

# Jones Day



Emma Martin

Emma Martin: Second Year Trainee  
Solicitor, Jones Day  
University: Cambridge  
Degree and class: History, 2.1

My first contact with Jones Day was at a presentation the firm gave at the beginning of my final year at university. I found it very refreshing compared to the multitude of other law firm presentations I had attended - informal, open and welcoming - which I now realise was a very honest reflection of the firm and the training contract it offers. This presentation gave me the opportunity to speak to current trainees and find out about the firm's unique non-rotational training system. It was the combination of the lovely people I met and the different outlook of the firm regarding training that led me to apply for a placement scheme at Jones Day.

The placement scheme is treated very much as a "mini training contract" in the sense that you sit in your own office or share an office with other placement students rather than sitting with a partner mentor and you are responsible for seeking out work from all departments within the firm for the duration of the two weeks. Admittedly this is a daunting prospect on day one but you soon settle it in and come to realise the benefits of not having a mentor sitting over your shoulder and having much more control over the work that you get involved with. For me, this experience cemented my understanding of how the training contract would work and confirmed my thoughts that it was exactly what I wanted from a law firm.

One year in to my training contract I have not been disappointed, in fact the training system has far exceeded my expectations. The experience of the placement scheme has definitely held true; you are expected to seek work from people and you are very much in control of your workload and who you work for. The autonomy I have been given over the work I have done has been brilliant. I have been able to work for at least four departments in the last year, sometimes all at the same time (which provides great diversity in your work) and sometimes working only on one particular transaction/case for one department (giving you the opportunity to really get your teeth into the work and seeing how it progresses). Having been able to spend the first year trying lots of different areas of law and getting a pretty rounded experience, I am now in a position with a year to go, to be able to concentrate on the one or two areas I have enjoyed the most, building on the experience I have already gained in these areas.

With regard to the type of work you can expect, again the training system allows you to often have a large amount of responsibility early on, often doing the work equivalent to that of a junior associate. In particular, I have had much more client contact and contact with other lawyers than I expected. In addition to communicating with clients regularly on a one-to-one basis over the telephone, I have attended client meetings either at the completion of a transaction or to advise them on a particular strategy, attended lawyers meetings to negotiate contracts, spoken with counsel in litigious matters and participated on multi-party conference calls.

But it is not just the control of your work and the quality of the work which attracted me to Jones Day. The office has a very friendly and non-hierarchical atmosphere, with people of all levels of experience socialising together outside of the office and in the office, everyone always has the time of day for you and will happily wander into your office just to have a chat.

The Jones Day training contract is unique and challenging and more importantly, is what you make of it. For me, it has been an entirely positive experience, however, it is not for everyone. You have to be proactive and can't expect work just to fall on your lap all the time, you must be prepared to work hard and willing to take on responsibility and you must be able to manage a busy workload. However, if you have all these qualities, then Jones Day has the perfect training contract for you, allowing you to gain the best possible experience and shape your own career more than any other law firm I know of.

