



“Why law?” – Perhaps the most common question that every budding lawyer can expect to be asked at vacation scheme or training contract interviews, and the one question that interviewees will likely have prepared to perfection in anticipation.

For many, law is the career path of choice from a young age or at least when making university applications, but actually roughly half of lawyers converted to the profession from non-law subjects, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) graduates.

This article aims to provide an insight into what STEM graduates can bring to the legal profession and what to expect from a career in law.

My personal experience

Back in sixth form, I was interested in pursuing a career in medicine and studied medical physiology at university. During my second year I gained experience in laboratory research, providing an insight into what a career in medical research would be like. In addition, I completed an experimental dissertation in my final year, working in the cellular and molecular biology department and researching the formation and function of the cytoplasmic cap in P2X2 receptors.

As you can probably guess from the title of this blog, I quickly discovered that research was not for me and began considering other professions.

After completing a mini-pupillage, work placement and vacation scheme, I was confident that law provides the variety, people-focus and challenge that lab work was missing. I graduated then took the plunge and converted



to law, along with many others.

Stats and facts – the reality

There is currently a pretty equal split between law graduates and non-law graduates within trainee and junior solicitor roles, indicating that the skills non-law graduates possess are increasingly sought after in the profession.

Evidently, certain areas of law naturally align with STEM subjects, for example intellectual property, medical negligence and personal injury, but scientific skills are also highly beneficial and useful in many other areas of law.

Being naturally inquisitive, scientists are the perfect match for a career in law. From very early on, the importance of organisation, structure and challenging principles is emphasised to STEM students, and the lab is the natural habitat for process and outcome work.

There are clear parallels to working as a solicitor: analysing facts, using imagination and logical thinking to solve problems, and working methodically to implement solutions to achieve the best outcome are what both scientists and solicitors do day to day.

Time to hang up the lab coat?

The legal profession is constantly evolving and adapting, particularly in response to the pressure on law firms to utilise modern technologies to provide legal services more cost-effectively. As such, STEM graduates in particular can use their transferable skills to facilitate a firm's shift towards a more efficient provision of legal services.

STEM graduates can expect a challenging, fast-paced and interactive experience when working in a law firm, which is quite different to my experience of working in a lab. With the legal profession aiming to provide more access and diversity, STEM graduates should not be discouraged from transferring from lab to law.



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