

WALKER
MORRIS



LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED

APPLICATION GUIDE FOR
OUR VACATION SCHEME 2024
& TRAINING CONTRACT 2026



APPLICATION

SO... YOU WANT TO BECOME A LAWYER?

WONDERFUL. WALKER MORRIS
NURTURES TALENT WITH HIGH-QUALITY
TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP DESIGNED
TO SUIT YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND
SHAPE THE CAREER YOU WANT.



USEFUL INFO

[GRADUATES.WALKERMORRIS.CO.UK](https://graduates.walkermorris.co.uk)

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TURN OVER TO FIND OUT ALL
YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
OUR VACATION SCHEMES AND
TRAINING CONTRACTS.



WHY SHOULDN'T IT BE YOU?

We know that starting a legal career is tough and we know there can be a lot of dread about applying for a training contract. It's not easy but we want to help you along the way. That's why we've prepared this document, so you can see what we are looking for – it's probably not the things you think – and so you can see what you need to do next.

A legal career is a rewarding one, some of our Solicitors and Partners have been with us for over 30 years. Yes it can be hard work, yes there can be some long nights (but not as many as you think) and yes there are deadlines to meet but we believe that with a strong team ethic and great supervision that it will be rewarding.

What's the secret to applying at Walker Morris? Show us who you are. Give us a reason to put you through. We're not looking to catch you out or going to ask you any trick questions. We know everyone's different, everyone has their own unique experiences and everyone has something to bring to the table. We're not looking for cookie cutter lawyers. That's not what we're about and it's not what our clients want either.

We publish all our hints and tips and details in relation to our Insight Days and Mentoring Scheme on our website graduates.walkermorris.co.uk and on our X (formerly Twitter) page [@WMGraduates](https://twitter.com/WMGraduates).



KEEN TO APPLY?

You can apply for our Training Contract starting in 2025 either directly or via one of our vacation schemes.

If you wish to take the vacation scheme route, the first stage of the application process is the online application form. The deadline for this is **31 December 2023**. The vacation schemes will be held in 2024. When applying for our vacation scheme you can also apply for a Training Contract at the same time, on the same form, to begin in 2025. Like many other law firms, our Vacation Scheme is a useful part of the selection process.

If you just want to apply for our Training Contract the deadline is **31 July 2024**.



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THERE ARE A LOT OF MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS SURROUNDING LEGAL RECRUITMENT AND WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR IN CANDIDATES, ABOUT WHO WILL FIT AND WHO WON'T, BUT THAT IS ALL THEY ARE – THEY DON'T REFLECT OUR REALITY. WE'VE PREPARED THIS DOCUMENT TO DISPEL THOSE MYTHS ABOUT WHO CAN BE A SUCCESS IN A LARGE COMMERCIAL LAW FIRM LIKE WALKER MORRIS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO GIVE YOU A HELPING HAND TO SEE YOU THROUGH THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS. WE HOPE YOU FIND THIS DOCUMENT USEFUL AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU SOON!

TRACY FOLEY, HEAD OF HR



THE VACATION SCHEME ROUTE

STAGE 1 THE APPLICATION FORM

FIRST, A FEW PROMISES FROM US:

- We read every application form we receive. We don't use computers to filter applications. After all, if you've spent time preparing the application, it's only right that someone reads it.
- We read applications "blind". When we review your application, we don't know your name or any other personal information about you, such as your address or contact details.
- We use Rare Contextual Recruitment System to identify the most disadvantaged candidates and those who have outperformed their schools by the greatest amounts. This is based on a range of Social Mobility flags and Performance Indices.
- We don't look at the university you attended either because there are hundreds of reasons why you might have chosen it. We won't exclude you if you didn't get a 2:1 at university or ask for certain grades but we do ask for evidence of your academic ability. We won't look at your grades in a vacuum but instead look at the whole person because your grades do not dictate how good you are!
- We hold Insight Days at our office, regularly attend law fairs in the North and virtually. We also run a mentoring scheme to give you help and advice on embarking on a career with us.
- We don't ask trick questions, we're not looking for a reason to trip you up or reject you. Tell us who you are and give us a reason to put you through.
- We collaborate with local universities and post regularly on social media to ensure that our "invitation to apply" extends to a more diverse pool of candidates.
- We look for ability and potential and we will continue to take steps to ensure that we attract talented and diverse applicants.



OUR APPLICATION FORM EXPLORES THEMES LIKE...

- Current affairs that you find of interest and why
- Why you are suited to a career at Walker Morris
- Positions of responsibility you've held and why they are important to you

It's a chance for you to tell us about you. We are looking for skills such as leadership, teamwork, the ability to work under pressure and how you deal with challenges.

Don't just tell us how you meet these requirements, show us. The best answers include juggling a degree with a part-time job or caring for others, as well as the more obvious things like being the captain of a college or university team or the representative of a student group. Tell us what you're most proud of, the challenges you've faced, and what makes you who you are. You'll be surprised at how diverse our lawyers are and we are all the better for it. You'll also be surprised how those stories are great examples of the skills we're looking for.

The one piece of advice we give to our reviewing panel (made up of lawyers from Walker Morris) is if there is something that stands out to you, put the candidate through. This could be anything - work experience, life experiences, challenges faced or the fact they are a good writer whose enthusiasm and eagerness really shines through. Can they bring their application form to life? Is this someone you'd like to know more about?

STAGE 2

THE ASSESSMENT CENTRE

We hope our application process is back to normal this year.

HERE'S HOW IT USUALLY GOES...

We run assessment centres in February and March. This involves a group-based exercise in groups of four. We don't ask you to jump through hoops or work out the next pattern in a sequence. It's a team exercise based on a commercial scenario with a short presentation at the end. Last year's Day 1 group exercise asked groups to devise a more innovative and creative method of gathering and reviewing documents for an acquisition of a Real Estate client.

Usually, you will be in a group of three to five people, so always start by introducing yourself to your team. Once the task is handed out, ensure you get to grips with it and give it a good read-over!

THE GROUP DISCUSSION

During the group discussion we are looking for some of the attributes below but you don't have to show us everything:

- 1 Leadership** – can you lead a team in the right direction? We don't want the loudest or most talkative person in the group, we're looking for the person that can encourage the rest of the team to get involved, that can bring out the best in others, set goals and see the group meets them.
- 2 Team Working** – can you work with others? Do you listen and help others? Can you help the team achieve the result you're aiming for even if they don't agree with one of your ideas?
- 3 Communication** – do you speak up when you have an idea or disagree? We want to see if you can pitch your ideas at the right level, whether you are persuasive and if others buy in to your ideas.
- 4 General Contribution** – did you get involved and maintain that involvement throughout even if not everyone agreed with you?
- 5 Innovative Ideas** – did you come up with any fresh ideas or a way to bring those ideas to life? Did you do things a little bit differently?
- 6 Commercial Awareness** – we're not looking for a fully formed business person but can you show us you have an understanding of the business and how it is going to make money? Did you think about risks and challenges and how they could be overcome?

THE PRESENTATION

We know that some people hate presenting and others love it. We're not looking for a polished public speaker but as a lawyer, you have to be prepared to speak up and give your view and opinion. You won't have to present to a full arena; just two or three Walker Morris assessors (who are all lawyers) and another group who have taken part in the same exercise. We are looking for people that can show:

- **Presentation skills** – are you engaging? Did you keep our attention? Did you speak clearly, concisely and confidently? Did you show a good understanding of your offering?
- **Replying to questions** – how did you deal with any questions from the assessors? We're not looking to catch you out but we want to see if you can think on your feet and deal with challenging questions. If you see a team mate is struggling do you help them? Are the answers you give credible?

The assessors learnt a lot about each individual and were able to see how their personalities shone through during these presentations. It was fantastic to see the enthusiasm, drive and passion from the attendees. We were really impressed to see attendees treating their presentation as if they were in the office and ensuring they maintained their engagement and professionalism throughout the presentation.

AFTER THE ASSESSMENT CENTRE

After the assessment we collect feedback from the assessors and review it. We will then decide who should be invited to the vacation scheme.

We think it's important that we give constructive feedback to anyone that was unsuccessful. For those who are unsuccessful we will inform them by email and ask them if they would like a call with our Early Careers Team. It's great to see some people take the feedback on board and return even stronger the next time round.

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**CANDIDATES WERE INVITED TO
ATTEND OUR VACATION SCHEMES
IN JUNE AND JULY THIS YEAR.**

STAGE 3

THE VACATION SCHEME

We usually hold vacation schemes over the summer. This is a good chance for you to get a feel for us and for us to get to know you. You will do a few group and written exercises alongside spending time embedded in our departments, carrying out day to day work alongside Trainees and lawyers of all levels.

SO...WHAT HAPPENS ON THE VACATION SCHEME?

This year we were able to return our vacation schemes back in our offices. We held three schemes in April and June, with all offering a jam-packed schedule.

We want to ensure that applicants can experience different working environments and understand the life of a trainee at Walker Morris. Day one involves a firm introduction, office tour, and welcome lunch, where you meet with your supervisor for the week.

Day two involves a full day in your department and networking Q&A with the current trainees. Day three, you get stuck into a role-play group exercise and end the day with a social event in the evening. Day four, we ask you to complete a written exercise, invite you to a "lunch and learn" session and spend more time in your department. The final day comes around so fast, and we close off the week with an informal chat with the Grad Recruitment team.



THE WRITTEN EXERCISE

The written exercise is usually a mock task that you might do as a Trainee or junior Solicitor such as preparing an internal memo for a supervisor or a draft piece of advice for a client. We're not expecting long treatise on the law; each task has a commercial focus and the best examples are focused and give a clear recommendation on what the recipient should do next. We want to see if you've put yourself in the shoes of your audience. Have you thought about what they need and want?

Demonstrating attention to detail, providing clear and concise ideas, and good presentation of work is needed to help get the best out of the written exercise. Some people find the written tasks challenging and others less so... it's all a learning experience and provides insight into your current strengths and development areas!

THE GROUP EXERCISE

We also carry out a group exercise that is similar to a commercial negotiation. For example, one group might be asked to act for a music band in a negotiation with another group acting for the record company. We're not looking for the group that gets the best result but for skills similar to the assessment centre.

This year we witnessed some fantastic negotiations. This task is an excellent opportunity for our attendees to demonstrate their commercial drive, team work, leadership abilities, and communication skills. The feedback from the applicants was extremely positive and they felt this exercise offered them an opportunity to broaden their knowledge, soft skills and experience what it is like to be in a work-related environment negotiating on behalf of their client.

FEEDBACK

Finally, we collect feedback from the departments, Trainees and anyone else who you might have had contact with to see how you've performed in client meetings/calls, around the office, socially etc.

If you've had a good vacation scheme we will either make you an offer for a training contract or ask you to join a call or meeting with our Early Careers Partner for a further chat. If you've not been successful we will still get in touch to give you individual feedback.

From the vacation schemes held this summer, 55 candidates were invited and from those, we have offered 14 Trainee positions.

DIRECT TRAINING CONTRACT ROUTE

By going through our assessment centre and vacation scheme, you will get multiple opportunities to meet various people within Walker Morris including Partners, Solicitors and current Trainees. We definitely encourage this route because we see more of you and you get a longer time to show us who you are and what makes us a good fit.

If you want to, you can apply directly for the training contract, this year the deadline is **31st July 2024**. You will still complete an application form - it's the same version as the vacation scheme application form and we look at it in the same way. We also still have an assessment centre and then an interview with a Partner and another Solicitor (hint: see above for our tips on this).

GET IN TOUCH
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