

**Graduate Internship Programme 2025-2026**

**Professional Conduct, Policy and Engagement, and Judicial Assistants roles**

**Background**

The Law Society of Northern Ireland (the “Society”) is seeking to recruit exceptional law graduates with the talent and desire to positively contribute to the administration of Justice in Northern Ireland (NI).

There are up to 4 roles currently available:

- One successful candidate will work within the Law Society’s Professional Conduct Department working to uphold professional standards within the solicitor profession in Northern Ireland.
- One successful candidate will work within the Law Society’s Policy and Engagement Department working to support improvement and reform across the Justice system in NI.
- Two successful candidates will work directly with the judiciary as Judicial Assistants. One opportunity exists to directly support the Lady Chief Justice and the Court of Appeal, while another candidate will work to support the assigned High Court Judge with responsibility for Judicial Review. These positions are being established in conjunction with and are funded by the Office of the Lady Chief Justice (OLCJ).

All 4 positions represent an opportunity to work at the highest levels of the Justice system in NI, build networks, and accelerate the careers of the successful graduates.

The positions will run for approximately ten months from September 2025 to June 2026 - some flexibility on timing is possible.

## **About the Law Society**

The Society is the Professional Body for the solicitors' profession in Northern Ireland (NI), representing c.3000 practising solicitors working in the private, public, business, community, and voluntary sectors across Northern Ireland.

Functions of the Society include acting as the regulatory authority for the solicitor profession in NI, setting and enforcing standards to ensure the provision of excellent legal services and ensure public confidence, and representing members on key issues, including advocating on their behalf. The Society also seeks to safeguard the rule of law, protect human rights, and promote access to justice.

The Society is structured into four Departments with four principal areas of responsibility:

- **The Professional Development Department** – We educate and admit solicitors to the profession and provide Continuing Professional Development for qualified solicitors.
- **The Professional Conduct Department** – We regulate the solicitor profession, maintaining the independence, ethical standards, professional competence, and quality of services offered to the public.
- **The Member Services Department** – We serve our members' by providing a range of professional services to support their needs.
- **The Policy and Engagement Department** – We represent the profession in our dealings with Government and wider society.

## **About the Roles**

The roles provide an exciting opportunity for recent law graduates to gain experience within a challenging, varied, and dynamic environment.

### ***Professional Conduct Intern:***

Working within the Society's Professional Conduct Department, the successful candidates will work closely with our regulatory teams to support the oversight and enforcement of professional standards. The Society is the regulatory authority which governs the professional conduct of our members. We aim to:

- Maintain and uphold high standards of professional conduct.

- Protect clients and the public.
- Uphold public confidence in the provision of legal services.
- Apply regulatory powers in a manner guided by the public interest.

The successful intern will be offered the unique opportunity to gain experience in regulatory compliance of the solicitor profession including:

- Assisting in the investigation of complaints, reporting and presenting to Committees;
- Conducting research on regulatory subjects, analysing data and reporting to senior members of staff;
- Supporting the monitoring and inspection team in the supervision of solicitors and firms, to ensure effective compliance of the provisions of the Solicitors (NI) Order 1976 and subsequent regulations;
- Supporting the teams in administrative tasks and maintaining records; and
- Assisting with internal projects including contributing towards the formulation of policy and guidance to members.

***Policy and Engagement Intern:***

Working within the Society's Policy and Engagement Department, the successful candidates will carry out research on a range of legal and policy issues, and will be involved in research projects, preparing briefing papers, drafting consultation responses, and considering policy proposals across a variety of areas.

The role will enable the successful individuals to build practical knowledge of legal policy issues across a variety of topics including, access to justice, the rule of law, human rights, diversity and equality, climate justice, LawTech, and justice reform. The role also involves monitoring legislation, law reform policy developments and analysing impacts on the solicitor profession, the wider legal/justice arena, and broader socio-economic effects.

The role will include the ability to gain experience on strategic issues of interest to the Society and insight into the policy development process within the Society, including the opportunity to attend Committee and Working Group meetings involving senior professionals within the Society, the solicitor profession, the wider legal sector and beyond.

### ***Judicial Assistants:***

Two successful applicants will spend a period as a 'Judicial Assistant', supporting the work of Judges of the Court of Judicature.

The roles will involve carrying out the following duties:

- Attending hearings and discussing relevant legal issues with the assigned judge.
- Carrying out research in connection with particular cases and preparing reports on particular points the judge would like to see addressed.
- Proof-reading draft judgments.
- Drafting press summaries as required and in a language which non-lawyers can comprehend under the direction of the Lady Chief Justice's Office Head of Judicial Communications.
- Assisting with the assigned judge's extra-judicial, communication and educational activities as required throughout the year, including assisting with preparation for and attending events with the assigned judge.
- Liaising with staff in the Lady Chief Justice's Office and Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service as necessary with regards to cases and listings.

This is an exciting opportunity to gain an insight into decision-making for complex and high-profile cases. The Judicial Assistant roles provide a developmental opportunity for law graduates making the transition from study into the workplace for barristers /solicitors in their first year of practice.

### ***Key Benefits***

The Graduate Internship Programme provides a developmental opportunity for law graduates making the transition from study into the workplace. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to gain experience of:

- Working within a complex, dynamic environment
- Working as part of a team and working directly with senior management
- Conducting research on a wide range of topics relevant to the legal sector
- Preparing and presenting analysis and developing policy proposals

- Observing and contributing to high level meetings and decision-making processes across the Society, including Committees and Council
- Work directly with senior members and leaders of the legal profession

The Internship would be an ideal career development opportunity for someone looking to start a career in legal research, policy, or practice.

### **Terms and Conditions**

The Professional Conduct and Policy and Engagement Intern will be situated in Law Society House, 96 Victoria Street, Belfast, with the potential for some homeworking, subject to business need.

The Judicial Assistants will be situated in the Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast. The duties of this post make it unsuitable for hybrid working.

The role are full-time, comprising of a working week with core business hours operating between 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday. Additional working outside these hours may be required in line with business need.

These positions are paid internships (which will be pro-rated to match the actual, agreed period of the internship). The Judicial Assistant posts are funded by the Office of the Lady Chief Justice.

## **Person Specification**

### **Essential Criteria**

#### **Criterion 1: Qualification**

- Candidates must, at the time of application, possess an undergraduate degree in law (minimum of 2:1 or above).

Candidates will be asked to demonstrate that they possess the following key competencies:

#### **Criterion 2: Research**

- Strong analytical skills, including the ability to assess relevant information and summarise this into logical, clear papers which present well-reasoned, evidence-based conclusions and proposals.
- Ability to deliver work to meet specified deadlines, familiarity with online research tools, particularly legal databases.
- Strong IT skills including Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

#### **Criterion 3: Policy**

- Working knowledge of the mechanics of government, in particular the passage of legislation from the earliest stages of draft proposals, the public consultation process, and the institutions of justice in this jurisdiction and elsewhere.
- Strong interest in the wider policy arena, including research output in important public and private sector organisations.
- Knowledge of the legal sector and justice system in Northern Ireland, including different agencies and mechanisms, and in particular, the role of solicitors, barristers, and the judiciary.

#### **Criterion 4: Communication**

- Excellent written and oral communication skills which can match the content of a presentation to the intended audience to maximise impact and further the objectives of the Society.

- Versatility, in particular the ability to work independently and as a part of a team, to show initiative and to exercise sound judgment about priorities of workload as well as the content of material.
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to find the most effective ways of working with others. Evidence of determination, resilience and a desire for personal development is important.

### **Desirable Criteria**

- Possession or pending graduation from a master's degree in law.

### **Shortlisting**

Should it be necessary to shortlist candidates who meet all the eligible and desirable criteria, candidates possessing First Class degree classification will be given priority.

If required, further shortlisting will take place based on an assessment of how well candidates meet 'Essential Criterion 2: Research'.

### **Appointment Process**

The below sets out the planned appointment process. All dates are indicative only and are subject to change. The Society will endeavour to provide as much notice as possible to candidates should there be any significant changes to the process.

### **Application**

Candidates who wish to apply for the position(s) must submit a completed application form. Applications must be submitted to [fiona.dowds@lawsoc-ni.org](mailto:fiona.dowds@lawsoc-ni.org) no later than 5pm on *Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025*.

### **Shortlisting**

Sifting of applications will take place week commencing *1st July 2025* with shortlisted candidates invited to interview as soon as possible after shortlisting has been completed.

**Interviews**

Interviews will take place week commencing *21<sup>st</sup> July 2025*. The successful candidate will ideally be notified in the same week of interview.

**Queries**

All queries about this opportunity should be directed to [fiona.dowds@lawsoc-ni.org](mailto:fiona.dowds@lawsoc-ni.org)