



Interview with a Trainee Solicitor – Gavin Fernandes

Gavin Fernandes is a first-year trainee solicitor at Lester Aldridge. As he starts the second seat of his two-year training contract, he talks us through his career path so far.

Please share with us your journey into law.

I attended Warwick and studied law, graduating in 2020. Shortly after graduating, I completed the LPC in 2021.

Tell us about your career/seats so far at LA.

I've been at LA for 2.5 years and have completed my first seat in Real Estate Development situated in the Southampton office. I have just started my second seat in our LA Marine team.

How does the seat system work at LA?

Four seats – six months apiece. You fill out a preferences form, and you are allocated a seat based on your preferences and the firm's business needs. The allocation is done by a senior partner of the firm who has ample experience with this not-too-easy task.

What area of law do you enjoy the most, and do you hope to qualify into it? Has this changed?

So far, everything I have done with LA has been real estate based. Thankfully, LA has sector strength in real estate development and residential property (where I was a paralegal before becoming a trainee solicitor). You get to work on some interesting, high-value sites and even with an exciting client list. For those reasons, I have enjoyed my work at Lester Aldridge but eagerly look forward to stepping away from the property sphere as I start my next seat in the marine law team here in Southampton.

What attracted you to the Lester Aldridge trainee scheme?

Having worked at the firm for two years, I felt like I had a good grasp of the culture and knew I would be a good fit for the firm. Given my legal path, the training contract was the most appropriate route of progression for me, but I understand that Lester Aldridge now offers more varied ways to progress legal careers that may be more appropriate for others.

How did you prepare for your trainee solicitor interview?

Having good knowledge of the firm from working as a paralegal, I focused on calm during the interview and ready to think on my feet for any unorthodox questions that may be asked.

What's the best thing about training at LA?

Variety of seats. If you are flexible with your living situation, you have the potential to work in all three of our offices across Southampton, Bournemouth and London which is an exciting prospect and not one many firms can offer.

How would you describe the culture at LA?

A supportive work culture is a game-changer in handling demanding workloads. Open communication fosters collaboration, easing stress. Team encouragement and flexibility empower employees, promoting a healthy work-life balance. This positive environment not only enhances productivity but also ensures everyone thrives, turning challenges into shared successes.

I am also fortunate to be a part of the firm's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee and appreciate being in a firm that accepts and takes on ideas I have to promote the strand I am a part of – Race and Ethnicity.

Do you have tips for trainees just starting their training contracts?

Embarking on your training contract is a significant milestone. Optimise this experience by cultivating a proactive mindset. Prioritise continuous learning, seek mentorship and maintain organisational excellence. Effective communication and relationship-building are paramount. Embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, fostering adaptability and curiosity.

Find out more about training contracts at Lester Aldridge

We are accepting applications for 2026 training contracts at our firm by 17 May 2024. [Find out more here.](#)