
Borges Salmon
A career guide
for lawyers

Contents

• A career at Burges Salmon	3
What do we want from you?	4
What do we offer in return?	5
• Lawyer career framework	6
Contact partner	6
Lawyer Review and Development discussion (LRD)	6
The route from trainee to partner	6
Professional development	7
Client working and supervision	7
Time recording benchmarks	7
The career model	8
Solicitor	8
Associate	8
Senior associate	9
Senior associate progression	9
Legal director appointments	9
Progression to partnership	10
Structure of the partnership – junior and full partners	10
Partner lateral hires	10
• Partners – key expectations and responsibilities	11
Business case	11
Leadership and management responsibilities	11
Rewards	11



A career at Burgess Salmon

At Burgess Salmon our values are: ambition, collaboration, commitment, fairness, quality and respect. They underpin everything that we do. We place clients at the heart of our business and meet their requirements through the dedication and hard work of our talented people.

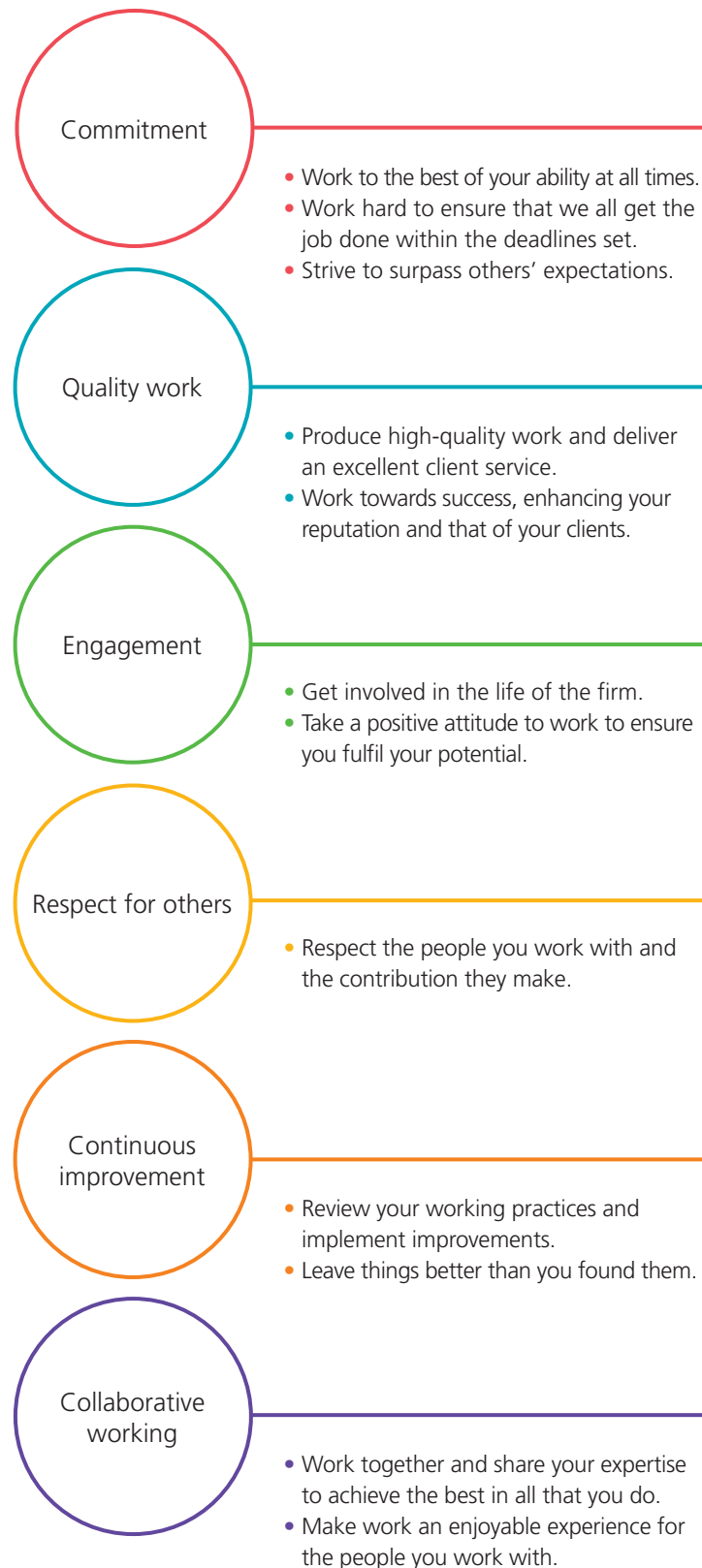


Our people are key to our success. Our reputation is built on the combined contributions and endeavours of everyone at the firm.

We realise that it is important for people to understand what the firm expects of them and what they can expect in return. Following workshops across the business we developed pledges based on the following questions:

- What do we want from you?
- What do we offer in return?

What do we want from you?



What do we offer in return?



The purpose of this guide is to give you an overview of your career opportunities at the firm and explain the key factors that impact on your progression. I encourage you to make the most of your opportunities at the firm and invest in your reputation, that of our clients and the firm.

Robert Halton
Chief People Officer

Lawyer career framework

Contact partner

Every lawyer is assigned a contact partner, normally a partner from your main work area. The welfare of our people is important and your contact partner has a vital role to play while additional support is provided by our People team. On a regular basis your contact partner will monitor your workload, technical and financial performance. Your contact partner organises your annual "Lawyer Review and Development" meeting (LRD) and assists with career development by helping you to identify longer term prospects, ensuring you have a realistic understanding of opportunities to discuss your future career path.

Lawyer Review and Development discussion (LRD)

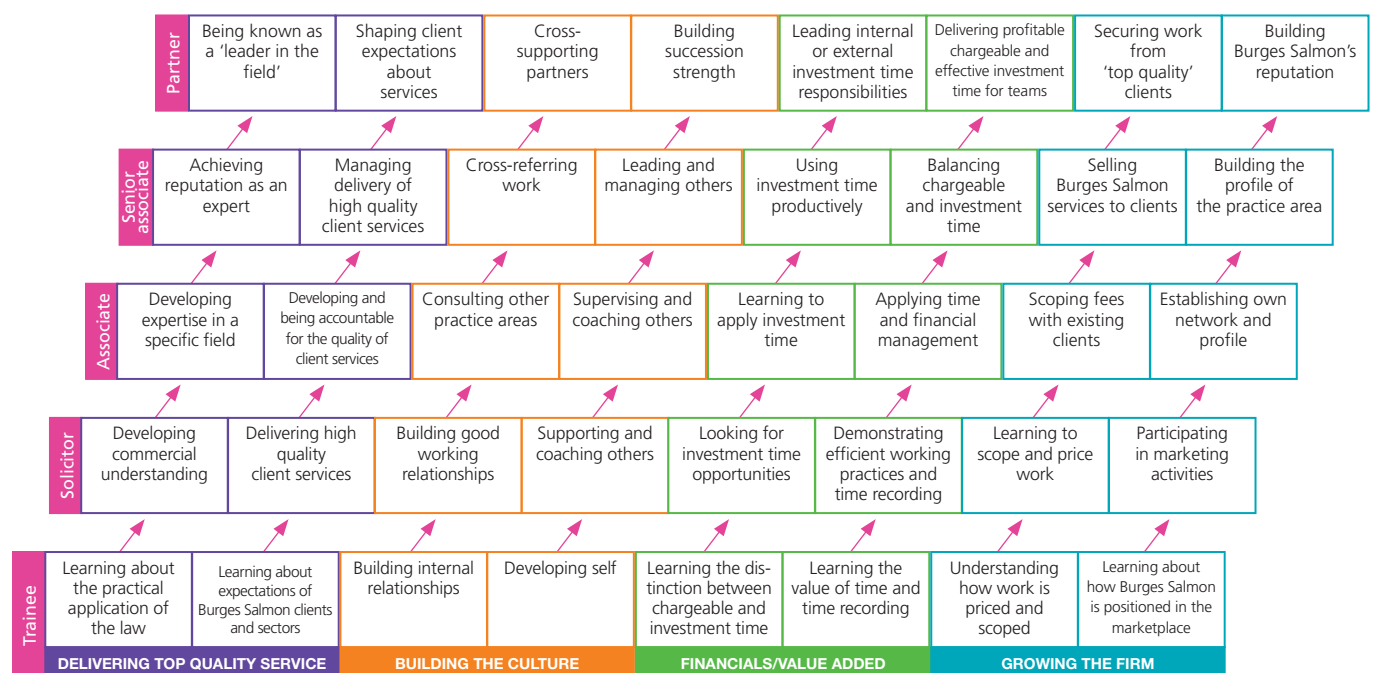
Your contact partner conducts your annual LRD along with a second partner or, in some cases, a legal director or senior associate.

The LRD looks at a range of personal development issues. It is in part retrospective, looking at performance over the previous twelve months but, more importantly, looks to the future, mapping out your goals and objectives for the coming year. It provides an opportunity for development needs to be identified and discussed.

Our expectations at each stage of your career are clearly set out in the "Contribution Frameworks". These frameworks form the basis of the LRD. You should familiarise yourself with them.

Your expected contribution builds throughout your career as can be seen from the summary "stepping-up" diagram below.

The route from trainee to partner



Following your review you will be assessed against four grades:

- Exceptional
- Very good
- Good
- Improvement required.

To progress between roles: trainee solicitor – solicitor – associate – senior associate, lawyers are expected to achieve a rating of at least very good, although progression is not automatic or based solely on grading.

Professional development

We know how important it is to support our lawyers in achieving their business aims and maximising their potential.

You will develop your professional competence through your experience of working on a range of client matters. You will have individual responsibility and an opportunity to learn from working alongside senior lawyers and partners. “Through the job” development is supplemented by our comprehensive curriculum which supports your technical learning and helps you develop the skill set you need to be a successful, astute, commercially minded lawyer and a competent manager and leader of people.

Opportunities for continuing professional development far exceed the expectations of the SRA encompassing both your personal and professional development. In our departments, our business sectors and across the firm, there are talks and training sessions to help you polish your legal expertise. We make the most of our knowledge, skills and resources and you will have ample opportunity to add your contribution to the mix!

Your technical legal development is complemented by a variety of practice development and management development courses which are linked to the different stages of your career. There are ideas to inspire you and exercises to help you stretch your intellectual muscles. Our blended learning approach allows you to manage your development around client work.

As your confidence and experience grows, we will help you provide effective support to junior lawyers in the firm. For example, our programme for trainee supervisors covers mentoring and coaching skills, delegation, provision of feedback and handling difficult conversations, as well as the regulatory aspects of the role.

Client working and supervision

Your involvement with client work will vary according to your level of experience and the type of work in question. We believe you should take as much responsibility as is practicable and in some cases you will have individual responsibility for the day-to-day running of matters. In a number of areas the complexity/size of the matter means that it can only be handled by a team of people. Consequently, the skills necessary to work successfully in a team are essential in our firm.

On all matters, of whatever size and complexity, you are ultimately responsible to the matter partner. This will sometimes be a partner from outside your own department or unit but in many cases your work will be supervised by a more experienced lawyer.

Time recording benchmarks

It is essential that you record your time accurately and fully. We do not set any billing targets but expect you:

- to fully record all of your time, both chargeable and investment time;
- to achieve “benchmark” hours as set out below;
- to ensure that, as matter executive, work in progress on current files is supervised appropriately, billed promptly and paid promptly; and
- to raise any issues or concerns about the conduct of the matter with the matter executive or matter partner.

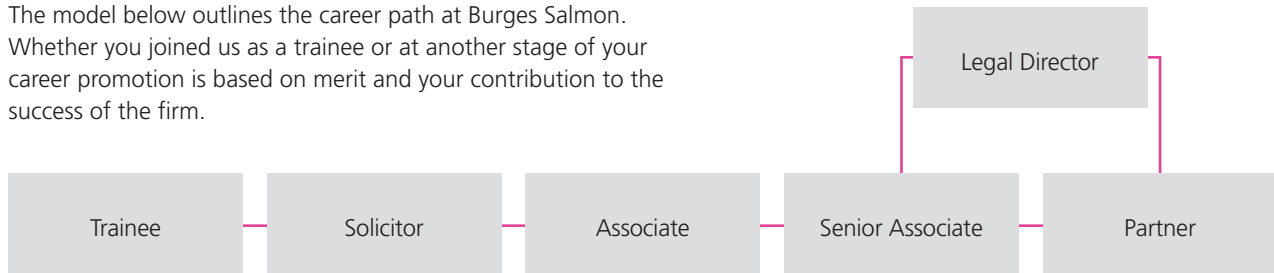
The current benchmarks are:

	Chargeable hours	Investment time hours	Total hours
Solicitor	1,450	350	1,800
Associate	1,400	400	1,800
Senior Associate	1,350	650	2,000
Partner	1,150	1,050	2,200

It is extremely important for everyone to make a full contribution to the life of the firm. The more senior you become the greater the expectation in terms of your investment time contribution. This is reflected in the contribution frameworks which you are reviewed against at your LRD meeting. Benchmarks are adjusted to take account of part time routines.

The career model

The model below outlines the career path at Burges Salmon. Whether you joined us as a trainee or at another stage of your career promotion is based on merit and your contribution to the success of the firm.



Solicitor

The solicitor grade runs from qualification until you become an associate – typically around three years' post qualification experience (PQE).

At this stage in your career the firm expects your main focus to be on gaining experience "through the job" and applying your legal/technical knowledge to our clients' needs. This is why solicitors have a slightly higher chargeable time benchmark than associates and senior associates. As a solicitor you should concentrate on developing your technical and client relationship skills as well as acting as a role model for trainee solicitors and other junior lawyers.



Associate

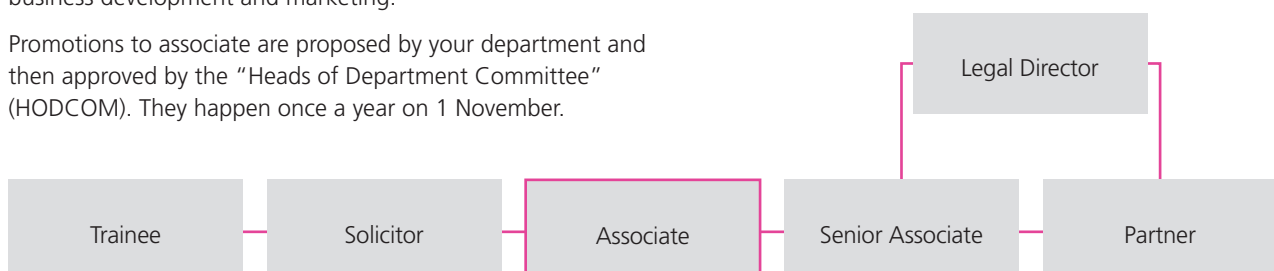
If you achieve a rating of at least very good in your LRD you are eligible to be considered for promotion to associate. This will typically be three years after qualification.

New recruits with more than three years' PQE may be recruited as associates.

At this stage in your career you will continue to build on your abilities to deliver top quality client service through commercial application of your legal knowledge, demonstrating effective collaborative working and time/financial management.

As you progress there will be an increasing emphasis on developing others and establishing a network of contacts across the firm. By this stage you should be displaying an awareness of business development and marketing.

Promotions to associate are proposed by your department and then approved by the "Heads of Department Committee" (HODCOM). They happen once a year on 1 November.



Senior associate

As an associate you are eligible to be considered for promotion to senior associate, typically after three years in the role. You need to achieve a rating of at least very good in your LRD.

By this stage, you should have developed your abilities across the full spectrum of the contribution framework. As a senior associate the emphasis will be on developing your profile with clients and your business development awareness.

You are expected to take on work at increased levels of responsibility and complexity and should be aiming to take on partner level responsibilities in areas where you have particular strengths. We recognise that to achieve this aim effectively you require an increasingly tailored approach to your development. Therefore you will need to develop a personalised development plan which will link into your LRD.

Promotion to senior associate is proposed by your department and approved by the "Partnership Committee" (PCOM). Promotions take place once a year on 1 November.

Once you have reached senior associate level the expectation is that you will play an increasingly active part in the life of your department/unit and in supporting the partners with whom you work most closely.



Senior associate progression

As a senior associate you have a critical role within the firm, supervising and developing more junior lawyers and working closely with the partners to deliver our services to our clients. Progression from senior associate may be to partnership, appointment as a legal director or, for some, outside the firm. Whatever route you decide to take we hope that you feel able to discuss your options when the time is right so we can offer you appropriate support.

On promotion to senior associateship you will be invited to attend a development centre as soon as possible. The centre evaluates your skills with the aim of putting in place a personal development plan. You are encouraged to develop a personal business plan which will be implemented with the support of your contact partner.

Legal director appointments

The role of legal director covers the exceptional circumstances where the partners feel you have a valuable contribution to make to the future of the firm in a senior role. The number of roles which exist across the firm is limited at any one time. The circumstances of appointment to the role will vary from case to case.

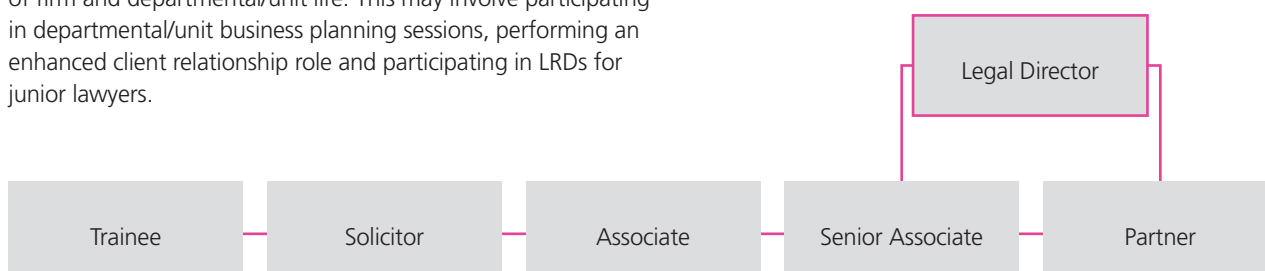
A key test will be to ensure that you are recognised for your reputation and expertise.

To be considered, you will be required to demonstrate that you are able to work on matters that would otherwise be undertaken by partners. This may involve servicing a strategically important client base or a significant specialist area of practice.

Legal directors are expected to participate in the wider aspects of firm and departmental/unit life. This may involve participating in departmental/unit business planning sessions, performing an enhanced client relationship role and participating in LRDs for junior lawyers.

Whilst it is not expected that you should display all of the characteristics or skills outlined above, you should demonstrate the majority.

Candidates are interviewed by a sub-committee of PCOM who recommend appointments to PCOM. Appointments normally take place once a year on 1 November.



Progression to partnership

At the heart of the partners' decision to invite a senior associate or legal director into partnership are two key criteria: your personal qualities and your business case.

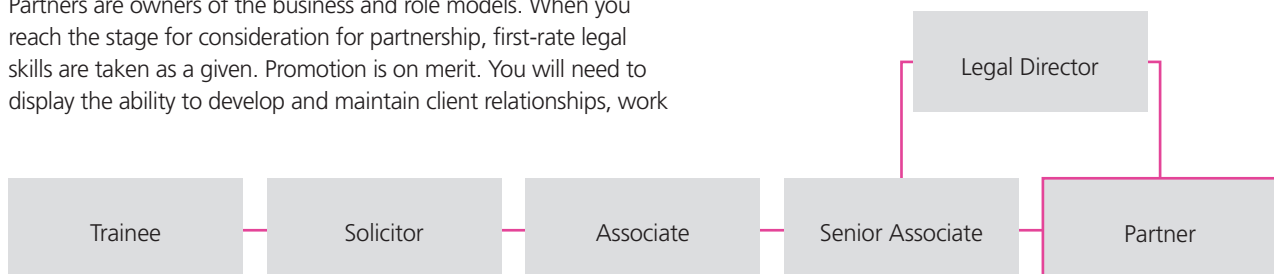
In order to consider potential candidates for junior partnership, the firm has established a "Partnership Consideration Group" (PCG). The PCG is made up of seven full partners, together with our chief people officer. The PCG reports to PCOM and all partnership appointments are agreed at a partners' meeting.

The time at which you will be considered for partnership will vary depending on prevailing market conditions and your particular case. It is unlikely that you will have attained the necessary technical, management and business development skills to become a junior partner without at least three years' experience as a senior associate although we recognise there may be exceptions to this.

Partners are owners of the business and role models. When you reach the stage for consideration for partnership, first-rate legal skills are taken as a given. Promotion is on merit. You will need to display the ability to develop and maintain client relationships, work

with others, share your skills and expertise and have the potential to build the business of the firm. As a result, the focus of debate is on the business case, which will be very carefully assessed. The existing partners must be confident that you have the potential to add something extra and grow the business for its future success.

A compelling business case for one individual may be very different from that of another. There can never be one factor, or series of factors, which will guarantee an offer of partnership. For example, one individual's business case might be based on sector specialism, whilst another's could be founded on a need for more partners in a core area of practice. We will consider flexible partnership proposals carefully. We will discuss your position to determine the practicalities of the proposal to ensure your needs, the needs of the firm and clients are balanced and met.



Structure of the partnership – junior and full partners

Our partnership is a traditional lockstep.

On joining the partnership you become a junior partner for a period of, typically, four years. This time allows you to demonstrate a successful transition to the role of partner and to implement the business case that justifies promotion to full partnership (equity). Your performance will be monitored at least annually in your "Partner Review and Development" discussion (PRD).

Your overall aim during this period is to become established in your area of practice in a way which supports the levels of gearing (ratio of partners to other lawyers) that we consider desirable in order to maintain our overall business strength and profitability.

When you are successful in being promoted to full equity you can expect to progress through the lockstep.

Partner lateral hires

Situations may arise where we need to develop a new capability, or expand an existing one that means we need to look externally. In these circumstances, it may be necessary to take on a new individual at partner level.

Lateral hires are exceptionally difficult decisions that must be taken in the long-term interests of the firm as a whole. Like the appointment of any new partner, a prospective lateral hire will be judged on their legal and personal qualities together with their business case. As with internal partnership candidates, this assessment is carried out by the PCG and PCOM and needs to be agreed at a partners' meeting.

Partners – key expectations and responsibilities

Business case

The most important responsibility of a partner is to implement their agreed business plan. This is of particular importance to junior partners as this is the key factor which determines progression to equity. All partners have business plans and each partner undergoes an annual PRD which assesses progress during the previous twelve months and sets goals going forward.

Leadership and management responsibilities

Partners have a central role in maintaining the culture and cohesion of the firm. This role not only involves the business activities but, crucially, the social life of the firm that makes Burges Salmon what it is.

All partners have responsibility as matter partners. Although most lawyers have day-to-day responsibility for managing a number of their own matters as matter executives, it is the role of the matter partner to oversee the work being carried out by our lawyers on behalf of the client. The role includes the supervision of the work being undertaken together with financial management (ensuring that the client is billed appropriately on a timely basis and assisting the finance team to make sure the firm receives payment promptly). Matter partners will be regarded as supervising partners for the purpose of the SRA code of conduct.

Another key role is being a contact partner. This role provides the key link between the firm and the lawyer and encompasses both work related matters and the development and welfare of the individual. Fundamentally the partners are responsible for the leadership, management and development of the talent within the firm.

As well as developing their own practice area, each partner is expected to contribute towards the running of the firm as a whole. This might involve being the partner responsible for trainees, trainee recruitment, or taking on the responsibility for heading a unit or department.

Most of the tasks necessary to the running of the firm have been delegated. The strategic direction of the firm is the responsibility of the PCOM and partners' meetings are held during the year. Paramount amongst these meetings is the annual partners' conference where key issues, including the firm's overall business strategy and the admission of new partners, are determined.

Rewards

The most fundamental change resulting from admission as a partner is from being an employee to being an owner of the business. From a personal standpoint an individual moves from employed to self-employed status and this brings with it a change in the individual's tax affairs.

A partner's entitlement to share in the profits of the firm depends upon the firm being profitable and on the firm being efficient in its billing and credit control procedures so that cash is available to fund drawings and other payments.

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BRO-00149