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47% of law students expect to work more than 50 hours a week after qualifying as lawyers

∞ Lord Denning the most popular legal figure amongst law students
∞ Judge John Deed the most popular fictional lawyer

Almost half of law students intend to opt out of the Working Time Directive to enable them to work more than 50 hours a week, according to research carried out by Sweet & Maxwell, the legal and business information provider. The Working Time Directive limits the working week to 48 hours but employees within the UK are able to opt out of the regulations.

The research, carried out by Sweet & Maxwell, reveals that only 13% of law students expect to work less than 39 hours a week. 5% said that they are prepared to work as many hours as necessary.

The number of hours per week law students are expecting to work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours expected to work per week</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>As many as necessary</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Many could be disappointed by their initial salary

Sweet & Maxwell’s research also reveals that 27% of law students expect to earn more than £31,000 on qualification, indicating that many law students could be disappointed by their starting salary. The average salary for a trainee solicitor is £20,925 and the Law Society sets the minimum salary at £17,110 for Inner London and £15,332 for the rest of England and Wales. ¹

¹ Figures taken from The Law Society
42% of respondents expect their peak earnings to exceed £70,000 and 3% believe that they will earn an annual income of over £500,000 at some point during their career. The average annual salary for a lawyer is £51,463.2

The research also reveals that a more moderate 7% see themselves in the role of partner within 10 years time, 16% see themselves as Senior solicitors working towards a partnership, while a less optimistic 26% expect to still be below partner level in 10 years.

14% of respondents hope to be qualified barristers, 10% intend to work within a public sector legal department and just 1% plan to work as in-house lawyers. Others see themselves “at the top” and “heading up whichever organisation I work for” within the next 10 years.

The research reveals that almost a quarter of law students would like to join a Magic Circle firm.

**Training and development opportunities and the status of an organisation are more important than salary when making career choices**

According to Sweet & Maxwell law students value training and development opportunities more highly than any other factor when choosing roles, with 27% citing this as the most important factor when applying for training contracts.

22% believe the status of a law firm or chamber is the most crucial factor and 20% think that salary plays the most instrumental role in making career choices. Only 2% of respondents cited pensions as the most important factor when choosing an organisation to work for, which may be welcomed by law firms hoping to scale back pension benefits offered to staff.

**The most important factors in deciding where to work**

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2 Figure taken from the Office of National Statistics
According to the research Lord Denning is the most popular legal figure amongst law student. Lord Denning was known as “the people’s judge” for overriding any laws that he believed stood in the way of justice and led the inquiry into the Profumo affair.

Leading barrister Michael Mansfield QC, who has defended the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six and is representing Mohamed Al-Fayed at the inquest into the death of Diana, Princess of Wales and Dodi Fayed was the second most popular. One respondent said that he will become his favourite lawyer when he has qualified!

Judge John Deed is the most popular fictional lawyer (13%) followed by Ally McBeal (10%) and Kavanagh QC (7%).

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Sweet & Maxwell (www.sweetandmaxwell.thomson.com) is a leading provider of information and solutions to the legal and professional markets in the UK and Ireland. With over 200 years of history and heritage in legal publishing, Sweet & Maxwell offers detailed and specialist knowledge, understanding, interpretation and commentary across a wide range of subjects in a variety of formats to meet customers' needs - books, journals, periodicals, looseleafs, CD-ROMs and online services. Sweet & Maxwell is part of The Thomson Corporation.

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