

LAWYER



JOB DESCRIPTION

Lawyers provide advice and numerous legal services to their clients, from drawing up contracts and wills to representing their clients in court. Lawyers are hired by individuals, nonprofit organizations, corporations, and government agencies. From prosecutors and defense attorneys to environmental lawyers, family lawyers, and tax attorneys, lawyers have a vast range of specializations from which they can choose.



SALARY

Associate ★★★★★

Partner ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Highly regulated profession • Intense competition for position at law firms • Private-sector law firms are biggest employers • Global opportunities in multinational businesses of all kinds

CAREER PATHS

Once qualified, lawyers can begin practicing as an associate, working under the supervision of a senior partner at a law firm. With experience and ability, they can rise to become a partner in the firm. Lawyers can choose from a range of specialties, such as serving nonprofit organizations or military services, or dealing with the legal matters of individuals or the government.

GRADUATE After completing an undergraduate program, you will need to take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and apply to accredited law schools.

LAW SCHOOL GRADUATE Law school programs typically last three years. At their completion, you will need to study for and pass a state's bar exam in order to qualify for a license.



CORPORATE LAWYER

Serves as a full-time staff member of a corporation, advising and representing the company in all law-related matters.



LAWYER Once you have obtained your license, you may start your career as a lawyer. It is important for lawyers to keep up to date with changing practices through continuing education.

SKILLS GUIDE



Excellent verbal and written skills and the ability to understand complex legal language.



Strong problem-solving skills for identifying the best course of action for clients.



The ability to follow detailed legal procedures correctly in order to maintain professional integrity.



Sensitivity for dealing with a range of clients, and the ability to explain legal matters to non-experts.



Dedication and perseverance to press your client's interests from start to finish of a legal case.



CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYER

Represents defendants in the criminal court system, offering legal counsel and appearing in court if their client's case goes to trial.



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAWYER

Takes on copyright infringement or intellectual property rights cases for the music, film, news, and publishing industries.



FAMILY PRACTICE LAWYER

Specializes in family-related issues, such as divorce and child custody disputes. May also advise and represent clients who are looking to adopt a child.



ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYER Advises on issues related to the environment, ensuring companies and organizations comply with state and national laws.

RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **JUDGE** *see pp. 112–113*
- ▶ **ARBITRATOR** Helps resolve legal conflicts outside of the court system. Arbitrators are often retired attorneys. They meet with the disputing parties and assist them in their negotiations.
- ▶ **FORENSIC SCIENCE TECHNICIAN** Collects, analyzes, and reports on evidence found at crime scenes. Many forensic science technicians choose to specialize in either crime scene investigation or laboratory work.
- ▶ **PARALEGAL** Works on legal matters, but is not a lawyer. Paralegals are responsible for many tasks ranging from conducting research and preparing reports to contacting clients and witnesses and gathering and organizing evidence.

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Law • Criminology • English • Psychology • Sociology • History • Business studies • Debating • Research and writing



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS Lawyers must complete an accredited law school program and pass a state's bar exam in order to practice.



LIFESTYLE Lawyers work regular office hours, but evening and weekend work is not uncommon. On-call work can take place any time of day or night.



LOCATION The work is predominantly office-based, but traveling to meet clients, or to attend court proceedings, is a common feature of the job.



THE REALITIES This profession is intellectually demanding, and involves long working hours. Experienced lawyers are very well paid.