

GILLESPIE MACANDREW



**Be part of
something
different**



Introduction

Welcome to our trainee recruitment brochure. I hope you will find everything you need to support you in making your application to Gillespie Macandrew – and importantly I hope it encourages you to do so.

At Gillespie Macandrew, you will find a welcoming and supportive environment for you to learn and flourish. Trainees are a critical part of our business and we look forward to welcoming a new cohort each year and supporting them on their journey into law. We have a responsibility to you – not just in terms of developing your knowledge of the law but in shaping you as a lawyer of the future and we take this seriously.

So what can you expect?

- We are looking for partners of the future, not just a trainee or NQ for now. Our retention rate to NQ is very high, and several of our more recent partner appointments are of those who joined us as trainees. Training at GM continues all the way through your career, and we have pioneered a respected and successful Training Academy to cover the last step from Associate or Legal Director to Partner.
- Our culture is something we believe is vitally important to the success of our business and of each person working here. At GM we believe in inclusivity and transparency and short lines of communication from top to bottom. We also believe in being not just good, but great – great at what we do for our clients and a great place to work in order to attract the very best. And with that, we value the contribution of each and every one of our team and encourage you to have your say right from day 1.
- GM is unique in Scotland in having no Managing Partner and instead being run by a commercially experienced non exec Chair and an executive CEO, neither of whom are lawyers. That gives us a very big advantage in that I focus entirely on our strategy for success and running the business and let our partners focus on their clients. In today's fast changing world, having a broader experience from outside the legal sector could not be more important. I believe this has helped us to become one of the fastest growing large law firms in Scotland.

In the following pages you will hear from our current trainees as well as some of our newly qualified solicitors, about their experience of working at GM. They have been in your position and hopefully you will find common ground and identify with some of the paths they have taken. You will also find some useful tips for your application – please do read these – we want you to get the best out of this process.

Above all, good luck.

Robert Graham-Campbell
Chief Executive Officer

5 Qs for our NQs

Jamie Seath,
Senior Solicitor – Land & Rural Business



What were your first impressions of GM?
My first impressions were as a work experience student in my first year at Stirling University and what struck me was that for a firm of its size it felt really down to earth and everyone was very approachable.

What three words would you use to describe GM?
Approachable, reliable and positive.

What is the best thing about working at GM?
The people you work with every day. You will appreciate that they teach you, push you and support you along the way. It genuinely feels like you're in a team and everyone is pulling in the same direction – which has been really critical these last few months considering the pandemic.

What has been the most challenging?
It sounds obvious but swapping seats is most commonly difficult for a trainee. I know it personally took me a couple of moves to get used to the process but it's similar for everyone so you're all in it together. It definitely helped me to improve my organisation as I knew I had a workload to pass onto a fellow trainee/colleague after each six months and so it encouraged you to take ownership over your files.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of applying?
Really think about why you want to work at GM and why that matches up with you as a person and what you hope to be as a solicitor. That will help you decide if the Firm is the right fit for you and assist in making your application stand out.

Laura Fairgrieve,
Solicitor – Private Client



What were your first impressions of GM?
My first impression of GM was how friendly the teams were, from NQs right up to Partners. Everyone is very supportive and you are absolutely not just left to your own devices to muddle along.

What three words would you use to describe GM?
Reliable, friendly and collaborative.

What is the best thing about working at GM?
The best thing about working at GM has been being able to get involved in good quality work at a junior level, both as a trainee and now as a NQ. As a trainee you are not just given easy or repetitive work and are able to get involved with interesting work with people from across your team straight away.

What has been the most challenging?
The most challenging aspect has been adapting to working from home recently. As a trainee it is a little more difficult when your colleagues aren't around you to ask silly questions. However, as home working has evolved over the last few months, it has definitely become much easier to connect with colleagues regularly on video calls etc.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of applying?
Don't just submit a generic application with all the buzzwords you can possibly fit in. Demonstrate that you have a genuine interest in GM's practice areas and why you want to work at GM.

My Journey to Law

Anais Banag,
Solicitor - Commercial Property



My journey into law began in front of the television, where I was introduced to the dramatic and complex world of lawyers in Law and Order.

Since then, I have had wonderful experiences and opportunities that have allowed me to be in this position.

In high school, I faced the common barrier that many prospective law students face: I knew no lawyers and very little of the law. After being turned away by a local firm, due to my sparse CV, I became actively involved with the Edinburgh University Access to the Professions. This allowed me to develop a clearer outlook of what would be involved in a law career but also to forge my own connections, which I then used to set up further work experience opportunities.

I attended the University of Edinburgh for both my LLB and Diploma. During my third year, I studied in Belgium. My Erasmus year was academically challenging with a focus on the law of the European Union. It was interesting, providing me with a different academic and legal outlook.

During my fourth year, I volunteered at the Scottish Child Law Centre. Being able to help the most vulnerable in the community was rewarding and furthered my appreciation for the legal profession. Despite the stress from my final year, I felt even more determined to push myself and join my dream career.

During my diploma, I became a tutor at the University, tutoring Property Law, Trust and Succession Law and European Union Law. Tutoring whilst study was demanding but indispensable to my academic and professional development. Having been in the same position as the students only a few years ago, I felt privileged to have a hand in helping others along in their journey in law.

Sam Conington,
Solicitor - Land & Rural Business



I knew early on that I wanted to study law. This interest manifested from watching too many episodes of the The Bill and reading John Grisham books.

I remember being asked in first year of high school what I wanted to do and I said “probably a policeman or lawyer”. Not the answer you would often expect from a twelve year old but it helped that I had come to the realisation early on that a professional footballer or cricketer was an unrealistic ambition. You could say that with such a pessimistic outlook I was destined to work in the legal sector.

Having this ambition benefited me during school because it gave me a focus. From then on I focused on getting the grades to study I studied at Aberdeen University for five years and thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Granite City.

Did I always want to be a lawyer? The short answer is no and, if I’m honest, I am still not fully convinced. It is difficult to know for definite, especially when there are potentially so many options out there. I might pack it all in and become a spear fisherman in Fiji.

Studying law is different to practice so being able to predict the area you want to work in after university is tricky. When I left university I had an idea of what I wanted to try but was aware this might change when I began my traineeship For example, I disliked conveyancing during my diploma but I have found that I really enjoy it in practice Keeping an open mind is important because you may end up working in an area that you never thought you would. I have talked to a number of qualified solicitors who had their mind changed or came across their chosen area by chance.

In my traineeship I learnt a lot about the profession which isn’t possible at University and I know I’m on the right career path.

Application Guidance

Tips for your application form:

Make your application clear and simple to read. We don’t want to guess your story – tell us!

- We want to know **WHY** you wish to work for Gillespie Macandrew – do your research and set out your reasons clearly.
- Please don’t copy and paste the same information to every firm, tailor your application to us.
- Please proof read your application for spelling mistakes! Can a family member or friend assist?
- Include your exam results in full, you may be asked for proof of qualifications later.
- We want to know of any relevant work experience and how your skills may be transferable to a law firm. A term time job in customer service may have taught you more valuable communication skills than one week of work experience in an office.
- If you do not have any work experience, don’t worry, you can include details of any clubs, societies, volunteering experiences or personal pursuits that may reflect your unique skill set.
- Be self-aware and know your own strengths and weaknesses.
- Be open to exploring different areas of law as legal work in practice can be very different to what you learn in your studies.
- Use the resources of your college or university Careers Service as they can provide invaluable support at this time.

For further details on our interview process including the format and practicalities, please visit our website gillespiemacandrew.co.uk/careers/traineeships/ and follow us on our social media channels for updates on the process and deadlines.

GILLESPIE MACANDREW

Find out how we can help you
GILLESPIEMACANDREW.CO.UK
Edinburgh | Glasgow | Perth