

Institutional programme proposition

The Future Lawyer | Rifat Sheikh | 29 October 2026

In the AI era, being legally capable is the baseline. Commercial capability is the career.

The Future Lawyer is a ten-session, on-site employability programme that teaches law students how lawyers win clients, and records the employability skills each student gains at the end of every session. It is built for LLB, LLM, SQE and LPC students: how a firm makes money, how clients choose a lawyer, and how a junior lawyer becomes valuable by earning trust and referrals.

EXPERIENCE BEHIND THE TEACHING

Rifat Sheikh co-founded a regulated, multi-department London law firm and was its Head of Business Development & Marketing for 15 years, building legal departments across several locations and designing the referral systems that fed them across the private, public and third sectors. Throughout, he taught, nurtured and guided senior and junior professionals in how work is won and kept. He is co-founder of REACH LAW, AI governance and regulatory intelligence infrastructure for UK regulated law firms, and writes regularly on AI, regulation and accountability in legal practice. Rifat is not a solicitor, and that is the point: he teaches the commercial engine of legal practice that solicitors rarely articulate and academics have not lived.

35%

revenue growth

40%

client retention increase

30%

client satisfaction uplift

15 years

period of these results, as Head of BD & Marketing

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Element	Detail
Sessions	10 weekly sessions across one semester: 6 taught modules and 4 build sessions
Session length	90 to 120 minutes, set to the university's timetable slot
Delivery	On site, in a teaching room; online delivery available on request
Cohort	Up to 25 students; programme alumni may fill spare seats at no extra cost
Every session	Report back, lecture, practical workshop, Q&A and the Skills Record
Between sessions	No homework. One practical build task that feeds the next session
Evidence	Learning gain measured at sessions 1, 5 and 10; a Skills Record every session; a TEF-ready cohort report
Final output	Each student's own Client Manual, a completed Skills Record portfolio and an Employability Statement

SESSION MAP

#	Session	Build task before the next session	Skills recorded
1	Understand the firm (taught)	Profile one local firm	Commercial awareness; career articulation
2	Know your responsibilities (taught)	Three ethical ways the firm could attract clients	Professional ethics and judgement; commercial awareness
3	Understand the money (taught)	Map local referral sources	Financial literacy; commercial awareness
4	Build 1: Referral source map	Contact one local advice or community organisation	Relationship-building; communication; teamwork
5	Identify the client and legal issue (taught)	Record what the organisation taught you	Client focus and questioning; ethics and judgement

#	Session	Build task before the next session	Skills recorded
6	Agree and deliver the work (taught)	Draft a first-contact email to a referral source	Communication; client focus; financial literacy
7	Build 2: Team client simulation	Write up your role; draft manual chapter one	Teamwork; client focus; communication
8	Build trust and show your value (taught)	Complete a full draft of the Client Manual	Relationship-building; commercial awareness
9	Build 3: Manual clinic and interview practice	Finalise the manual and Employability Statement	Career articulation; communication
10	Build 4: Showcase	Alumni may return to any module	All eight skills at Demonstrated level

Every scenario is fictional. Students never give legal advice, and any volunteering is arranged by the student with the host organisation or through the university's own pro bono or clinic provision.

BUILT FOR THE OFS AND THE TEF

Requirement	How The Future Lawyer delivers	Evidence produced
OFS condition B1: academic experience	Ten practitioner-led sessions on how legal work is won	Session map; Skills Record
OFS condition B2: resources, support and engagement	A weekly on-site practitioner, Q&A every session, alumni seats	Registers; feedback; mid-programme update
OFS condition B3: student outcomes	Career articulation, an Employability Statement and local professional relationships	Cohort report; Employability Statements
TEF: student outcomes and educational gains	Learning gain measured at sessions 1, 5 and 10 across eight skills	Individual and cohort learning gain data
Access and participation: progression risk	Students without professional networks build them through referral-source research and local volunteering	Outcomes reportable against the university's own target groups

WHAT THE UNIVERSITY RECEIVES

Deliverable	When
Skills mapping to the university's graduate attributes	Before session 1
Attendance register	Every session
Learning gain baseline	Session 1
Mid-programme update	After session 5
Closing learning gain measurement	Session 10
Cohort report, written for TEF and access and participation evidence	Within 2 weeks of session 10
Year-end outcomes report	Annual partners only

FEES

One fixed fee per cohort, regardless of how many students attend, up to 25.

Option	Fee	Includes
Semester Programme (on site)	£7,500 per semester	10 weekly sessions; all materials and templates; Skills Record for every student; learning gain measurement; attendance registers; mid-programme update; cohort report; certificates; travel within London
Annual Partnership (on site)	£15,000 per academic year	Two Semester Programmes, plus alumni seats in any module at no extra cost and a year-end outcomes report

Option	Fee	Includes
Additional cohort	£7,500 per semester	A second cohort of up to 25 in the same semester, on another weekly slot
Introductory session	£400 on campus	A 40-minute introduction for students or staff, credited in full against a Semester Programme booked within three months

Fees exclude VAT where applicable. Online delivery is available on request and quoted separately. Travel outside London is charged at cost.

Limited partnerships. One partner institution per teaching day, Monday to Thursday. Slots are allocated in the order confirmations are received.

TERMS

- **Booking and payment.** 50% invoiced on booking to secure the weekly slot; the balance after session 5. Invoices payable within 30 days.
- **Fixed fee.** Covers one cohort of up to 25 for 10 sessions; not reduced for lower attendance.
- **Rescheduling.** Either party may move a session with 7 days' notice. Sessions missed through the practitioner's illness or campus closure are rescheduled at no extra cost.
- **Cancellation.** More than 8 weeks before session 1: full refund of the booking payment. 8 to 4 weeks: 50% retained. Under 4 weeks: retained.
- **Materials and data.** Materials remain the practitioner's property for use with the enrolled cohort; students own their manuals and Skills Records. Cohort reports are anonymised; manual extracts are shared only with consent.

QUESTIONS PROGRAMME DIRECTORS ASK

Question	Answer
Is this an accredited qualification?	No. It is supplementary professional development and does not carry SRA endorsement or guarantee a job.
What does the university provide?	A named contact and budget holder, the weekly slot, a teaching room for up to 25 with a projector, the cohort's sign-up list, its graduate attributes framework, and supplier set-up with a purchase order.
How is impact reported?	Attendance, learning gain per student and per cohort, skills progression and anonymised feedback, with limitations stated. Employment outcomes require separate longitudinal evidence.
How are confidence and barriers addressed?	Through truthful lived experience, practical feedback and exploration of different employers. Students are not asked to disclose personal experiences.

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