

The logo for Origin LEGAL, featuring the word "Origin" in a large, white, sans-serif font, with "LEGAL" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font directly below it. The logo is set against a red background with a subtle circular pattern.

Origin  
LEGAL

INTERNATIONAL - HR - IN-HOUSE - PRIVATE PRACTICE - PARALEGAL

A low-angle, close-up photograph of a building's facade. The facade is composed of a dense grid of white, oval-shaped panels that create a textured, scale-like appearance. The panels are set against a vibrant blue background, likely the sky. The perspective is from below, looking up at the curved surface of the building, which recedes into the distance on the right side of the frame.

## Solicitors Qualifying in 2018

THE MARKET FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED SOLICITORS

# 2018 NQ Recruitment

## – knowledge provides opportunity

Are you a newly qualified solicitor or approaching qualification? If you are, then this is an invaluable document shedding light on markets, the recruitment process, questions you should consider and your ultimate career plans.

### BACKGROUND – A BIT OF HISTORY

As we enter 2018 the pattern of NQ recruitment seems predictably similar to both 2016 and 2017. We are already experiencing a strong appetite for law firms to continue multiple hires in business areas such as Corporate, Real Estate, Planning, Real Estate Development and Construction. Following the trend of recent years 2018 should again be a very interesting and dynamic market.

This year the NQ market is already showing signs of moving early. A lot of the March NQ's for 2018 have found it fairly straightforward in securing their positions and we are already arranging meetings for some September 2018 candidates. Historically if we look back to pre-recession the NQ market would not start gathering pace until June, July, August.

Fast forward to 2018 and the demand for September NQ's is already high. This is following the trend set in previous years as law firms seek to recruit the solicitors they need at the earliest opportunity.

The consistency in predicted work levels has allowed law firms to get their recruitment planning in place early in the year. Retention rates for 2018 are showing all the signs of remaining high and law firms are increasingly trying to organise their internal applications early as the demand for good NQ solicitors appears greater than ever. Some law firms struggle with retention rates as there remains such a wide choice of opportunity for NQ solicitors.

Historically firms would look to allocate their internal recruits first and then fill the left-over positions externally, sometime close to September. This would mean July and August were really fast moving for the NQ market. Interview processes could be rushed and candidates could feel pressured into making a decision. The stress of this situation could lead to NQ's accepting jobs in a hurry and changing their mind. It was never the best situation for law firms or candidates to make important career and lifestyle decisions in a hurry.

“Very interesting and dynamic market”



## QUALIFYING TODAY – MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

In approaching qualification historically an NQ solicitor would have the same questions to ask themselves and the same decisions to make which included:

- Can I stay at my training firm?
- Do I want to remain at my training firm?
- Where do I want to be based?
- What is my preferred practice area?

As an NQ it is important to think about where you would like to be in 5 years time and the influence this first job will have on your long term career goals.

There are many more questions that the NQ of 2018 should be asking themselves. I often advise the NQ solicitors that I work with, that this first career choice is one of the most important. It is part of the process for shaping the journey your career will take as a solicitor.

### “Demand remains high”

Fast forward to 2018 and in the advent of a wider range of choice there are many more decisions to make:

- Do I want to work in Private Practice or In-House?
- Do I want to work in the UK or Internationally?
- Once I have chosen my practice do I have a specific sector focus or specific area of expertise within a chosen practice area?
- What type of law firm best suits my style of working?
- What type of training and support is on offer to develop my experience?

Candidates have been able to secure double seats in their chosen area on qualification to help give them greater experience in their chosen discipline. 2017 saw a continued trend in candidates transferring the final part of their training contract to their new firm. This has become increasingly common in the final year of life as a trainee solicitor. This allows NQ candidates the opportunity to integrate with their new team, clients, and even settle into a new location before starting life as a solicitor. In a repeat of 2016-2017 the demand for this situation is happening particularly within Corporate and Real Estate areas.



## QUALIFYING TODAY – MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

### The Current Position – March 2018

As we write this in February 2018, the March 2018 NQ market is really busy. The candidates we are working with have found that there remains plenty of choice of opportunity. Demand remains high with good candidates able to focus on what they really want and many have successfully found positions almost perfectly matching their expectations.

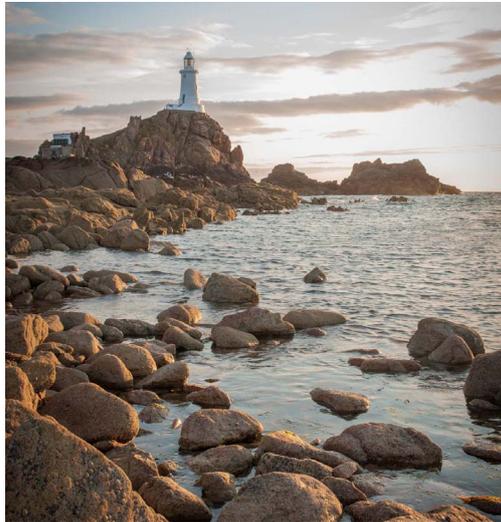
### Looking Ahead – September 2018

The early signs for September 2018 do not indicate any remarkable change from the last two years of NQ recruitment. Already a high number of NQ candidates have informed me that they are in the process of being offered and we have noticed some firms making a concerted effort to keep their NQ's well informed. Personally, I have experience several firms seeking advice on NQ timelines and social media feeds have been active with debates and articles suggesting law firms secure their trainee solicitors much earlier.

The direction this situation is moving in continues to offer multiple benefits to trainee solicitors. It is likely NQ solicitors will have a stronger chance of being retained at their current firm in their chosen practice area. The options for NQ solicitors to secure a position within their chosen practice area and also their geographical location have increased even if this means moving firms.

One of the biggest benefits of the 2018 NQ market is that by starting much earlier in the year it allows both trainees and law firms to explore options in detail without the pressure and stress of a short time-frame.

While the market is in such a positive position it is important that 2018 qualifiers have a clear focus on the decisions they are making.



## INTERNATIONAL

Internationally, demand for NQ solicitors is highest in the Channel Islands offices of the global offshore law firms. A buoyant market combined with a relatively low level of internal trainees means there are plenty of opportunities for Corporate, Banking, Funds and Commercial Litigation NQ solicitors. This has led to firms beginning their hiring process earlier, with some of the larger ones starting interviews in January for September 2018 qualifiers.

Elsewhere, a small number of NQ roles come up with international firms in the Middle East and Asia, but they do tend to be heavily sought after. We anticipate that vacancies in these locations will come to the market later, perhaps June/July for September qualifiers, since the firms will usually have to consider their own trainees before looking externally. For more information on international opportunities for junior lawyers, ask us for a copy of our Guide to Building an International Legal Career.

**“The market is in such a positive position it is important for those qualifying to have a clear focus on the decisions they are making”**

## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO? SEPTEMBER 2018 NQ TIMETABLE:

### January / February

Engage a good and experienced recruitment consultant. Ask friends for referrals; speak to previous year trainees and find out who they would recommend; look for specialists in your market. LinkedIn is a great tool for checking your recruiters background if they are unknown to you.

Check their online LinkedIn recommendations to see if they have placed candidates similar to you and have experience of your chosen practice area / location. A good recruiter will be able to advise you on the range of opportunities available and the best way of going about securing a position. Try to start the process of making internal applications to the jobs you want at your training firm.

Start thinking about the area of law that you would like to practice and the locations you would like to work in. Also what you really enjoy about your job, including the sectors you have worked in. It is important to consider the type of law firm you would like to work at and the training and support they can offer you. Try to engineer discussions with your current firm about your final seat. Try to make that seat work for you and your chosen practice area on qualification.

Prepare your paperwork. Work with your recruiter to produce a strong CV that is tailored to the roles and locations you are targeting. Consider including a profile that highlights your motivations and career ambitions. Also consider who you will use as referees and make sure your academic certificates are accessible in case needed.

### March / April / May

Continue to investigate internal applications. Ensure you have a strong LinkedIn profile which will be viewed by potential employers to support your application. Add a professional picture to your LinkedIn profile if needed and try to ensure good professional content on your page. Your LinkedIn profile is the main access point to your information alongside your CV. It is equally as important.

Try to focus on the geographical areas and specific discipline you are looking for. Make

applications and attend interviews in these areas. Hopefully with some detailed interview coaching and support from your recruitment consultant you can secure the position you want.

### June/July

If you have not secured a position in your chosen location / discipline continue to keep a watching eye on your local market. This is also the time to widen the search into different geographical areas or a second choice discipline.

### August

If you are still available in August widen your search with recruiters to ensure you are visible for when those final September positions are released.

### September

Start your new position.

For a confidential conversation about the NQ market please contact the team at Origin Legal by telephone on +44 (0)1206 233500 or email us at [enquiries@originlegal.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@originlegal.co.uk).



## CURRENT VACANCIES

Origin Legal offers a comprehensive legal recruitment service to candidates and clients encompassing all levels across all disciplines. For details of current vacancies visit <http://www.originlegal.co.uk/jobs>

- Private Practice
- International
- Paralegal and Support Services
- Legal HR
- In House



## THE AUTHOR

Jason Nottage has been recruiting across the regions for 20 years and having joined Origin Legal as a director shortly after its launch. An extremely loyal recruiter Jason has developed a strong client following particularly in the Midlands and Northern Home Counties. Jason has a strong passion for NQ recruitment and has a positive attitude to helping young solicitors find the best opportunities at the start of their career. Jason travelled extensively before settling down in Colchester, Essex where he and his wife are bringing up their 3 young daughters.

## CONTACT

Origin Legal is recognised as one of the UK's leading providers of legal jobs at all levels for lawyers, legal executives, solicitors and paralegals.

To find out more about the NQ Market, discuss your options or to register an interest, please contact the team at Origin Legal on +44 (0)1206 233500:

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