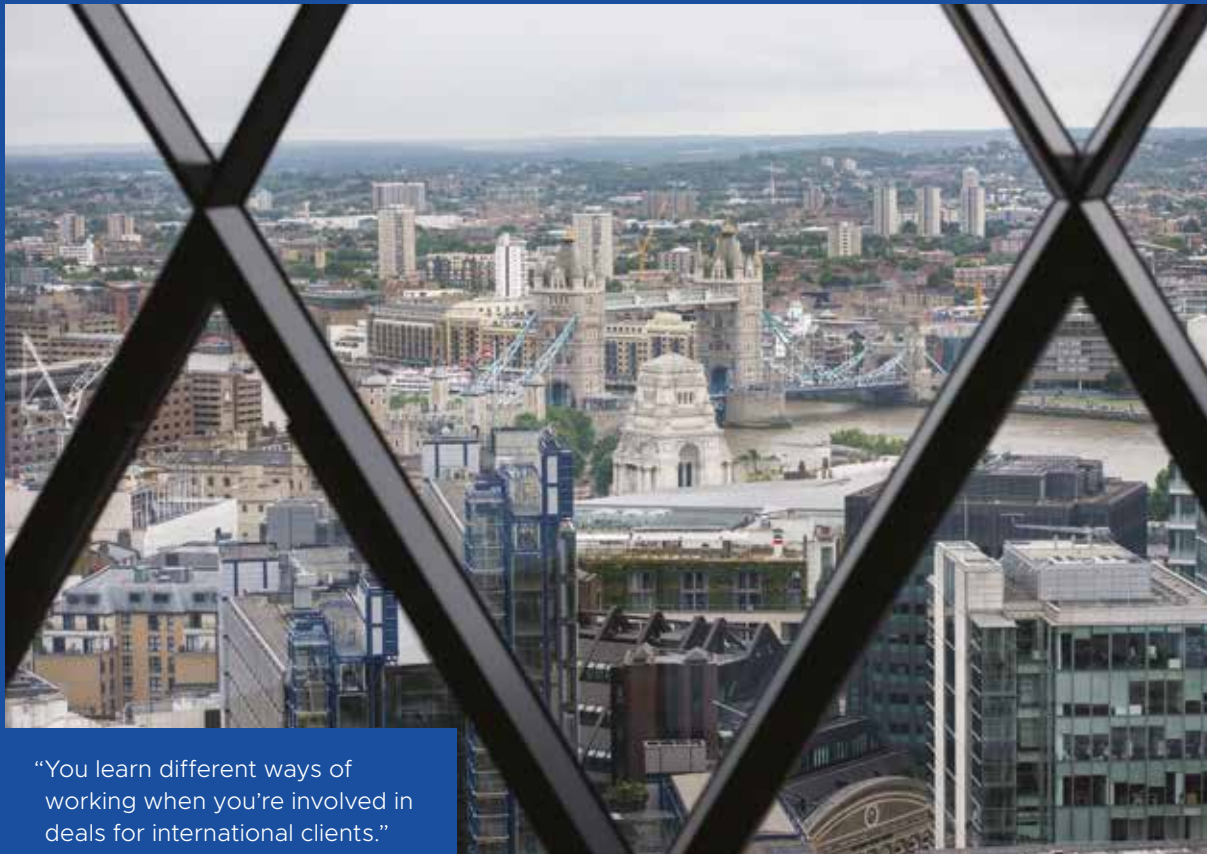
"We operate small teams which means everyone has a role and our trainees gain exposure to everything that goes on."



"You're given problems to solve which makes you feel part of the team immediately."



"This kind of training is challenging in some ways but there is always support there."



“You learn different ways of working when you’re involved in deals for international clients.”



“I’ve worked on a deal that involved 11 jurisdictions.”

“We have international work in the London office as well as working with our colleagues overseas on international projects.”

Partner

Work for a firm with a strong international reputation



Kirkland & Ellis is a recognised major force on the global stage, practising English, US and international law. Our global footprint of offices and international outlook means we’re trusted by many of today’s biggest global brands.

The organisations we work with in London and the size of the transactions means we handle frequent matters across multiple jurisdictions. We have a reputation for managing our clients’ international objectives very effectively.

“We’re not just an English law practice. A great deal of the work we do in London is international, involving the US, Europe and Asia.”



From the Gherkin to 40 Leadenhall



Image: #ByAssembly

We are excited to share with you the plans for our future office location in London.

We have occupied the iconic Gherkin building (30 St Mary Axe) for the past 20 years. Having grown substantially during that period, the time had come to make a decision about our next home. After considering a number of options, we chose 40 Leadenhall, a brand-new, modern, light-filled building with excellent environmental and sustainability credentials that is amenity rich and has incredible, unobstructed views across the City, the river and beyond.

To give you the best environment for your working life you will be provided with state of the art facilities including enhanced IT and work spaces. Kirkland & Ellis will also have exclusive access to seven balconies, the largest of these (pictured above) is on level 34.

By 2025, we will have made the move to 40 Leadenhall and we look forward to welcoming you there.

Training Principal
Rajinder Bassi

“Trainees spend the majority of their time working on real deals and cases gaining exposure to partners who are working at the top of their game.”

During the first weeks at Kirkland & Ellis, all trainees participate in an induction process that introduces them to the firm. Our aim is to ease you into working life and integrate you into the firm. Everyone will be aware of your arrival and will be looking forward to meeting you. You're seen as a valuable new resource for partners and associates to draw on – something you need to live up to.

Over the next few months there are lunchtime training sessions for you to participate in, which cover different aspects of our practice areas. These are delivered by partners and are the more formalised part of our training programme. They give you valuable grounding in the practice areas that you may experience during your seat rotations. The opportunities to play to your interests are enormous and the self-starters we're looking for will always be talking to associates and partners about the projects going on and the work they can get involved in.

Your supervisor in each seat will help you control your workload so you can deliver on all of the responsibilities you're eager to fulfil.

A desire for responsibility is one of the common threads amongst Kirkland & Ellis trainees. We're a firm that's happy to give it to you based on your proven ability to deliver. With our mid and end of seat reviews we give you feedback on your development and the opportunity to develop and mould your capabilities and approach in response.

Feedback is a two-way street, however. An important cultural aspect of our firm is the dialogue we encourage. Doors are always open to trainees who have ideas and initiatives they want to put forward and our non-hierarchical and meritocratic approach means great ideas will be responded to far quicker than they would be elsewhere. Our responsiveness is a key feature of our entrepreneurial culture.

We're a firm that doesn't stand still, always finding new and better ways to do things for the success of our clients, our firm and our people. So if you want opportunities in abundance, have the confidence and drive to act on them yourself, and have the personal skills you need to build a network and become part of the team, Kirkland & Ellis is a place you will flourish without question.



“You have direct client contact early on and they’re fine with that. With the whole team involved, the client knows they’re getting a quality product.”

Newly Qualified Associate

Work with high-profile clients from the start



One of the exciting things about the work we do at Kirkland & Ellis is advising clients from well-known businesses we see around us every day. Everything from retail companies to healthcare, real estate to hospitality.

It’s not unusual for the deals we’re involved in to be covered in the business pages and sometimes the headline news. It gives all of us a lot of satisfaction – no matter how long we’ve been in the business – to know we’re operating at that level and at the top of our game.



“With the clients we have you need to be commercial, intellectual and entrepreneurial.”



“You shouldn’t come to Kirkland & Ellis for the sake of being a lawyer. You should want to be part of the business and commercial world.”



Associate (Former Kirkland Trainee)

Arun Sohan-Pall

Graduate in Law, London School of Economics

“Being a Kirkland trainee exceeded every expectation I had of my training contract. In a short amount of time, I had exposure to a range of deals that left me excited about my future as a lawyer at Kirkland.”

I have recently qualified into the Corporate team having completed my training contract in August. As well as Corporate I also undertook seats in the Debt Finance, Financial Services Regulatory and Real Estate Finance teams. It was fascinating to see the different angles of private equity transactions. In all my seats, I was treated like an important member of the team from day one.

Being a Kirkland trainee exceeded every expectation I had of my training contract. In a short amount of time, I had exposure to a range of deals that left me excited about my future as a lawyer at Kirkland.

Within the first week of my training contract, I was emailing the CFO of a company and was trusted to take the lead on running junior processes. Although this can be daunting, you always feel supported – I always knew I could reach out to someone to ask for help.

Trainees also sit with a supervisor who are always there to offer advice and guidance. It is remarkable how much you can learn from just sitting in the same room as an experienced lawyer operating at the pinnacle of the legal market. It is easy to stay motivated here when surrounded by driven and ambitious individuals. The energy is infectious, and encourages you to go beyond what you think you are capable of.

Looking back, the training contract involved a lot of hard work, but I had so much fun along the way. I could not imagine being a lawyer anywhere else.



“The firm looks for self-starters who will take opportunities to learn.”

“It was enlightening discovering how the partners handled things.”

Trainee

Take responsibility for your own career



The culture of the firm is friendly and informal, the training process feels open and flexible. You can talk to anyone about the work you're doing and are encouraged to ask questions.

You can get involved in private equity work, leveraged financings, financial restructurings, taxation arrangements on domestic and international transactions, mergers and acquisitions, regulatory and fund formation matters, and competition issues, as well as litigation and arbitration cases.



“If you take the initiative people will help you get involved and explain things.”

Associate (Former Kirkland Trainee)

Tilly Kersley

Graduate in French and German, Leeds University

“This is a meritocratic firm, where trainees aren’t limited by a fixed view of what trainees can do. If you work hard and do well, you get the opportunities to do better, more challenging work and keep progressing.”

It’s incredible to realise where I am today compared to five years ago. My legal knowledge has grown exponentially, becoming broader and deeper. I attribute that to hard work but also the training approach at Kirkland & Ellis.

There’s a relatively small intake, you learn on the job, alongside the formal training sessions, and collaborate with lawyers at all levels of the firm. All of which ensures you learn at pace, gain exposure to people and deals, get to demonstrate your capabilities, and take on new challenges.

You’re very much part of the team from day one and can set your own course by putting yourself forward for the legal work you’re interested in. Everyone is genuinely invested in helping you go as far as you can. Associates and partners alike, take the time to go through things with you.

I hadn’t considered private equity work until I met Kirkland & Ellis lawyers at a graduate fair. Their passion for the work came across immediately. They explained what it involves, clearly and intelligently, and I was able to make an educated decision about applying to the firm. Even on the Vacation Scheme, I was involved in proper, substantive legal work straight away. I discovered the whole process of a deal, had to complete tasks independently, and really felt my opinion was valued even then.

Being a trainee at Kirkland & Ellis means being committed to your career. This isn’t just a job. People at Kirkland & Ellis are passionate and driven about what they do but also really approachable. It’s inspiring to be surrounded by such motivated and talented people. The firm isn’t looking for cookie-cutter applicants. Be yourself, and if it’s right for you then there is no better place to train.





"It's always fine to ask questions."



"Being in control of my own work gives me a great sense of ownership and makes me want to do it well."

"Everyone was really welcoming and keen to help."

Associate

A firm where people really matter



Pursuing a career in law and working for Kirkland & Ellis is challenging but everyone here is behind your success, whether that's your supervisor during each seat, associates you collaborate with, or partners who share their knowledge and expertise.

Our open culture gives you access to everyone and through regular progress meetings you can share any concerns as well as discuss your ambitions. We also give you the freedom to manage your own time, so you can deliver what's been asked of you and fulfil your interests and commitments outside of work.

"We place a lot of trust in our trainees to understand and manage their own work, which for the kind of people we hire is very motivating."

Superior training across multiple practice areas



High-quality training is the hallmark of our trainee training programme.

Before joining the firm as a trainee, you can get to know us at our open days, at various law fairs and at our assessment days.

High-quality training is the hallmark of our trainee training programme at Kirkland & Ellis – we have been awarded the LawCareers.Net “Best Trainer – US Law firm in the City” accolade on numerous occasions.

Your success goes hand in hand with ours, so we are passionately committed to your personal development and career progression. Join us and you will receive quality training right through to qualification and beyond.

You will have four six-month seats. Three of our main practice areas are corporate, finance and investment funds so it is likely you will spend a seat in each of these. Your other seat(s) will be allocated from one of our other complementary practice areas.

Your training

The formal training programme we run for the first four months of your Training Contract covers primary practice areas in detail, building on the skills you have already learned, while also introducing new topics. There are also opportunities for soft skills training with our firm’s Leadership and Management Training programme.

Post-qualification training

Your training and development does not stop after your Training Contract. We continue to invest in your professional development through regular lunchtime training sessions and workshops.

These are tailored specifically to the work of the London office, such as corporate and finance update sessions. Nearly all of our teams have Professional Support Lawyers, dedicated to ensuring you receive the highest quality training throughout your career.

At Kirkland & Ellis your career is our business, so we are focused on helping you become the best lawyer you can be.

Rewards & benefits

First year trainees receive a starting salary of £60,000 and this rises to £65,000 in the second year. We pay the fees for your compulsory qualification prep courses and exams and provide a competitive maintenance grant for the year of study. On top of that we also offer:

Private medical insurance	Dental plan	Emergency back-up child/elder care
Life insurance	GP consultation service	Wellbeing apps
Income protection	Fertility and family forming	Kirkland concierge
Travel insurance	Employee assistance plan	25 days holiday
Pension scheme	Cycle to work scheme	Season ticket loan
Corporate gym membership	Free breakfast	
BUPA health assessment	Subsidised lunch	

“There’s a real openness about the firm which makes it easy to be yourself.”

Associate

A working culture that inspires you



Everything we’re proud of at Kirkland & Ellis stems from our open, dynamic, friendly, inclusive and professional culture that we’re committed to maintaining.

“Our commitment to diversity is reflected not only in the firm’s policies, programmes and committees, but also through our efforts to build and maintain a culture that values and gathers strength from difference.”



Our trainees feel the benefit of this culture from the moment their Training Contract begins, through an induction programme that eases them in to their new working environment, with a focus on integration and making sure names and faces are quickly known amongst the whole London team.

All of our partners operate an open door policy, ensuring any questions about cases or deals or an individual’s role and development are dealt with in an unhindered way. The atmosphere this helps to create encourages all of our associates and trainees to collaborate, share knowledge and inspire each other too.

The result for our clients is a team of highly motivated and informed lawyers working on their projects, with everyone making the most of each other’s knowledge and experience to get the best result.

It’s not just about work. Our lawyers and staff get together in our café at breakfast and lunchtimes and we have lots of events throughout the years such as our Halloween pumpkin carving competition, our annual quiz night, and our summer and winter parties. We also have firm netball and football teams for anyone who is interested, whatever your ability.



Our lawyers have to work hard but in the supportive and collaborative environment we nurture, the results we deliver are significant and the sense of achievement equally so.

Diversity

Kirkland & Ellis’s commitment to diversity has made the firm more vital, more competitive, and better able to serve a broad and varied client base in complex matters. Diversity at Kirkland & Ellis transcends race, gender identity, gender, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Our lawyers boast rich and varied backgrounds, knowledge and skills, and we value and encourage diversity with respect to each individual’s work style, career path and experiences.

We work closely with diversity organisations such as Aspiring Solicitors and SEO and many of our current trainees and associates came through this route.

SEO
/LONDON

AS ASPIRING
SOLICITORS

“Using our legal skills to better lives, communities and our profession.”

Partner

A firm that takes its role in society seriously



In 2022, Kirkland & Ellis worldwide devoted more than 149,500 hours to organisations and individuals on Pro Bono matters. Our commitment as a firm to providing legal services without charge to those who cannot afford legal counsel is based on our goals of helping to improve clients' lives, bettering communities and deepening the professional experience of our attorneys.

“At Kirkland, we are committed to advancing the local and global communities in which we live and work. To fulfil that mission we dedicate substantial energy, talent and resources to an array of meaningful causes and initiatives that reflect our values and vision.”



Over the last year, lawyers from Kirkland & Ellis London have provided Pro Bono services to a diverse range of organisations and benefitted enormously from the experience of clients and challenges outside of their usual legal work. More importantly, they have really made a difference to the people for whom they have worked. Every hour of Pro Bono work counts as billable equivalent, hour for hour for associates and our Firm aims for each associate to spend at least 20 hours per year on Pro Bono work.

Pro Bono opportunities are available to attorneys at all levels, including trainees. We have highlighted some of the Pro Bono projects in which attorneys at the Firm have been involved.

Kirkland has partnered with the University House Legal Advice Centre, one of London's oldest legal aid organisations, to provide volunteer staff for its weekly housing clinic in East London since 2017. The clinic provides free legal support to vulnerable individuals facing housing issues including homelessness, evictions, and poor living conditions.

Since the autumn of 2015, Kirkland attorneys have represented numerous clients in welfare benefits appeals with a success rate of over 90%.

Since 2020, Kirkland attorneys have provided substantial Pro Bono support to Amicus, an apolitical, non-campaigning, non-profit organisation that helps provide legal representation to those facing the death penalty in the United States, by building a portfolio of user-friendly case files for prisoners on death row.

The London office partners with Refugee Legal Support and several City law firms in the Family Reunification From Europe Project, which aims to reconnect refugees living in England with their family members living in refugee camps across Europe. Throughout 2022, the Firm helped Afghan refugees find new beginnings, assisting more than 100 refugees with U.S. asylum applications or adjustment of status. After war broke out in Ukraine, Kirkland quickly launched a multi-firm project to assist Ukrainians in the U.S. with applications for Temporary Protected Status, a project that is expected to expand to include eligible individuals from other countries of origin.

Our Investment Funds Group is currently assisting Big Issue Invest, an affiliate of the Big Issue group of charities, which is forming an investment fund alongside the charity, UnLtd, called the Growth Impact Fund after their research uncovered very significant unmet funding needs in the social enterprise sector, particularly for enterprises founded by individuals from underrepresented groups. Kirkland has already successfully raised capital from a diverse group of investors into a novel fund structure to enable Big Issue to invest in social enterprises across the UK. The establishment of the Growth Impact Fund was named a finalist for “Best New Pro Bono Activity” in LawWorks’ Pro Bono Awards 2022.





Partner (Former Kirkland Associate)

Sam Sherwood

Graduate in Law, Nottingham University

“I joined Kirkland & Ellis having trained at another law firm. I was attracted by the big deals and the truly international nature of the work.”

I know from conversations with my peers in other law firms that you can get far more responsibility as a junior qualified lawyer at Kirkland & Ellis than you do elsewhere. You can really forge your own career but also get all the necessary support when you need it.

They help you learn as quickly as possible by giving you lots of exposure to different clients and deals. If you put the hard work in you can become a partner at six years qualified, as I did.

In my first year I had the opportunity to spend two months in our Hong Kong office. I was working on a deal with a client in Australia and it made sense to be in a closer time zone. It was fantastic getting to know my colleagues in Hong Kong.

I worked on incredible deals from day one and had a real sense I was part of a firm working at the top of the market. That's very motivating and makes you even more passionate about your work.

Whether you want to train here or, if like me you join from another firm, you have to be genuinely interested in private equity and have an understanding of what it involves. Enthusiasm is essential, as is self-motivation. You're treated like an adult, with the responsibility that goes with it, so you have to be driven. Moving to Kirkland & Ellis has been the best career choice I could have made.

“Graduates need to show us why they’re right for this firm.”

Partner

All of this is possible



When we interview we look for graduates who’ve got to know our business and understand the kind of work we do. Then we look for their excitement about doing it.

There are common traits among the people we hire. Intelligence, focus, a commercial outlook. They’re independent and capable of managing themselves. But we also look for personalities that will fit with our open culture, mix well with our clients and engage fully with colleagues at all levels of the firm.

These are the people who will make partner at around six years post qualification experience.

“We’re a young, modern firm looking for self-starters who’ve figured out through their research that they like the kind of work we do.”



“Take the time to have a proper dig around to learn more about what we do.”



“We want inquisitive people who are always asking, is this the best way of doing things.”



"We love finding the right people for our firm."

Partner

All of this begins with us



We're recruiting trainees for 2026, with vacancies open to both law and non-law students and graduates.

Applications for our open days, vacation schemes and training contracts will open on 1 October 2023.

All applications should be made via our website
ukgraduate.kirkland.com



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