



INSTITUTE OF
PARALEGALS

Setting Standards. Promoting Professionalism.

Become a Professional Paralegal: Careers Information Sheet

*“Within a decade there will be more paralegal law firms than there are solicitors firms,
and more paralegal fee earners working in solicitors firms than there are solicitors”*

A massive revolution is taking place in the legal sector. Virtually unnoticed, paralegals have become by far the largest group of legal practitioners in the country. They already outnumber solicitors, barristers, licensed conveyancers, notaries and the other four groups of regulated legal practitioners by 2 to 1. In solicitors' firms paralegals already make up (as a mean average) 44% of all fee-earners. It has taken four centuries for there to be circa 10,300 solicitors' firms. It has taken just 10 years for there to be approximately 6,000 paralegal law firms (commercial entities offering legal services without the involvement of regulated lawyers). Paralegals are now eligible to become partners of solicitors' firms and Tribunal Chairmen/women.

Solicitors' firms and in-house legal departments in local government and commerce are hiring paralegals in preference to junior solicitors. This fact, coupled with the trend for solicitors' firms to prefer trainees who have had paralegal experience, means that you should consider paralegal work even if it remains your goal to become a solicitor or barrister. Also remember that doing good-quality paralegal work can help reduce the length of your training contract by up to six months.

As paralegals replace solicitors they continue to do ever more complex work. It is commonplace now for paralegals to have their own files and own clients. The Institute has a number of members who head departments in solicitors' firms.

For **comprehensive careers advice** on paralegal jobs and careers visit www.CareerParalegal.org

To join the **recognised career path** for professional paralegals, the Route to Qualification, visit www.theIOP.org

To get **free up-to-date information** about the world paralegal/legal practice subscribe to *The Paralegal* - the journal of record for the paralegal profession. Visit www.TheParalegal.org

To see what the legal profession expects from entry-level paralegals download a set of the free Introductory Level IOP **Competency Standards** for Paralegals at www.LegalStandards.org.

To find out about the paralegal profession generally, and also about the Institute of Paralegals, please visit www.theIOP.org. As law students you are entitled to join as Affiliate Members. Once you begin practicing law you will be entitled to upgrade to Associate Paralegal status. Once you have sufficient practice experience you will be eligible to become a Qualified Paralegal. Thereafter you could be eligible to become a Fellow of the Institute.

Whether you want to make a career as a professional paralegal, or whether you want to become a solicitor or barrister now or sometime in the future, you are still eligible to join us.

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The Institute is the oldest incorporated professional body for paralegals in the UK and also the oldest not-for-profit representative body. We are recognised by government, legal regulators and the legal profession.