

Vinson & Elkins



TRAINEE  
SOLICITORS





“ Given our U.S. heritage, we aim to treat our trainees as simply the most junior members of client and deal teams, giving them direct experience of international quality work while providing a safe environment in which to learn. ”

– Alex Msimang, Managing Partner, London



# FOCUSED ENERGY

## DEEP EXPERIENCE

Vinson & Elkins' London office has a strong focus in the energy industry, having been originally established in 1971 in conjunction with clients participating in the North Sea oil boom. Since then, we have expanded to focus on key industry sectors and client types. Lawyers in Vinson & Elkins' London office advise on some of the most complex transactions, projects and disputes in the construction, energy, healthcare, infrastructure and telecoms sectors. In addition to this industry specific experience, Vinson & Elkins has lawyers who understand and address the needs of specific client types. For example, we have teams who have extensive experience in advising private equity, venture capital and hedge fund clients investing a range of industry sectors and in advising state owned companies in connection with infrastructure and energy investments and disputes. We believe that focusing on key industry sectors and client types enables us to provide a tailored service to our clients and have a deeper understanding of the commercial aims they are seeking to achieve.

Our sector specific experience has taken our lawyers all over the globe and enabled us to advise clients on matters involving almost every country in the world. We use our London office as a hub to advise clients in the jurisdictions in which they do business and we often work with preferred local advisors in each of these jurisdictions. Our London-based lawyers are most commonly advising on matters based in continental Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

In each of the sectors and geographies in which we act, our work includes M&A transactions, capital markets, private equity, funds and special situations investments, joint ventures, project development, finance, restructuring, tax, dispute resolution, and employment.

Our London trainee solicitor programme offers you a chance to be part of Vinson & Elkins' dynamic and international team.

## GLOBAL

For over a century, Vinson & Elkins, a leading U.S.-headquartered global law firm with approximately 650 lawyers located in 15 offices across the globe, has provided innovative business solutions for our clients whose needs are as diverse as the entities they represent. In today's challenging environment of global markets, volatile economies, and complex human and environmental issues, our law firm's time-tested role as trusted adviser has become even more critical. The depth and breadth of Vinson & Elkins' lawyers' experience, combined with the responsiveness and efficiencies of the firm's global reach, enable Vinson & Elkins to serve clients from start-up, to the negotiating table and boardroom, before legislative and regulatory bodies, in the courtroom and beyond.

Vinson & Elkins has amassed a wealth of experience working on projects for clients in almost every country on the map. We are accustomed to working not only in well-defined markets, but also in less familiar and more challenging environments, under developing local regimes or those with evolving communications and infrastructure. We know how to adapt to local customs, cultures and laws, enabling us to handle matters quickly and effectively. We work in tandem with our clients, travelling wherever and whenever we are needed. This knowledge enables us to offer creative solutions for our clients engaged in leading-edge projects around the world.



## OVERVIEW

Over four decades ago, Vinson & Elkins became one of the first U.S. law firms to establish a practice in London. Since then, we have built a dynamic office, undertaking work that has gained the respect of clients and competitors around the world. The London office has approximately 60 fee earners.

Our clients are predominantly in the international energy, private equity, finance and infrastructure sectors, focusing on:

- Capital Markets and Finance
- Construction (contentious and non-contentious)
- Energy, Transactions & Projects
- Infrastructure
- International Dispute Resolution and Arbitration
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Private Equity, Funds and Special Situations Investments
- Tax
- Telecoms Infrastructure

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# OPPORTUNITY

## **INTERNATIONAL • EXCEPTIONAL TRAINING • EARLY RESPONSIBILITY**

Vinson & Elkins' London office offers approximately five training contracts starting in September each year. Trainees become part of our team from day one. We staff transactions and disputes leanly, as we believe it gives our clients a focused team who understands all aspects of their transaction or dispute. This means that each trainee is an integral part of the service provided to our clients. It is not uncommon for trainees to be attending client meetings, engaging with the clients by telephone or email or attending hearings in their first weeks and months at the firm.

The firm is dedicated to offering extensive 'on-the-job' training and many of our lawyers trained at Vinson & Elkins. Our culture focuses on passing on senior lawyers' knowledge and experience. The graduate recruitment team focus on ensuring that trainees are involved in a variety of transactions and disputes and work with a broad range of clients. This ensures that the training is balanced and enables our trainees to make an informed decision on where they want to qualify at the end of their training contract.

Since its inception in 2003, our London training programme has earned Vinson & Elkins numerous awards, including the "Best Training Principal – U.S. Firm in the City" award in 2018, the "Best Recruiter – U.S. Firm in the City" award in 2017, the "Best Trainer – U.S. Firm in the City" award in 2010, and the "Best Trainer – Medium City Firm" award in 2006, all from LawCareers.Net. From 2007-2009, LawCareers.Net shortlisted the firm for the "Best Trainer – U.S. Firm in the City" award. From 2012 - 2014, we were further shortlisted for the "Best Recruiter – U.S. Firm in the City" award. Vinson & Elkins is proud to continue to win such recognition – particularly where it is based on independent interviews with people who are going through or have been through our training programme.

## **SECONDMENTS**

While being based in London, trainees often take secondments in our overseas offices, including in the Middle East and our head office in Houston, Texas. Secondments give trainees the chance to experience different legal cultures and to have increased client contact. Whether or not secondments are offered, trainees should expect to travel internationally during the course of their two years. Trainees may also expect to work with lawyers from across the firm's various offices on a daily basis.

## **VACATION PLACEMENT & TRAINING CONTRACT**

When we are considering offers for training contracts, we give preference to those students who have previously completed a summer vacation placement with us. Accordingly, undergoing a vacation placement with us is strongly recommended. Approximately 25 one-week summer vacation placements in our London office are available per year between June and September. Our vacation placements are designed to give you a real sense of what you would encounter as a trainee in the first six months of your training contract, and have a deliberate emphasis on letting you interview us as much as letting us get to know you.



## OPEN DAY

If you are in the first year of a law degree or the penultimate year of a non-law degree, and would like to learn more about the firm, you may be interested in applying to attend our Open Day on 20 March 2019. The Open Day is dedicated to candidates at this earlier stage. Applications can be made at any time up until 8 February 2019 by emailing us at [graduaterecruitment@velaw.com](mailto:graduaterecruitment@velaw.com). Please include your name, contact details, university, and your current stage of education. Please also confirm that you have achieved our minimum academic requirements of at least AAB at A-Level or equivalent.

## REQUIREMENTS

We are looking to recruit ambitious individuals with exceptional academic results (2:1 degree minimum and at least AAB at A-Level or equivalent), sound commercial awareness, and rounded personalities. The ability to think laterally and creatively is essential, as is a need for common sense and a willingness to take the initiative. Foreign language skills are an asset, but by no means a requirement. Additionally, diversity and inclusion are two of the core values which guide all that we do at Vinson & Elkins. Since our success ultimately depends on developing exceptional legal talent, Vinson & Elkins is committed to attracting and retaining the finest lawyers from all backgrounds and perspectives. In terms of compensation, currently, the firm funds both the GDL and LPC. A maintenance grant of £8,000 will also be provided for both the LPC and GDL year. Trainees start at a salary of £50,000, which increases to £55,000 for the second year. Newly qualified salaries in London are currently £143,000. Benefits include private health insurance, firm pension, season ticket loan for transportation, discounted gym membership, travel insurance and dental cover.

# RELATIONSHIPS

Vinson & Elkins is committed to encouraging lawyers and other firm personnel to be involved volunteers in their communities. Through their personal efforts, firm employees strengthen the ties that bind our local and national communities and promote the development of individuals who make up those communities.

Our lawyers are guided by the principle that pro bono clients — like all of our clients — should be fully and effectively represented. As a result, we devote significant time and financial resources to the legal needs of persons who cannot afford to pay for representation, as well as to local civic projects. Vinson & Elkins' international pro bono initiatives provide lawyers an opportunity to connect with the human side of the practice of law. From senior partners to trainees, Vinson & Elkins' lawyers apply their skills to personal passions and make lasting impacts in the communities in which they live and work.

Whether we are helping to reunite parents with their children, assisting Holocaust survivors in the U.S. with obtaining restitution from the German government, or assisting the survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire through work at voluntary law centres across London, our long tradition of pro bono service has grown to become a broad and diverse practice area.



# KEY DATES

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO APPLY FOR A SUMMER VACATION PLACEMENT OR A TRAINING CONTRACT, PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT DATES:**

Vacation placement application window:  
1 November 2018 to 31 January 2019

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Training contract application window:  
1 November 2018 to 31 July 2019

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Open Day for first year law students or penultimate year non-law students:  
20 March 2019

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Vacation placements:  
June 2019 to August 2019 (one-week placement)

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You begin your training contract:  
September 2021

Applications should be made by way of our online application form, available from our website at:  
[www.velaw.com/careers/LondonRecruitment.aspx](http://www.velaw.com/careers/LondonRecruitment.aspx)

In applying for vacation placements, please be aware that we give preference to those candidates who will be ready to start a training contract two years after that placement.

## INSIGHTS

**DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT THOUGH...**

### **Arabella Robinson – Vacation Placement Student 2014, Trainee 2018 - 2020**



I completed my vacation scheme with V&E in the summer of 2014. I knew soon after starting that this was the firm I wanted to work with when I finished my studies.

During my vacation scheme I was able to complete work in international arbitration, M&A, ETP and tax law, all in the space of one week. I liked the varied nature of the work – instead of getting drawn into one department you get to work on a variety of matters and develop relationships with people within different teams.

Ultimately, the people are what make the firm really special - they make you feel like a part of the family from the outset. As the scheme is flexible and you can work in and amongst any team, you get to meet everybody. They are all eager to set time aside to sit down and explain their work to you and give you tasks to help you understand what they do. This is extremely important in a scheme as it means you learn about areas which you may never have considered. For me particularly, I didn't know much about ETP work and this became a key area I was interested in. In fact, it was this experience which developed my interest in the energy sector, resulting in my double dissertation exploring the legal implications of conflict and armed revolution on oil and gas contracts in the Middle East.

### **Francesca Gray – Vacation Placement Student 2015, Trainee 2017 - 2019**



I attended the vacation placement programme in the summer of 2015. The programme was a true snapshot of life as a trainee at the firm. We were tasked with real and exciting work and all members of staff made a massive effort to get us involved. We were exposed to the social side of the firm too, as various lunches and drinks were held during the programme. I thoroughly enjoyed my vacation placement at V&E and didn't hesitate to accept an offer to train there.

I am currently in the second seat of my training contract, sitting in the Mergers & Acquisitions department. Usually, my day will consist of reviewing transaction documents, carrying out due diligence and undertaking research tasks on the impact of new laws on a client's investment. The small intake of trainees at V&E was something that really appealed to me. Ultimately, it means that trainees are afforded with a great deal of responsibility from very early on. Generally speaking, there will be one trainee on each deal/case and that trainee will be considered a genuine part of the deal team.



“The Open Day was extremely enjoyable. It succeeded in providing me with a true picture of what it would be like to work in Vinson & Elkins’ London office. ...”

— Anonymous, Open Day Attendee



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### **Ka-Mun Fu – Vacation Placement Student 2013, Trainee 2015 - 2017, Associate in M&A Team 2017 to Date**



My vacation scheme at Vinson & Elkins was an excellent opportunity to experience life as a trainee with the firm. I was introduced to everyone and, after a tour around the office, I very quickly set about assisting one of the lawyers in the litigation department on one of their cases. I was given a wide range of tasks to do, ranging from legal research and sitting in on conference calls and client meetings to amending and proofreading a sale and purchase agreement and a master licence agreement for the corporate team. It was great to be able to contribute towards genuine client cases and transactions (rather than made-up tasks), and everyone in the office made me feel like an actual member of the team.

As a trainee, I went on secondment to the Houston office which was an exciting six months to be able to work in the head office, experience the true Texan culture of the firm and even go to the Rodeo! I worked on a wide range of different matters and rotated through several departments including Energy Transactions and Projects, Finance and Litigation. The training at Vinson & Elkins takes a very “hands-on” approach and, as trainees, we are encouraged to take ownership of tasks by being responsible for certain aspects of a transaction whilst also having the supervision and guidance from associates and partners as necessary.

### **Emilie Stewart – Trainee 2010 - 2012, Associate in Finance Team 2012 to Date**



A training contract at Vinson & Elkins will certainly be diverse, challenging, and exciting. I started my two-year training contract sitting with a disputes partner and, on day one, I was thrown into a case we had recently been instructed on and was encouraged to assist with developing the arguments for the pleadings, conducting research and drafting the pleadings.

One of the main reasons I came to Vinson & Elkins was the ability to work on large international transactions while being in a smaller and friendlier office in London. There is certainly a Texan feel to the London office and you might occasionally see some cowboy boots or hear a Texan “y’all”. During my training contract, as well as working with those in the London office, I also had the opportunity to work with associates on matters originating from the Hong Kong, Tokyo, Beijing, Dubai and Houston offices, many of whom were originally London trainees. International opportunities are definitely available for trainees at Vinson & Elkins, and I have been lucky enough to travel to Houston, Dublin, Luxembourg, Frankfurt, San Francisco and Paris on transactions, in some cases with less than a few hours’ notice. I also did one of my seats as a trainee sitting in the Hong Kong office. It is very rare to work on a deal with just one jurisdiction involved; almost all our work is international which makes things more exciting and gives trainees a view of larger scale, more challenging transactions.

I am now a senior associate in the finance team and appreciate the breadth of my training in all departments; things learnt in each department still come in use on a daily basis. Having a smaller intake gives trainees an ability to mold their training to their individual interests and trainees are encouraged to seek out opportunities which interest them. This helps ensure that trainees who are willing can take on more responsibility. Training at Vinson & Elkins is all about getting involved and learning from experience in various departments.

## EXPERIENCE

VINSON & ELKINS' LONDON OFFICE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN SOME OF THE BIGGEST AND MOST EXCITING WORK OF THE LAST FEW YEARS, INCLUDING REPRESENTING:

- Vitol Group and Helios Investment Partners in Vivo Energy's initial public offering on the London Stock Exchange and Johannesburg Stock Exchange (the largest London IPO of 2018 at the time and the largest Africa-focused IPO in a decade, with a valuation of close to £2 billion)
- Equinor (formerly Statoil) in its successfully signed US\$2.9 billion acquisition from Petrobras of a 25 per cent interest in the Roncador field, located in the Campos Basin in Brazil. The purchase price consists of an initial payment of US\$2.35 billion, plus additional contingent payments of up to US\$550 million
- STAR Rafineri A.S., a subsidiary of the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic ("SOCAR"), and its sponsors on the financing and development of a US\$5.65 billion greenfield oil refinery in Turkey on the Aegean Sea. This is the largest project financing in Turkey and involved 7 ECAs and about 15 banks and won 10 awards, including *Infrastructure Journal's* "European Oil and Gas Deal of the Year 2014"
- HTA Group Ltd on its US\$600 million issuance of senior high yield notes, in connection with its pan-African portfolio of telecoms assets
- Maersk Oil on successful tax litigation against HMRC in the First-tier Tribunal in *Maersk Oil North Sea UK Limited and Maersk Oil UK Limited v The Commissioners for HMRC*
- The Republic of Iraq Ministry of Oil in connection with the c.£10.8 billion Basrah Gas Project to capture the large volume of natural gas currently being flared in oil fields in the southern region of Iraq, including a 25-year development joint venture agreement with Royal Dutch Shell PLC and Mitsubishi
- The Panama Canal Authority in relation to the construction and engineering aspects of the £3.4 billion Panama Canal Expansion Program in Panama and a number of technical and high-value disputes in DAB proceedings and ICC arbitration proceedings
- An international real estate fund on its acquisition, and the financing of such acquisition, of an interest in a portfolio of real estate assets located in Spain with a net book value of nearly €7 billion
- A joint venture among Korean Gas Corp (KOGAS), Lotte Chemical, STX Energy, and Uzbekneftegas, on the development of the approximately US\$4 billion Surgil upstream gas and petrochemicals project and the Asian Development Bank, KEXIM, and KSure-led financing thereof
- A large U.S. private equity company bringing claims against the Republic of Ecuador under its bilateral investment treaty with the United States, arising out of the indirect expropriation of power generation



# IMPACT

Recognised in Energy & Natural Resources, Construction, International Arbitration, Projects and Telecommunications

— *Chambers UK*, 2018

Ranked in M&A: Upper Mid-Market and Premium Deals, Corporate Tax, International Arbitration, Oil & Gas and Construction

— *Legal 500 UK*, 2017

“Demonstrates strong credentials in oil, gas and petrochemical projects, as well as transport and water developments. Able to advise on projects in often challenging international jurisdictions.”

— *Chambers UK*, Projects, 2018

“What I was looking for was a team with strong leadership that was creative, imaginative and could look for legal arguments that maybe other firms couldn’t quite see clearly. They’ve done that and they’ve built a very good case.”

— *Chambers UK*, International Arbitration: Commercial Arbitration, 2018

“Powerhouse oil and gas practice with the ability to handle a range of complex corporate, regulatory and contentious matters.”

— *Chambers UK*, Energy & Natural Resources: Oil & Gas, 2018

“Other firms can be cold and impersonal, but here the culture percolates through Texas. People like each other and they don’t take themselves too seriously.”

— *Chambers Student Guide*, 2018

“A client describes this as ‘a very seasoned team with [experience] in telecoms infrastructure.’”

— *Chambers UK*, Telecommunications, 2018

“A very, very good team in oil and gas,” adding that “the team are one of the best to work with.”

— *Chambers Global*, Projects & Energy, 2017

“Particularly known for its energy industry [experience]. Acts on proceedings governed by leading arbitral institutions and rules, including the ICC, AAA and LCIA. Also experienced in handling disputes arising in the construction and engineering, insurance, banking, technology, intellectual property and pharmaceuticals sectors.”

— *Chambers UK*, International Arbitration, 2017

“Vinson & Elkins RLLP ‘provides sound practical advice in a timely fashion’ on matters ranging from high-profile M&A transactions, financings and disputes.”

— *Legal 500 UK*, 2016

Listed on the Honor Roll of Most Feared Law Firms

— *BTI Litigation Outlook*, 2018

“Exceptional — everyone I met, spoke to or had any dealings with, from partners to reception staff, was professional. Quality of advice was 100 percent, as was their knowledge.”

— *Chambers UK*, 2014

“A lot more client contact than expected.”

— *Chambers Student Guide*, 2014

“There’s a sense of Southern hospitality at the firm ... V&E lawyers know how to enjoy a good Texan party.”

— *Chambers Student Guide*, 2014

“Recognised for impressive regional experience and notable strengths in the private equity, telecoms and oil and gas sectors.”

— *Chambers Global*, 2013

# RECRUITING THE ASSOCIATES OF TOMORROW

Vinson & Elkins recruits trainees with a view to developing our next generation of associate solicitors (and partners). Our retention record reflects that. Since the inception of our training programme in 2003, we have made associate offers to 82% of our qualifying trainees — and are delighted that many of our former trainees have continued their careers as lawyers at the firm.

## QUESTIONS

If you have any questions relating to the summer vacation scheme or our training contracts, please do not hesitate to contact any member of our London trainee recruitment team.



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# Vinson & Elkins

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