



ALLEN & OVERY



Company Name: Allen & Overy
Nature of business: Legal
Number of employees: Over 2,250 in the UK

A little about the organisation:

At a time of significant change in the legal industry, we are determined to continue leading the market as we have done throughout our 87-year history.

We will do this by ensuring we always challenge ourselves to bring new and original ways of thinking to the complex legal challenges our clients face.

Building on our long heritage enables us to attract the most talented people and continue to deliver this level of innovation with and for our clients.

To support our clients' international strategies, we have built a truly global network now spanning 44 offices in 31 countries. We have also developed strong ties with relationship law firms in over 100 countries where we do not have a presence. This network makes us one of the largest and most connected law firms in the world, with a global reach and local depth that is simply unrivalled.

Global coverage in today's market does not simply mean having offices in important cities around the world. For us, it means combining our international resources and sector expertise to work on cross-border transactions directly in the markets and regions important to our clients.

Does the organisation have an agreed policy and programme for the provision of work-related learning/employability opportunities to school students?

Allen & Overy is an international legal practice and a founding member of PRIME, the work experience commitment from the legal profession. PRIME aims to create an industry standard required to ensure fair access to quality work experience for school-age students across the UK from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As part of its PRIME commitment, every summer Allen & Overy gives 200 students from state schools access to a high-quality work experience programme – The Smart Start Experience.

**Does the organisation work solely with primary or secondary aged children?
Or do you have different programmes and work with both?**

Over the years a number of our offices have developed partnerships with local primary and



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secondary schools. We strongly believe that bringing people from the business world into schools can have a positive influence on children and young people and helps break down barriers.

In London we have forged strong partnerships with local primary and secondary schools, offering a wide range of activities to complement curriculum-based learning for almost 20 years.

How many students is the organisation able to provide opportunities for per year either via school based workshops or hosting students internally.

As part of our most recent submission for the Social Mobility Employer Index our work reached 139 schools offering 93 work experience placements, 77 mentoring opportunities and involved 1,706 young people in our schools outreach activities.

Does the organisation have a dedicated employee/team whose job it is to engage with schools either in communities local to the school or across the region/country as a whole?

Two members of our Pro Bono & Community Investment Team manage the partnerships with local schools. We also work with a number of charities and social enterprises who work closely with us to identify the young people eligible for our programmes.

How is the opportunity to deliver workshops, host work placements etc. received by your colleagues? Are people keen to engage with these projects?

To support the initiatives highlighted above we had between 4% and 12% of employees in our London staff volunteer, without them we wouldn't be in a position to offer these many opportunities.

Hours of staff engagement on community and education initiatives continue to increase with over 2,300 hours already volunteered for the first six months of our financial year (May to October).

Do staff report back positively on their experiences working on employability initiatives with schools/students? Would you say offering staff these opportunities has a positive effect on workplace morale?

After each interaction with a young person we ask volunteers for their feedback on their experience. This helps us understand the impact on our volunteers and the beneficiaries. Staff continue to volunteer on an increasing level across our educational programmes and the drive, enthusiasm and passion to do more continues to grow.

"I have found my volunteering with education programmes (such as employability workshops with secondary school pupils) the most exciting and stimulating of all the pro bono work I have done: working with young people requires you to rethink how you explain the law and your involvement in it." Trainee Solicitor



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Complete the sentence:

Employers offering work-related learning opportunities to school students is important because we believe business has an important role to play in helping young people reach their full potential by overcoming barriers created by society and personal circumstances.

Complete the sentence:

We value our work engaging students with employability opportunities because not everyone has the same opportunities in life or the same access to education and employment. That's why we work to encourage young people from less privileged backgrounds to aim higher in education and to achieve more in their careers.

Is there any other advice you would offer any organisations seeking to establish or further embed their own employability school engagement programmes?

Increasing access to education and employment is an important focus for Allen & Overy's Pro Bono & Community Investment work and one of two themes we organise our volunteering around globally. A&O delivers a number of programmes from primary school age up to higher education, with the overall objective of helping young people fulfil their potential – regardless of their background.

Look to develop a culture of employer engagement programmes within local schools. Perhaps choose a school with no current employer partnerships or employer engagement – this way you can build a relationship with a school, collaborate on creating new ways to help young people understand how their education is important and build awareness of the relevance of what they learn at school has an impact on their futures and potential careers.

Most recently we formed a partnership with Raine's Foundation School in Tower Hamlets, which serves 700 students aged 11-19 in our local London community. Raine's has been judged to "require improvement" by the UK's education inspector, so we are bringing together our lawyers' and professional support staff's skills, as well as strategic guidance through school governors, to provide a package of support for teaching staff, pupils, governors and the wider community.

This follows the successful ten-year partnership with another large secondary school close to our London office, Bethnal Green Academy (now Green Spring Academy Shoreditch), in which we supported the school's transition from near closure to being rated the most improved school in London (second most improved school in the UK) and achieving record GCSE results.

It is important to create an internal narrative so every employee who engages in your programmes can see how their contribution made a difference.



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Finally combine one-off volunteering activities alongside longer-term strategic support to schools through governance. Allen & Overy is committed to continually developing leaders; employees are encouraged to become school governors as a way of developing their confidence and skills which is valued by the education sector.