

1

A career in law

THE STUDY OF LAW

Lead-in

The study of law differs from country to country, but most law degree programmes¹ include **core** (compulsory) subjects which all students must take. Which core courses are typical in your country? How long does it take to complete a law degree?

Reading 1: A career in law

1 Read the text below and answer these questions.

- 1 Which courses do law students in the UK have to take?
- 2 Which optional courses might a student who wants to work in a big law firm take?

The study of law is intellectually stimulating and challenging, and can lead to a variety of interesting careers.

In the UK and the USA, law degree programmes usually take three years to complete. In the UK, these programmes typically include core subjects such as **criminal law**, contract law, tort law, **land law**, **equity and trusts**, **administrative law** and **constitutional law**. In addition, students are often required to take courses covering skills such as legal writing and legal research.

There is also a variety of optional (elective) courses available. Since many law students go on to become lawyers, students often take courses that will be useful to them during their future careers. Someone wishing to run a small **partnership** or to work alone as a **sole practitioner** in a small town may decide to take subjects such as **family law**, **employment law** and **housing law**. Those wishing to work in a large **law practice** will consider subjects such as **company law**, **commercial law** and **litigation and arbitration**.

Many universities also offer courses on legal practice. Courses like this give students the opportunity to experience the work of a lawyer before deciding on a career in the law. Another way of finding out more about law in practice is to get involved with a voluntary advice centre or **law clinic**. These clinics offer free **legal assistance** to the local community and provide a useful introduction to some of the day-to-day work of a lawyer.

For students wishing to work in a commercial practice, knowledge of foreign languages is essential. When **law firms** hire new recruits, they generally look at four things: education, personality, work experience and language ability. Since English is the language of the international legal community, law firms increasingly expect graduates to have a good command of English.

- 2** Read the text again and decide whether these statements are true (T) or false (F). If the statement is false, correct it.
- 1** A course in family law is usually included among the core subjects at law schools in the UK.
 - 2** Some law degree programmes offer courses in some of the important skills that lawyers need in order to do their work, such as legal writing or legal English.
 - 3** Law clinics give law students the opportunity to learn about the legal problems of the medical profession.
 - 4** Today, commercial law firms expect recruits to be completely fluent in English.
- 3** When you record vocabulary, you should try to write down as many collocations as you can, and not only single words.
How many collocations with the words *legal* (e.g. *legal writing*) and *law* (e.g. *law firm*) can you find in the text?

Speaking 1: Law firms and courses

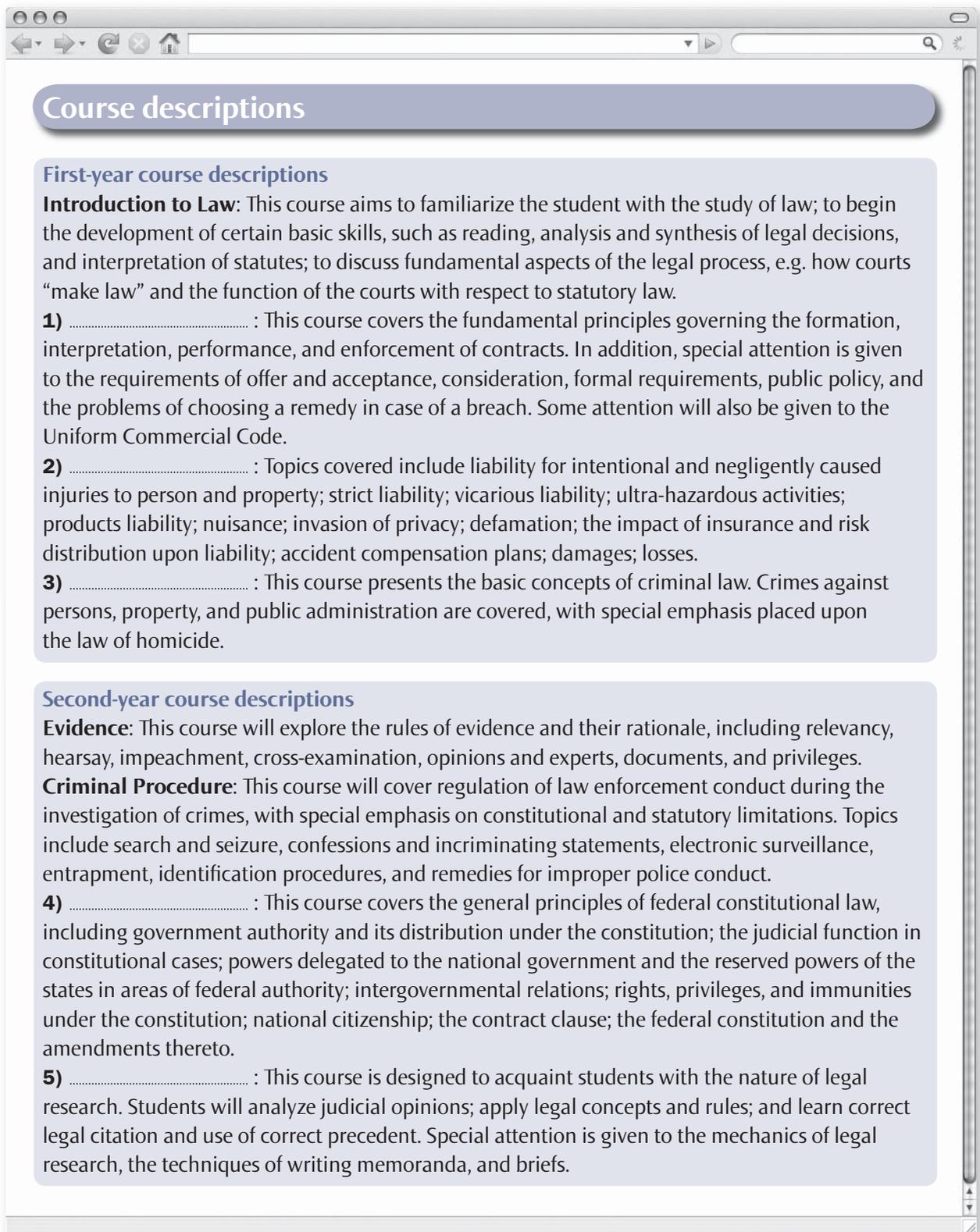
- 4** Discuss these questions with a partner. Look at the sample responses.
- 1** What type of law firm do you (think you would like to) work in?
*I'd like to work as a sole practitioner, as I'd prefer to be my own boss.
I think a big law firm would be exciting.*
 - 2** Which optional courses are you taking / did you take during your studies?
*This semester, I'm taking an elective course in environmental law.
I took a course on human rights law when I was in law school.*

Reading 2: Course descriptions

- 5** Reading texts in a foreign language often means encountering unfamiliar words. Discuss these questions with a partner.
- 1** What is the best way to deal with unfamiliar words in a text?
 - 2** Read the following list of strategies and discuss how useful they are. What factors might affect the strategy you use?
 - Try to understand the new word with the help of surrounding words.
 - Look up every unknown word in a dictionary.
 - Ignore the unknown word and read on.
 - Look up some new words, ignore others.
 - Analyse the unknown word: ask what part of speech it is (a noun or an adjective, for example); if it has a root or a prefix (Latin or French, for example) that may help you understand it; if it has a positive or negative meaning, etc.

Keep these strategies in mind when reading the text on page 10.

- 6 Quickly read the law course descriptions taken from a university website. Ignore the gaps for now. Do you think this university is in the UK? Why (not)?



Course descriptions

First-year course descriptions

Introduction to Law: This course aims to familiarize the student with the study of law; to begin the development of certain basic skills, such as reading, analysis and synthesis of legal decisions, and interpretation of statutes; to discuss fundamental aspects of the legal process, e.g. how courts “make law” and the function of the courts with respect to statutory law.

1) : This course covers the fundamental principles governing the formation, interpretation, performance, and enforcement of contracts. In addition, special attention is given to the requirements of offer and acceptance, consideration, formal requirements, public policy, and the problems of choosing a remedy in case of a breach. Some attention will also be given to the Uniform Commercial Code.

2) : Topics covered include liability for intentional and negligently caused injuries to person and property; strict liability; vicarious liability; ultra-hazardous activities; products liability; nuisance; invasion of privacy; defamation; the impact of insurance and risk distribution upon liability; accident compensation plans; damages; losses.

3) : This course presents the basic concepts of criminal law. Crimes against persons, property, and public administration are covered, with special emphasis placed upon the law of homicide.

Second-year course descriptions

Evidence: This course will explore the rules of evidence and their rationale, including relevancy, hearsay, impeachment, cross-examination, opinions and experts, documents, and privileges.

Criminal Procedure: This course will cover regulation of law enforcement conduct during the investigation of crimes, with special emphasis on constitutional and statutory limitations. Topics include search and seizure, confessions and incriminating statements, electronic surveillance, entrapment, identification procedures, and remedies for improper police conduct.

4) : This course covers the general principles of federal constitutional law, including government authority and its distribution under the constitution; the judicial function in constitutional cases; powers delegated to the national government and the reserved powers of the states in areas of federal authority; intergovernmental relations; rights, privileges, and immunities under the constitution; national citizenship; the contract clause; the federal constitution and the amendments thereto.

5) : This course is designed to acquaint students with the nature of legal research. Students will analyze judicial opinions; apply legal concepts and rules; and learn correct legal citation and use of correct precedent. Special attention is given to the mechanics of legal research, the techniques of writing memoranda, and briefs.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-71899-8 - Introduction to International Legal English Student's Book: A Course for Classroom or Self-Study Use

Amy Krois-Lindner, Matt Firth and TransLegal

Excerpt

[More information](#)

7 Choose the correct title for each course in the catalogue excerpt on page 10.

- 1 Criminal law / Crime law
- 2 Law of the constitution / Constitutional law
- 3 Contract law / Contracting law
- 4 Legal research and writing / Legal investigation and writing
- 5 Liability law / Tort law

8 Read the excerpt again and answer these questions.

- 1 Which course covers basic skills that students will need during their studies?
- 2 Which course deals with research and writing skills needed in professional life?
- 3 Which course teaches students how to cross-examine a witness?

9 Underline three words you do not know. Try to guess their meaning by looking at surrounding words and analysing the words.

10 Which of the courses in the excerpt are/were you required to take in the law degree programme you are/were enrolled in?

Listening 1: Law courses

Most universities now offer language courses for lawyers, and in some countries these courses are compulsory. Some courses in legal English focus on the study of Anglo-American legal systems and associated terminology. Others offer a more practical introduction to the language skills lawyers will need during their future careers.

You are going to hear a discussion between two law students, Heidi from Germany and Pavel from Russia. They are each spending a semester studying law in England and are discussing the English courses they were required to take as part of the law degree programmes in their respective countries.

11  **1.1** Listen to the discussion and tick (✓) what each speaker says he/she did on his/her legal English course.

	Heidi's course (Speaker 1)	Pavel's course (Speaker 2)
1 worked on writing skills for lawyers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 practised legal research skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 learned about other legal systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 studied terminology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 gave presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 practised speaking about own legal system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12  **1.1** Listen to the conversation again and then discuss with a partner which course (Heidi's or Pavel's) most resembles your experience of legal English so far.

Language use: Comparative and superlative forms

13 The two law students in Listening 1, Heidi and Marc, compared the legal English courses they took at their universities. Look at these sentences from the dialogue (1–9) and match them with the rules regarding the use of comparative and superlative forms (a–h). Some examples may match with more than one rule.

- 1 People here speak very quickly, which makes it *harder* to understand.
- 2 But now it's much *easier* – I can understand almost everything.
- 3 That's *more difficult for me than* understanding what people say.
- 4 Yes, I think writing's *the hardest* thing to do in English.
- 5 Our course was *more practical* – we worked on the language skills that lawyers need.
- 6 We didn't really work on speaking skills, though; it was *more important* to present the terminology.
- 7 That was definitely *the most useful* thing we did.
- 8 It sounds like your course was *better than* mine.
- 9 I don't know if it was better, but it was certainly *more language-based* and *more skills-based*.

- a Adjectives with one syllable form their superlative by adding *-est*.
- b Adjectives with one syllable form their comparative by adding *-er*.
- c Short adjectives ending in *-y* form their comparative by removing *-y* and adding *-ier*.
- d Multi-syllable adjectives form their comparative with *more*.
- e Compound adjectives form their comparative with *more*.
- f Multi-syllable adjectives form their superlative with *most*.
- g Some very frequent adjectives have irregular comparative forms.
- h *Than* is used to introduce the second element in a comparative structure.

14 Complete this excerpt from an introductory talk given in the first session of a legal English course. Use the correct comparative or superlative form of the adjectives given.

You might be expecting to learn a lot of detail about Anglo-American legal systems and their foundations, but our focus this semester will be **1** (practical) than theoretical. We will mainly be working on language skills, such as writing letters or speaking with clients. I am convinced this is the **2** (good) way to prepare for using English for law. You may find this course **3** (challenging) and **4** (time-consuming) than you expected, but you may also find it one of the **5** (useful) courses you take at university, as many students have told me in the past. To make it **6** (easy) for you to plan your time, I'll be handing out a list of the readings and the assignments you'll be working on this term.

Speaking 2: Learning approaches

15 Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Which of the four skills – reading, writing, listening or speaking – do you find the most difficult?
- 2 When it comes to learning legal English, which of the two courses discussed by Heidi and Marc do you think offers the better approach? Explain the reasons for your choice, using comparatives and superlatives if possible.

LAW IN PRACTICE

Lead-in

Lawyers in smaller firms often advise clients on general legal issues, contacting colleagues for assistance when necessary. Lawyers in larger firms tend to specialise in specific areas, such as advising on tax matters, dealing with commercial transactions or registering patents. Which areas of law do you find most interesting and why?

Reading 3: Graduate recruitment programme

16 Read the advertisement for the Barker Rose Graduate Recruitment Programme and answer these questions.

- 1 Do you need to have a law degree to qualify for the programme?
- 2 How will Barker Rose help graduate students qualify to become solicitors?

>> The Barker Rose Graduate Recruitment Programme

For the ambitious graduate wishing to train as a commercial lawyer, we offer trainees first-rate work in an informative, challenging and busy atmosphere, where your contribution counts from day one.

We require approximately 15 exceptional trainee solicitors each year to contribute to our future growth, in both our London and Manchester offices.

>> Training programme

We handle only commercial matters, offering training in company, commercial and finance, commercial litigation, employment, media, energy, trade and commodities, shipping and property law, and in the business skills essential to success as a solicitor.

>> Minimum qualifications

Strong academic qualifications, including a 2.1 degree¹ (any discipline). We take a flexible approach and are willing to progress candidates whose application otherwise demonstrates first-rate personal qualities and experience.

>> When and how to apply

Apply by 31st July two years before the start of the training contract.

To apply online, please click on this link:
<http://www.barkerrose.co.uk>

>> Sponsorship

We will pay your full course fees for both the GDL and LPC, plus maintenance of £6,000 during your GDL and £7,000 through your LPC study year.²

>> Further information

If you would like further information, please contact Graham Matthews, our Graduate Recruitment and Trainee Manager, on 0650 581 8967 or by email at graduate.recruitment@barkerrose.co.uk.

Barker Rose will be presenting its Graduate Recruitment Programme at the University of London Law Fair on 15 May at 2.30 p.m. in the John Adams lecture theatre.

¹ In the UK, different-class degrees are awarded as follows: 1 (*a first*), 2.1 (*a two-one*), 2.2 (*a two-two*), 3 (*a third*).

² The Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) is a conversion course allowing those holding non-law degrees in any subject to convert to a career in law. After completing the GDL, students who want to become barristers take the Bar Vocational Course (BVC) before entering the profession as pupil barristers. Students who want to become solicitors take the Legal Practice Course (LPC) before becoming trainee solicitors.

17 Read these four descriptions of students and decide if they would be suitable for the Barker Rose Graduate Recruitment Programme. Give reasons for your answers.

1 Andrea

Andrea is most interested in criminal law and has helped advise defendants of their rights at her university law clinic. She is very studious and is aiming for a first-class law degree.

2 Sandip

Sandip founded his own e-commerce business following a disappointing 2.2 law degree. He is now in great demand as a gifted dotcom consultant, but would like to pursue a career in commercial law.

3 Meral

Meral is interested in company law and is very ambitious. Her aim is to become a partner in a law firm by the age of 30. She would like to begin her training contract next year in order to get ahead as soon as possible.

4 Oren

Oren is a business-studies student and would like to pursue a career advising companies on mergers and acquisitions. He had originally wanted to start his own business, but decided on a career in law during his second year.

18 Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Would the Barker Rose Graduate Recruitment Programme be of interest to you? Why (not)?
- 2 If you had the chance to speak to someone about the programme, what questions would you ask?

Writing: Short email

19 The Barker Rose Graduate Recruitment programme gives an email address where you can write for more information. Write a short email asking the questions you discussed in Exercise 18, question 2. Use the opportunity to give some information about yourself, your professional and academic background and why you are interested in applying for the programme.

Listening 2: Graduate recruitment programme

20 ◀ 1.2 Barker Rose are presenting their Graduate Recruitment Programme at the University of London Law Fair. Listen to the first part of the presentation and decide whether these statements are true (T), false (F) or not clear (NC).

- 1 The students at the presentation have recently taken their mid-term exams.
- 2 The speaker is a law graduate.
- 3 Most of the speaker's lawyer friends are partners in law firms.
- 4 The speaker will take questions during and at the end of the talk.
- 5 There were over 60 lawyers working for Barker Rose in 1979.
- 6 New associates can work in an area of law that interests them.

21 ◀ 1.3 Listen to the second part of the presentation and answer these questions.

- 1 How much do graduate trainees earn during their second year at Barker Rose?
- 2 How are year-end bonuses awarded?
- 3 What other benefits are paid for by the firm?
- 4 How many hours are associates expected to bill per year?
- 5 After how many years are some associates considered for partnership?

- 22** Some words can have several meanings. Choose the best explanation (**a** or **b**) for each of these words or phrases as they are used in the presentation.
- 1** a partner
 - a** one of the owners of a partnership (e.g. a law firm)
 - b** someone's boyfriend, girlfriend, husband or wife
 - 2** an associate
 - a** a person whose position at work is slightly lower or less complete than the full official position described (e.g. an associate director)
 - b** a person who is closely connected to another person as a companion, friend or business partner
 - 3** a bonus
 - a** a pleasant, additional thing
 - b** an extra amount of money given as a reward in addition to the money you were expecting
 - 4** benefits
 - a** a helpful or good effect, or something intended to help
 - b** things such as medical insurance that employees receive in addition to money
 - 5** to practise¹
 - a** to do something regularly in order to become skilled at it
 - b** to work in an important skilled job for which a lot of training is necessary

Text analysis: Structuring a presentation

In order to be effective, a presenter must make the audience understand why the topic is important to them. It is also important to make your points short, simple and clear. Remember to KISS (Keep It Short and Simple).

- 23** This outline gives a detailed summary of the main parts commonly found in presentations. Find each of the points in the transcripts for audios 1.2 and 1.3 (page 125). Write down the line numbers at which each point can be found.
- 1** Welcome the audience
 - 2** Introduce yourself
 - 3** Introduce the topic
 - 4** Tell the audience why they should be interested in the topic
 - 5** Tell a short personal anecdote
 - 6** Give an overview of the talk
 - 7** Main point 1
 - 8** Main point 2
 - 9** Main point 3
 - 10** Main point 4
 - 11** Summary
 - 12** Final 'bang' – leave the audience with a strong final impression

¹ (US) to practice

24 ◀ 1.2, 1.3 Listen again to the whole presentation and complete this table of useful phrases.

Language function	Phrase
Welcoming the audience	1 Hello, everyone, along. 2 It's great that so many of you were this morning.
Introducing yourself	3 OK, let me just myself.
Introducing the topic	4 I've been asked along the ...
Telling the audience why they should be interested in the topic.	5 ... (a programme) I'm sure will be of as ... 6 It's right to ...
Telling a short personal anecdote	7 I when I ... 8 I know from that ...
Giving an overview of the talk	9 There are I'd like to cover today. 10 First, giving you a little information about Barker Rose. I'll then go on to what we have to offer to new associates., I'll also what we expect from our potential graduate recruits.
Introducing the next point	11 So, to , who are Barker Rose? 12 This brings point: what ... 13 This leads what ... 14 Let's now what we ...
Concluding the presentation	15 To , Barker Rose ... 16 Finally, I'd like to about what I said at the beginning of my talk today.

25 How formal was the style of the presentation? Support your answer with examples from the table above.

Speaking 3: Presentation

26 Prepare a short presentation on one of these subjects. Use the guidelines above to help you.

- What your university has to offer potential new undergraduates
- What your law firm has to offer graduate recruits

Language Focus

1 Vocabulary: types of law firm Match the halves of these sentences about the different types of law firm mentioned in Reading 1.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1 A commercial practice</p> <p>2 A large law firm</p> <p>3 A law clinic</p> <p>4 A partnership</p> <p>5 A sole practitioner</p> | | <p>a is managed by partners who share profits and responsibility equally.</p> <p>b works on his or her own, has no partners and usually handles smaller cases.</p> <p>c advises clients on corporate and commercial matters and may also negotiate transactions and solve business problems.</p> <p>d can have 50 or more lawyers working on complex matters for large organisations.</p> <p>e gives students an opportunity to deal with real clients and to develop their legal skills.</p> |
|---|--|--|

2 Vocabulary: law vs legal Complete these sentences by inserting either *law* or *legal*.

- 1 Instruction in legal English is becoming compulsory in a growing number of law faculties all over the world.
- 2 After university, my work as a trainee solicitor gave me useful experience in commercial litigation, and I was offered a good position in a large firm.
- 3 During my studies, I volunteered at a local clinic, where I provided free assistance to people who could not afford to pay for a lawyer.
- 4 Some of the most important courses a student completes during his or her studies of the law are skills courses, such as courses in writing and research.

3 Prepositions Complete these phrases from the lawyer's talk in Listening 2 with the prepositions in the box.

about about about at by by for for from of on to to to with

- a** First, I'll start by giving you a little information Barker Rose.
- b** Our Graduate Recruitment Programme includes an excellent set benefits students prepared to commit themselves fully.
- c** I'll then go to outline what we have to offer new associates.
- d** OK, let me just start introducing myself.
- e** Finally, I'll also talk a little what we expect our potential graduate recruits.
- f** Hello, everyone, and thanks coming along.
- g** Finally, I'd like to remind you what I said the beginning of my talk today.
- h** So, to start, who are Barker Rose?
- i** This brings me my next point: what benefits can successful applicants our Graduate Recruitment Programme expect?

4 Ordering Number the statements in Exercise 3 in the order in which they most likely occurred. You may want to listen to the talk again to check if your answers are correct.

1 f ...