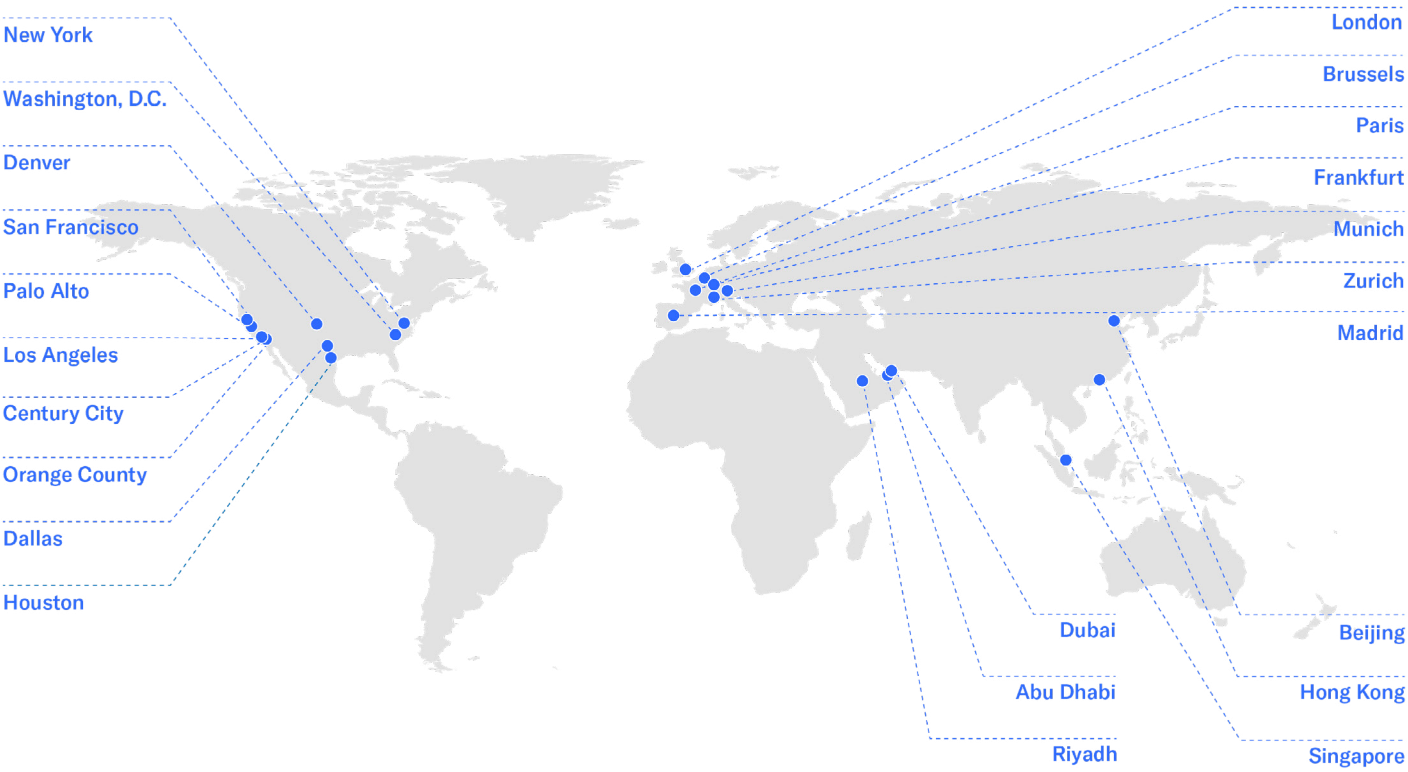
TRAINING WITH GIBSON DUNN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

GIBSON DUNN

Gibson Dunn is a leading international law firm, with a history spanning more than 135 years.

We have over 2,200 lawyers in 23 offices located in major commercial centres across the globe.

A Truly International Firm



Contents

Jade Chu
Training Principle
of the UAE Offices

JADE CHU, TRAINING PRINCIPLE OF THE UAE OFFICES

I am delighted to welcome you as the Training Principle for our Dubai and Abu Dhabi offices. I hope that by reading this brochure, you will gain a deeper insight into who we are, what we offer, and why Gibson Dunn could be the right place for you to start your legal career. This is an exciting time for Gibson Dunn, especially for our offices in the Middle East!

What we offer is truly unique. We are one of the few firms in the region providing the opportunity to train and qualify as a solicitor under English law, all while launching a dynamic career in the Middle East. We operate as one firm, not as satellites, and our cross-office collaboration ensures that you can tap into the expertise and insights of professionals worldwide, further enhancing your development as a lawyer with exceptional opportunities to be involved in challenging cross-border work. The close-knit nature of our teams in the Middle East allows our trainees to work side-by-side with senior lawyers, receiving valuable feedback and fostering an environment where you can gain significant firsthand experience.

We are looking for candidates who have a strong desire to be part of our team. Above all, we are looking for bright, enthusiastic individuals who are committed to developing their careers in a challenging and rewarding environment, and who will contribute to our success and that of our clients.

If you have any questions after reading this brochure and visiting our website, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Graduate Recruitment team. I look forward to hopefully welcoming you to the firm soon.

With best wishes,
Jade Chu

Our Offices in the UAE

We have represented government-affiliated entities, prominent companies, and financial institutions in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Middle East for more than 40 years. Today, we have a market-leading, integrated UAE practice servicing both local and international clients across a variety of practice areas and industries. The team's 30+ lawyers in the UAE practice English, New York, and UAE law (including ADGM and DIFC).

With offices in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, our full-service UAE team covers M&A, private equity, energy and infrastructure, project development and project finance, finance (including Islamic finance) and restructuring, capital markets, regulatory and legislative matters (including financial regulatory), funds, international arbitration and dispute resolution.

Our clients include Government-related entities (including sovereign wealth funds), family offices, multinational corporations, and financial institutions. In particular, our UAE team works closely with Abu Dhabi Government entities, across various practice areas, which has given us a holistic understanding of their requirements, preferences, and negotiation positions. Several of our team members also have experience of being seconded to Abu Dhabi Government entities.

Our Offices in the UAE

International Recognition & Awards

Law Middle East Awards 2025 – International Law Firm of the Year

IFLR Middle East Awards 2025 - National Law Firms of the Year - **UAE: International**

IFLR Middle East Awards 2025 - Equity Deal of the Year – **Talabat IPO**

IFLR Middle East Awards 2025 - M&A Deal of the Year – **KKR Gulf Data Hub**

PFI Awards 2025 - Global Power Deal of the Year – **Wave 5&6 Solar Projects**

Chambers Middle East Awards 2025 – "UAE Corporate/M&A Law Firm of the Year"

Global Banking & Markets Middle East Awards 2025 – "Debut Corporate Bond Deal of the Year" – **ADNOC Murban**

Chambers RANKED IN Global 2026 Leading Firm

Law.com International Middle East Legal Awards 2025 – "International Arbitration Team of the Year"

IJGlobal Awards 2024 – "Joint Venture of the Year" – **ADNOC joint venture with BP**

IJGlobal Awards 2024 – "Bond of the Year" – **ADNOC Murban RSC Limited Bond Issuance**

IJGlobal Awards 2024 – "Refinance of the Year, Middle East" – **Al Dur II IWPP**

Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East Awards 2024 – "Syndicated Loan Deal of the Year" – **Ministry of Finance, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its $11 billion senior term loan credit facility**

Chambers Middle East Awards 2024 – "Middle East Breakthrough Law Firm of the Year"

IJInvestor Awards 2024 – "Refinance of the Year, Middle East" – **Al Dur II IWPP**

IJInvestor Awards 2024 – "Oil & Gas Acquisition of the Year – Middle East" – **ADNOC joint venture with BP**

How We Work

Working life at Gibson Dunn is different from that at most other firms. In all our practice areas, we work in small, focused teams: the best lawyers, not the most lawyers. We work on a fully integrated basis with all our international offices, which means that our lawyers at all levels have regular contact with their international colleagues. We believe that this approach allows us to remain nimble and responsive to our clients' often fast-changing needs, enabling us to provide them with the best possible service. This approach is good news for our trainees and junior associates. It means that everyone, at any level, gets to have a seat at the table.

We encourage all our lawyers and trainees to work above their level of seniority with the appropriate support and supervision. More responsibility early on means a greater exposure to the most interesting aspects of the work, as well as the opportunity to develop skills and expertise. Inherent in our approach is the importance of client contact for our junior lawyers and trainees.

Our trainees are provided with all the support they need, both informally, with on-the-job observations and feedback, and more formally, with regular performance reviews. All trainees receive a mid and end-of-seat appraisal in addition to regular feedback.

The firm is also immensely proud of its mentoring programme. Each trainee and associate is allocated a mentor, who is always available to discuss any issues or concerns, as well as just to provide support. Each mentor has a special budget to take their mentee out for lunches and coffees. At Gibson Dunn, we operate a genuine "open door" policy, with associates and partners regularly dropping into each other's offices to discuss ideas and provide mutual support.

Meet Our Future Trainee

Salamah Almarzooqi
Future Trainee, Dubai
Bachelor of Laws with English Laws, University of Aberdeen

Salamah spent the summer of 2026 in our Dubai office on the UAE vacation scheme. This September she heads to London to study for the SQE alongside our future London trainees, before coming back to Dubai to start her training contract in 2027. Salamah shares her experience below.

Why did you apply for the Gibson Dunn Vacation Scheme?

I applied for the Gibson Dunn vacation scheme as it is a unique opportunity to gain practical experience at a global firm, whilst being in an exciting, growing market. The firm's outstanding reputation of excellence was the initial attractor, but their clear and consistent commitment to growth, particularly in the Middle East, stood out to me. The opportunity to contribute to the work of this caliber, in a firm rapidly expanding its regional presence, was enticing. The vacation scheme was the ideal way to gain insight and experience this firsthand.

How did you find the application process?

The application process was smooth, transparent, and accessible. I found the opportunity through researching firms with offices in Dubai and applied directly through the online portal. The online application offered me the opportunity to demonstrate my knowledge of the firm with some short answer questions. I then went through a two-stage interview process. These interviews were more natural and conversational, allowing me to demonstrate my skills better.

What did you enjoy most about the Vacation Scheme?

I really enjoyed engaging with and learning about various practice areas in real depth. There was a good mix of sessions dedicated to this learning, practical work within your assigned practice area, and the opportunity to network and interact with the associates and partners. This depth made the scheme a real learning experience, and an authentic insight into what day-to-day life is like at a top global law firm.

How did you find the interaction with your supervisors, mentors and the other lawyers you met?

If I could highlight one thing, it would be the culture at Gibson Dunn. The warmth and openness of the people made the experience particularly memorable. The supervisors and partner mentors made their roles a priority and took a real hands-on approach. They were dedicated to including us in important work and offering real insight into their practice areas. I felt that everyone was genuinely interested in getting to know me, and willing to offer their time and guidance even amid demanding workloads. This made it easy to ask questions, seek feedback, and build real connections.

Can you tell us about some of the work-related tasks you were given?

The practice area I was allocated was Financial Regulation. Having a supervisor who was highly engaged and invested in my experience meant that I had the chance to work on real substantive matters. I especially appreciated being invited to sit in on client calls, allowing me to see firsthand how matters are managed and communicated in practice. I was also given interesting research tasks which involved me digging into specific legal questions and issues, such as digital asset regulation, and presenting my findings in a clear and concise manner. In addition, I was entrusted with the review and amendment of agreements, which even included inserting relevant regulatory provisions, deepening my understanding of how the law operates in practice.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of applying?

Put yourself out there and approach the application process with confidence. In addition to researching the firm, reach out to people on LinkedIn, attend events, and initiate conversations. Although it can be uncomfortable, you will find that lawyers at Gibson Dunn are incredibly welcoming and willing to share experiences and advice.

Asking questions and demonstrating intellectual curiosity will help you stand out. It is also important to invest time in building strong commercial awareness to better understand Gibson Dunn's positioning and the regional market as a whole. Ultimately, confidence, curiosity, and genuine interest take you a long way.

Meet Our Associate

Mostafa Mabrouk
Associate, Corporate, Dubai
Politics, Philosophy, and Law, King's College London

Gibson Dunn's reputation as a global elite law firm, particularly its recently growing presence in the Middle East, was a key factor in my decision to apply for the Training Programme. I was drawn to the firm's unique combination of high-profile, complex work and a culture that values individual initiative and collaboration. The opportunity to train alongside some of the leading practitioners in the region and be part of the firm's exciting new investment in the Middle East spoke to me. During my first year, the Dubai office grew significantly, the Abu Dhabi and Riyadh offices were established, and our regional presence across the three offices has more than doubled. Additionally, Gibson Dunn's emphasis on preparing and encouraging its trainees to take on increased levels of responsibility from the very start on bespoke cross-border matters resonated strongly with me, as it reflected the firm's commitment to integrating trainees as of their very first days.

During my training contract, I have had the opportunity to work across diverse practice areas, including, Corporate/M&A, Project Finance and Dispute Resolution. In my first seat with the Corporate/M&A team, I had the opportunity to be closely involved, as part of a small team, on several high-value cross-border acquisition deals involving targets in Peru, Chile, Panama and Egypt, with buyers and sellers in the UAE, Egypt and the UK. During my second seat with the Project Finance team, I had the chance to work on several mega projects in the upstream and downstream oil and gas sector. I have also assisted the finance team representing government entities as borrowers in landmark syndicated facilities; as a trainee, I was lucky to be exposed to drafting some of the documentation in these financing transactions – which goes to show the level of responsibility that the firm is willing to offer its trainees early on. For my third seat, I was offered a chance to do a secondment at the London office as part of their Corporate/M&A team. While I was in London, I forged long term friendships, made countless connections, and became better integrated within the Gibson Dunn network. I have also discovered a passion for hospitality work; I have assisted the team in representing Private Equity funds acquiring hotels, lenders providing funding to hotel owners, and several other aspects related to hospitality assets. The hospitality assets in these deals were located all around, from London and Rome to Zurich and Venice. In my last seat with the Dispute Resolution team in Dubai, I assisted the team in an ongoing high-profile dispute, and I had a chance to attend several strategy meetings with the team to discuss the client's objectives.

Beyond my day-to-day trainee responsibilities, I have been involved in several rewarding initiatives. First, the firm invites all new joiners, including trainees, to the New Lawyers Academy (the "NLA") which is a three-day retreat hosted yearly in the US. The NLA was a great opportunity to learn more about the firm and meet so many other colleagues from across the Gibson Dunn network. I have participated in several online law fairs to share insights about the Gibson Dunn training experience and answer questions from prospective applicants. In the Dubai office, we have also hosted short internships for students to try and share with them our experience of being part of Gibson Dunn in the Middle East and working in the legal sector. I have had the opportunity to meet with the students and deliver workshops around the typical tasks that trainees are involved in. These activities have enriched my experience and underscored Gibson Dunn's commitment to community impact and inclusivity.

Meet Our Associate

Mostafa Mabrouk
Associate, Corporate, Dubai
Politics, Philosophy, and Law, King's College London

I am very excited to have qualified into the Corporate/M&A team and look forward to continuing to grow and develop with the firm in the Middle East and as part of the Gibson Dunn network.

If you are considering applying to Gibson Dunn, my advice would be to:

Demonstrate your interest in the Middle East market:

Research Gibson Dunn's work in the region and the unique opportunities it offers. Try to showcase the reasons behind your desire to start your training and develop in the region.

Be commercially aware:

Demonstrate an understanding of the economic drivers and legal challenges impacting the region and the stakeholders operating here. It is essential to have an understating of how companies operate and what drives their success, as the clients you will be advising are mostly companies and will appreciate a lawyer that can speak their language.

Highlight your individuality:
Gibson Dunn values initiative, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a genuine passion for law. Be prepared to demonstrate how your skills and experiences align with these values. Take every opportunity to ask questions, engage with lawyers and immerse yourself in the firm's culture.

Meet Our Associate

Aliya Padhani
Associate, Financial Regulatory, Dubai
Human, Social and Political Sciences, Cambridge

I had always had law in the back of my mind as a possible career: it seemed like a practical path that played to many of my strengths, particularly analysing complex issues, forming arguments and communicating them clearly. After a nudge from my best friend, I applied for training contracts in my second year, secured one, and went on to complete the law conversion course and LPC before beginning my training at a British firm in London.

As part of my training contract, I spent six months in Dubai and loved both living in the region and the work. As someone who had always wanted to live somewhere sunny and close to the beach, it was a pretty perfect six months. I returned to London and qualified into the financial regulatory team. Regulatory work appealed to me because it is constantly evolving, but also cerebral and quite academic. I liked that combination: the subject matter is always current and commercially relevant, while still requiring you to really get into the detail and think through difficult questions.

While I was in London, an opportunity came up to join Gibson Dunn's financial regulatory practice in Dubai. Sameera Kimatrai, the partner I work with, was building her practice in the UAE at the time, and the chance to work with her and be part of that growth was an exciting one. It also came at a point in my life when the timing felt right to move out of London and return to Dubai. Professionally and personally, there really wasn't a compelling reason to say no.

I am part of our financial regulatory practice, which covers the different regulatory jurisdictions across the UAE and a broad spectrum of matters, from traditional financial services and fintech to virtual assets. The UAE has positioned itself as a global hub for digital assets, so a significant part of my practice is in that space. It is an exciting area to work in because the regulatory landscape is developing incredibly quickly and we often have the opportunity to advise on genuinely trailblazing matters.

A large part of my practice has involved licensing and helping clients navigate the UAE's different regulatory regimes. Highlights have included helping Circle and Binance obtain licences in the Abu Dhabi Global Market. More recently, I have been working on a number of innovative tokenisation projects, which are particularly interesting as the legal and regulatory frameworks continue to develop alongside the technology.

One of the things I enjoy most about the practice is how international it is. Our financial regulatory team works very collaboratively across the UAE, London, Asia and the US. We share clients and matters, draw on each other's expertise and regularly work together when a matter spans multiple jurisdictions. It genuinely feels like one global team - we have even met up in different parts of the world - and there is always someone to call on when you need a different perspective or particular expertise.

One of my favourite things about our UAE offices is their size. I came from a very large London office, where it was easy to get a little lost in the crowd. Our offices here are much more intimate: you genuinely know everyone, across different practice areas and levels of seniority, and you tend to have a good sense of what everyone is working on. I think that makes it particularly easy to ask questions, get involved in different matters and learn from people outside your immediate team.

The culture is also genuinely friendly and relaxed. People make time for one another and, importantly, we genuinely enjoy each other's company. We have weekly office coffees, monthly lunches and plenty of other opportunities to spend time together outside the day-to-day work.

For someone joining at the beginning of their career, I think the smaller-office environment is a real advantage. You are not one of hundreds of junior lawyers: people know who you are, what you are interested in and where you want to develop. At the same time, because we are so integrated with the wider Gibson Dunn network, you get the intimacy of a smaller office without sacrificing the opportunities and resources of a global firm.

Your Training – The Nuts And Bolts

Our UAE Training Programme offers a fantastic opportunity for those looking to train and qualify as a solicitor under English law, all while launching a dynamic legal career in the Middle East. Although our Training Programme is young, our UAE offices are full of deep and broad experience of training and managing trainees and junior lawyers. Many of our lawyers are preeminent in their fields of practice. They have all trained, qualified, and practised at a wide range of different firms and have a considerable breadth and depth of experience that they have invested and continue to invest in the Training Programme. This also makes us flexible; we have no traditional way of doing things. Our commitment is to excellence. This offers an extraordinary opportunity for ambitious trainees to take control of their careers from the outset, always supported by colleagues of the highest caliber.

Solicitors Qualifying Examination

Our Training Programme is designed to help trainees qualify as a Solicitor in England and Wales via the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) route. Trainees will need to pass the SQE and complete two years of qualifying work experience (QWE). Those that have not studied a qualifying Law degree in England and Wales will first need to complete the Postgraduate Diploma in Law (PGDL) before sitting the SQE. We cover the full cost of the SQE and PGDL, and provide a competitive maintenance grant of £20,000 for each. There is flexibility in how and when trainees complete their studies, and we will discuss this with candidates upon making an offer.

Trainee Seats

During the two years of QWE, trainees spend time in different practice areas, known as "seats," including the opportunity to get experience in project development, project finance, M&A, corporate, finance, funds, regulatory, capital markets and dispute resolution. This variety enables our trainees to develop the skills and insights that are crucial to becoming a first-rate lawyer. There may also be opportunities for overseas secondments to the firm's other international offices. The firm is committed to ensuring that our trainees can pursue the careers they wish to the greatest extent possible. During each seat, a partner or senior associate supervises trainees. Our partners and associates have a wealth of experience, and we believe that observing how a senior lawyer goes about work is quite simply the best way to learn. Trainees will also have the opportunity to become more widely involved in the work of the practice group. In addition to regular informal feedback as well as a mid-seat review, our trainees undertake a comprehensive review at the end of each seat which provides a fantastic opportunity to discuss progress.

Structured Training

In addition to day-to-day "on the job" training, all our trainees benefit from a personalised formal training programme carefully developed by the firm, designed to provide the skills needed to thrive at Gibson Dunn, including seminars and workshops on substantive law as well as topics such as commercial awareness, drafting, negotiation, advocacy and networking.

Getting Involved

Training and Retreats

At Gibson Dunn, formal and informal training and in-house networking does not stop with the end of your training contract but continues throughout your career at the firm.

Training: all partners, associates and trainees attend regular practice group training and update sessions, many in collaboration with our international offices. We also provide regular training seminars for our clients, which our associates and trainees play a key role in developing and presenting.

US Retreats: Gibson Dunn also has a number of lawyer academies and retreats, organised according to year group and practice area, enabling our lawyers to get to know, and learn with, their peers in other offices. These events are enormously popular.

Free-Market System

All Gibson Dunn associates are empowered to accept or decline work assignments from partners. This gives our associates greater flexibility to develop and shape their careers than is possible at most other law firms.

Client Development Allowance

Every lawyer is allocated an annual marketing budget to use in entertaining clients, contacts, and friends in the business community, thereby fostering an entrepreneurial spirit. In addition to this allowance, our associates are encouraged to devise, design, and host their own client marketing events to which they invite their peer clients and contacts. Trainees also benefit from this allowance.

Professional Development Allowance

All Gibson Dunn lawyers and trainees are given a budget for the purpose of funding training sessions and seminars outside the firm. This means that, in addition to formal and informal in-house training, our lawyers can take advantage of the high-quality events taking place on their doorstep.

Book Allowance

All lawyers and trainees at Gibson Dunn have a book allowance to enable them to purchase specialist texts or periodicals relevant to their area of law or personal interest.

Mentoring Programme

Every trainee at Gibson Dunn can participate in the firm's mentoring programme. Mentors regularly arrange lunches and other informal meetings. The key goals of the mentoring programme are to foster and enhance personal and professional growth and opportunities.

Pro Bono Work

Pro Bono Work

Gibson Dunn has a long-standing and greatly valued tradition of service to the community. We are privileged to be able to give back to the communities that have contributed to our success and believe that community involvement adds an important dimension to the growth and development of all of our lawyers, both as lawyers and as citizens of those communities.

Awards List

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – Robert F. Mullen Pro Bono Award

The Lawyer Awards – Pro Bono Initiative of the Year Award

State Bar of Texas – Pro Bono Excellence Awards /The Houston Bar Association – Harris County Heart of Pro Bono Award

Financial Times – Europe Innovative Lawyer Awards

Sanctuary for Families – Above & Beyond Pro Bono Achievement Award

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) – Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year Award

Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) – Advancement in Animal Law Pro Bono Achievement Award

PILnet – Local Impact Award

Firmwide Pro Bono Hours in 2025:

240K+

Firmwide Pro Bono Hours Since 2014:

1.4M+

Lawyers Participated in Pro Bono in 2025:

2,000+

Average Pro Bono Hours (Firmwide):

106

New Pro Bono Matters Opened in 2025:

750+

Value of Pro Bono Hours in 2025:

$321M+

Next Steps

Apply Here

Salary

First year trainee: AED 319,150 (approximately £65,000)

Second year trainee: AED 343,700 (approximately £70,000)

Maintenance grants

PGDL: £20,000

SQE: £20,000

Applications for our UAE Vacation Scheme and direct Training Contract open on 1 September 2026. We recruit on a rolling basis, so early applications are encouraged. The final deadline for submissions is 8 January 2027.

UAE Vacation Scheme

Our Vacation Scheme offers a unique opportunity to gain meaningful legal experience in either our Dubai or Abu Dhabi office. It's designed to give you a realistic insight into our work, culture, and clients, helping you assess whether a long-term career with us is right for you. We're looking for individuals who are genuinely interested in pursuing a future at the firm, and for those whose long-term goal is to secure a training contract, performance during the scheme forms a key part of our assessment process.

Vacation schemes are how we get to know our future trainees, and how they get to know us. We recruit almost all of our trainees this way, so if you're thinking of applying, a vacation scheme is the best place to start.

The scheme will take place in summer 2027, with exact dates confirmed in due course.

UAE Training Programme

This route is designed for individuals who are ready to begin their legal training and qualify as a solicitor under the England and Wales qualification route, whilst being based in the UAE.

Successful candidates will undertake a two-year training contract in either our Dubai or Abu Dhabi office, gaining first-rate work experience with leading lawyers in their fields, together with excellent practical training, mentoring, and support within a collegial and respectful environment.

Training will commence following the completion of any outstanding academic requirements, such as the Postgraduate Diploma in Law (PGDL) and the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE).

Eligibility

We welcome applications from final or penultimate year LLB students (UK Qualifying degree only), final year students on a non-UK-qualifying law course (e.g. legal studies), final year non-law students, career changers and recent graduates.

We particularly welcome applications from UAE nationals.

Applicants should have:

- At least three A levels at ABB or above (or equivalent), and have achieved, or expect to achieve, a 2:1 degree or above;
- Strong ties to the Middle East and a genuine interest in building a legal career in the region;
- Native or fluent Arabic, both written and spoken (preferred); and
- Strong communication and organisational skills, with the ability to work closely with partners and associates in small, focused teams and gain early exposure to client work.

If you have any questions regarding our opportunities, please do not hesitate to contact our Graduate Recruitment & Development Team at graduaterecruitment@gibsondunn.com.

GIBSON DUNN