

Employed in high-skilled job	68%	Employed in lower-skilled job	10%
Employed in high-skilled job and studying	9%	Employed in lower-skilled job and studying	0%
Studying	2%	Unemployed	4%
High-skilled work (median) salary	£26,500	Low-/medium-skilled salary	£20,000

Law

University College London takes the No 1 spot in our new Law table, bringing an end to Cambridge's long-held run at the top. UCL's research quality within law is peerless, based on results of the latest Research Excellence Framework 2021 and it outdoes Cambridge on student satisfaction with the broad undergraduate experience. In second place overall, Cambridge still has the edge for graduate prospects – with 96.9% of graduates employed in high-skilled jobs and/or postgraduate study within 15 months. Further reshuffles among the upper ranks of the table include London School of Economics rising to fourth place (from ninth) while Durham is up three places to fifth. Oxford has slipped three places to rank seventh. Climbing six places to sit 13th, Ulster is the top-ranked modern university in the table. Modern universities more broadly do best for students' evaluation of teaching quality, with our National Student Survey analysis showing Cumbria (68th overall) in front, followed by Gloucestershire (=44th) and Edinburgh Napier (31st). But for students' ratings of the broader experience Surrey – founded in the 1960s – comes top, followed by West London (=69th in the main table) and Edinburgh Napier.

One of the most popular choices for higher education, law continues to attract record applications. In 2023, 157,680 applied to study law, 14% more than in 2019 after successive years of rising demand. Interest from 18-year-old applicants has seen the sharpest increase of 27% between 2019 and 2023. The number of places available has risen too but has not kept pace with applications, and 28,195 law students were accepted onto courses in 2023 (up 7% since 2019). More encouragingly for school leavers, however, the number of places going to 18-year-olds has increased more steeply by 22% across the same timeframe.

Entry standards reflect the fierce demand for places: seven of the 102 universities in our table average more than 200 points in the UCAS tariff and more than a third average over 144 points (equivalent to three As at A-level). Led by Glasgow, four Scottish universities (which benefit from the favourable tariff conversion for Scottish secondary qualifications) claim the highest entry tariffs among their law entrants. King's College London attracted the highest tariff score south of the border. But there are so many places to study law that there are still 11 universities where entrants averaged below 100 points.

Law graduates who want to become solicitors in England progress to the legal practice course, while those aiming to be barristers take the bar vocational course. In Scotland, most law courses are based on the distinctive Scottish legal system, which also has different professional qualifications. About half of law graduates do not go into practice and, perhaps surprisingly, law ranks only =41st out of the 70 subject areas in our employment ranking, with 63.1% of graduates in high-skilled work or postgraduate study 15 months on from degrees.

"If you want to enter the legal profession, a law degree teaches you the principles applied in legal practice. A law degree will also provide you with a rigorous training in critical thinking, which will prepare you for a number of professions," advises Dr Peter Candy, assistant professor in civil law, University of Cambridge.

Training contracts for those going into law keep pay in graduate-level jobs relatively austere, and the subject ranks a lowly 60th out of the 70 in our pay index. But the average starting salary of £23,500 earned by legal graduates across all universities bears little resemblance to the packets likely later down the line, and there is a strong case for the delayed career gratification posed by law.

There are not normally specific subject requirements for law, but A-levels of use include history, English, politics, classics and philosophy. Applicants are advised to read widely and to be curious about the law and its relationship with other areas of society.

Law	Teaching quality %	Student experience %	Research quality %	Entry standards (UCAS points)	Graduate prospect %	Overall score
1 University College London	82.2	79.1	74.5	199	93.1	100
2 Cambridge	83.8	76	59.2	200	96.9	99.3
3 Glasgow	77	74.8	66.8	224	88.7	97.9
4 London School of Economics	84.3	78.5	61.3	190	87	97
5 Durham	81.2	74.1	59.5	191	90.5	96.4
6 Strathclyde	83.7	83.2	45.8	210	84.4	96.3
7 Oxford	80.1	64.5	62	200	91.8	96.2
8 Edinburgh	75.2	69.7	64.2	211	90.5	96.1
9 King's College London	80.6	73.7	56.2	203	86.9	95.8
10 Sheffield	83.6	82.7	55	154	91.7	95.6
11 Aberdeen	82.5	82.3	43.2	198	85.4	95.2
12 Warwick	78.8	78.5	62	166	88.1	94.5
13 Ulster	85.4	83.1	55	132	87.5	93.8
14 Bristol	72.7	71.5	67.5	178	88.4	93.6
=15 Exeter	77.9	78.7	54.8	159	90	93.5
=15 Lancaster	87.8	87.8	48	143	81.9	93.5
=15 Surrey	88.5	89	41.5	126	88	93.5
=18 Queen Mary, London	76.7	77	57	172	86.9	93.4
=18 York	80.9	81.3	49.2	165	85.9	93.4
=20 Dundee	82	81.7	29.2	188	85.8	92.9
=20 Queen's, Belfast	72.7	73.7	62.3	160	91.8	92.9
22 Glasgow Caledonian	87.7	85.6	25.8	204	74.2	92.7
=23 Nottingham	79.2	79.5	53.5	162	83.9	92.6
=23 Cardiff	76.3	77.7	60.5	152	87.3	92.6
25 Southampton	78.9	76.6	46.5	147	91.3	92.3
26 Aston	84.8	88.1	43.5	130	84.7	92.2
27 Kent	81.4	78.5	69.8	137	78.4	92
28 Birmingham	73.2	73.6	61.5	155	88.4	91.9
29 Leeds	71.4	73.6	66.5	166	83.3	91.4
30 Stirling	80.7	75.2	38.5	187	78.2	91
31 Edinburgh Napier	89.5	88.2	5.5	168	82.4	90.9
32 Newcastle	76.9	76.9	41.8	152	87.6	90.7
33 Liverpool	75.2	78.2	51.5	144	85.4	90.5
34 Abertay	87.3	85.1	5	149	87.8	90
=35 Northumbria	84.1	79.9	30.8	133	85.1	89.9
=35 Leicester	81.4	82.3	32	134	86.1	89.9
37 East Anglia	78.4	79.1	32.5	136	88.4	89.5
38 Nottingham Trent	83.5	80.1	53	116	77.5	89.4
39 Manchester	73.6	69	40.8	165	86	89.2
40 Sussex	78.7	80.3	44.8	131	80.2	88.9

Law cont.

	Teaching quality %	Student experience %	Research quality %	Entry standards (UCAS points)	Graduate prospects %	Overall score
41 Swansea	81.7	80.9	27.8	133	83.2	88.6
42 Essex	80.6	79.8	56	114	74.6	88.2
43 Reading	79	79.2	33.8	124	84	88.1
=44 Manchester Metropolitan	81.6	80.5	42.8	119	77.4	88
=44 Gloucestershire	91.6	84.1	8.8	103	84.8	88
46 Royal Holloway	73.4	73.1	38	130	87.2	87.5
=47 City	81	80.1	34.8	133	76	87.4
=47 Bournemouth	82.2	82.4	26	104	84.7	87.4
49 Portsmouth	83.7	78.8	26.8	121	78.9	87.1
50 West of England	80.2	78.9	46.5	110	75.7	87
51 South Wales	83.7	74.9	33.5	115	78.6	86.9
52 Plymouth	78.9	77.5	37.2	115	79.7	86.7
53 Robert Gordon	79.8	70.8	—	162	87.2	86.6
=54 Kingston	82.5	81.9	27	99	80	86.1
=54 Keele	79	79.5	29.5	113	80.3	86.1
=54 SOAS London	64.9	58.5	58.8	142	84.6	86.1
=57 Hertfordshire	82.8	80.9	29	98	78.9	86
=57 Greenwich	80	75.7	37	112	77.1	86
59 Liverpool John Moores	84.5	83.9	9	129	76.8	85.9
=60 Wolverhampton	89.5	84	27.8	95	70.7	85.8
=60 Solent, Southampton	88.3	83.4	—	105	82.9	85.8
=60 Coventry	86.3	82	33.2	105	70	85.8
63 Edge Hill	83.8	79.9	36	121	67.5	85.6
=64 Lincoln	79.1	76.6	32.8	114	77.2	85.5
=64 Hull	84.6	82	11.2	122	76.6	85.5
66 Bangor	82.2	77.8	—	126	84	85.1
67 Oxford Brookes	77.9	75.3	32.5	102	79	84.7
68 Cumbria	92.4	86.3	—	116	68	84.4
=69 West London	89.5	88.9	—	103	71.5	84
=69 Aberystwyth	77.8	76.4	34.2	116	71.3	84
71 Leeds Beckett	85.6	84.7	11.8	106	71.2	83.9
=72 Middlesex	83.6	80.9	26	99	69.4	83.7
=72 Winchester	81.5	74.9	11.5	107	79.3	83.7
=74 St Mary's, Twickenham	86.2	80.4	—	91	80.5	83.5
=74 Derby	85.8	76.7	—	118	75.7	83.5
76 Salford	76.9	72.3	24.8	119	74.9	83.4
=77 Buckingham	82.5	70.9	—	109	83.7	83.3
=77 Westminster	81.7	79.7	29	112	65.8	83.3
79 Sunderland	88.2	83.9	—	106	71.1	83.2
=80 Central Lancashire	83.6	80.5	13.2	123	66.5	83
=80 De Montfort	81.2	81	13.5	95	75.9	83
82 Huddersfield	79.3	79.7	15.2	121	71	82.9
83 Roehampton	81.8	78.2	40.2	94	63.2	82.8
84 Worcester	82.6	74.5	12.8	103	74.4	82.7

85 Bradford	82.6	83.1	—	116	71.9	82.4
86 York St John	80.9	78.2	—	108	77.6	82.3
87 Chester	84	75.4	12.8	116	67	82.1
=88 Liverpool Hope	78.4	66.1	—	107	84.1	81.7
=88 Bedfordshire	87.7	85.6	—	109	63.8	81.7
90 London South Bank	80	75	—	101	79	81.6
91 Brunel	68.1	70.3	34.5	118	73.5	81.5
92 Brighton	73.6	67.8	28.5	101	73.2	80.9
93 Sheffield Hallam	79.9	72.9	—	111	73.8	80.7
94 London Metropolitan	83.1	82.2	—	99	67.5	80.4
95 Anglia Ruskin	81.5	77.9	9.8	97	67	80.3
96 Birmingham City	75.9	75.4	9	116	67.1	79.7
97 West of Scotland	80.9	73.6	—	122	62.9	79.2
98 East London	83.6	78.1	17.8	98	55.3	79.1
99 Northampton	76.2	71.1	—	102	73.5	79
=100 Canterbury Christ Church	78.8	74.9	16.8	92	63	78.9
=100 Teesside	79.3	74.5	18.2	107	58.2	78.9
102 Staffordshire	59.9	51.6	18.2	107	65	72.9

Employed in high-skilled job	45%	Employed in lower-skilled job	20%
Employed in high-skilled job and studying	6%	Employed in lower-skilled job and studying	2%
Studying	10%	Unemployed	5%
High-skilled work (median) salary	£24,500	Low-/medium-skilled salary	£20,000

Liberal Arts

Now in its fourth year, our Liberal Arts table is topped for the third time in a row by University College London (UCL), while its inaugural No 1, Warwick, is runner-up once more. UCL's lead is secured by the top research quality rating in the subject, while its entrants average by far the highest entry standards (198 UCAS points) and its graduates secured the best outcomes – the latest data showing 92.5% in high-skilled jobs and/or postgraduate study within 15 months. Warwick, though, has the most satisfied students, topping both measures derived from the National Student Survey: teaching quality and the broader experience. At the opposite end of the scale, students at Leeds (ninth overall) and Birmingham (joint fifth) recorded the lowest rates of satisfaction with teaching quality and the wide experience respectively.

Interdisciplinary by design, liberal arts degrees encompass the arts, humanities and social sciences, although there is no set formula. They provide undergraduates with opportunities to hone their analysis, communication skills and critical thinking. As students progress through the courses they begin to specialise in areas of particular interest. Dr George Legg, senior lecturer in liberal arts and head of the Department of Interdisciplinary Humanities, King's College London says: "Concerns around climate, technology, conflict and identity require multiple disciplinary perspectives if they are to be solved. Rather than focusing on a single subject, students specialise – or major – in a certain discipline while also taking courses in other subject areas. This flexible thinking means liberal arts students are well equipped for the complex world that awaits them after graduation."

Career paths include roles in the media, communications, PR, politics and art galleries. Job prospects for the subject as a whole rank 38th this year (down nine places) with 64.3% of graduates employed in high-skilled jobs and/or furthering their studies 15 months on. Salaries