

ESADE LAW SCHOOL: WORKING HOLISTICALLY TO ENSURE EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY



**EDUARDO
BERCHÉ MORENO**

MARIA OBIOLS

**JORGE
CASTINEIRA**

MIRIAM CLOTA

ESADE LAW SCHOOL



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



**EPD
Feedback
Loop**

CONTRIBUTORS

EDUARDO BERCHE MORENO

Esade Law School Dean

Email :
eduardo.berche@esade.edu

JORGE CASTINEIRA

appointed Esade Law
School Dean and
Associate Professor

Email:
jorge.castineira@esade.edu

MIRIAM CLOTA

Project Manager Esade
Law School

Email:
miriam.clota@esade.edu

MARIA OBIOLS

International Career
Services and Human
Resources Director

Email:
maria.obiols@esade.edu

SUMMARY

ESADE programs are designed to provide holistic graduate employability for all students. The Professional Careers Service (SCP) and Quality Unit at ESADE Law School work closely together to ensure the workplace relevance of the Law curriculum and assist in the overall employability of its students. The SCP helps students set personalized goals and provides tools and activities (including mandatory internships) to increase the employability of individual students. In parallel, the Quality Unit ensures that the curriculum is current and relevant to the changing legal market. Evidence from a range of different evaluation sources, including post-activity questionnaires and regular meetings with class and club student representatives, show that this holistic approach to employability has real impact on the high salary and employment rates of ESADE Law graduates.

CONTEXT

ESADE Law School is a prestigious law school located in the metropolitan area of Barcelona in Spain. It is part of the ESADE Business and Law School, which is a private academic institution affiliated with Ramon Llull University. ESADE Law School is known for its rigorous academic programs and its focus on international and comparative law. The school offers a wide variety of degree programs, including a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) program, a Master of Laws (LLM) program, and a Doctorate in Law (PhD) program.

ESADE ranks highly in skills and employability in several of the most prestigious national and international rankings. These include, #1 - Innovative Education (Iberoamérica) - El Economista EEMM; #3 - New skills & Learning Worldwide (new ways of thinking) - Financial Times Executive Education; #2 - Salary Increase (Europe) - Financial Times MBA; and, #5 - Employability Worldwide - QS MSc Marketing (see Appendix I for more details).

Additionally, ESADE Law School has been accredited with progress towards excellence by the Educational Agency of the Catalanian Government (AQU). This accreditation was based on, among other factors, the high rates of employment of the students of ESADE Law School. At the international level, ESADE Business School obtained its first accreditation in 1999. To date, ESADE has obtained accreditation from the AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA.



One of the main features of ESADE Law School is its emphasis on experiential learning. The School offers a variety of programs that allow students to gain practical experience by working with real clients and cases. ESADE Law School also has a strong international focus, and many of its programs include opportunities for students to study abroad or participate in international moot court competitions. ESADE emphasises practical training and preparing graduates for a rapidly changing legal market. In recognition of this work, the School has received an 'excellent' rating from the regional authorities. ESADE has strict selection criteria based on entry tariff (which is the standard criteria of selection in Spain) alongside a high standard of English proficiency, and successfully passing an interview with the faculty. Moreover, all students need to complete an internship at a law or law-related firm as part of their studies. Our programs are designed with input from a professional council composed of top legal professionals from both public and private sector organisations and law firms. These employer advisors are a key source of advice for ESADE Law School and play a major role in course and programme development.

A key factor in our ability to review and update our programs fairly frequently and responsively is the relatively small size of the School. In fact, ESADE is a comparatively small and agile institution in comparison to other law schools in Catalonia. As a result, the School has been able to adopt a holistic approach to the inclusion of employability in every one of its programs. From the outset of their studies at ESADE, students are faced with complex cases drawing on real-life examples. In addition, all students have access to the Careers Service (SCP) throughout their studies. The Career Services team is part of an integrated ecosystem which includes the main stakeholders of the organization, including academics, admissions, and students. This integration, combined with a specialized and personalized service, allows for proactive, tailored support of our future graduates and ensures extraordinary synergies across all departments.

Interestingly, few students at ESADE need to use the Careers Service to source employment post-graduation as most of the students acquire a job independently immediately on graduation from the program. This is partly possible because of the Careers Service support that students can access and can take advantage of throughout their program. In fact, in their final year of study 75%-90% of students will have applied to job offers published through the Careers Portal and will have participated in an average of 3 advising sessions with a Careers Adviser to discuss their career aspirations.

Careers-focused advising and orientation sessions are presented in two different formulations and run throughout our programs. Firstly, we hold general advising sessions aimed at generic careers coaching. These sessions support careers topics of more general interest. Secondly, we run specialized advising sessions tailored by economic sector. This provides a tailored service to address students' career concerns and market demands. These sessions are arranged in collaboration with the Professional Committee of the School, which includes representatives from law firms, Public Notaries and legal servants, and from the in-house legal departments of companies.

By the end of the 4 years of the degree, students will have completed comprehensive work-based training that will allow them to enter a range of professions directly or indirectly related to the legal field. This professional training relies upon the completion of external internships, which provide essential professional skills training and legal experience. The internships require the completion of a range of training activities in an office, company, organization or institution for a minimum of 100 hours.

The main types of skills and knowledge acquired by the students during their internships are outlined below:

- Preparation of documentation for presentations.
- Acquiring an ability to critically analyse the legal system.
- Adequately interpret the legal rules applicable to the different reviews and cases presented.
- Acquiring the ability to create and structure norms in the face of different factual assumptions.
- Improvement in the ability to read, interpret and write legal texts.
- Search, select and analyse information from different legal sources.
- Improvement of legal argumentation techniques.
- Identify and understand the range of pathways available across the legal profession and develop specialist knowledge in their own chosen career pathway.

Each student's internship tutor or supervisor will adapt their individual workplace tasks to ensure the achievement of these key competencies within their specific organisational context.



METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The activities outlined above were all developed by the Careers Service, and the Program Management and Quality Units (QU) of ESADE Law School, in conjunction with student associations. These activities are just one part of a comprehensive employability program designed to prepare Law students for the job market and ensure that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their careers. The program – our Professional Development Program (PDP) – is based on a holistic approach that combines career guidance, counselling, training, and networking. These key activities are supported by robust quality assurance processes that ensure that the programs remain of high quality and meet the needs of the students and the job market.

The Professional Development Program (PDP) revolves around two fundamental axes. The first is self-awareness – aimed at supporting participants to better understand themselves, their motivations, values, and interests. The second is job market knowledge – supporting students to develop specialist knowledge of their particular career pathway and to develop the competencies required to enter it.

The process begins with the exit profile or learning objectives detailed in the program specification. This is the reference framework for the Professional Career Service (SCP) and for the students of each of the programs delivered by the SCP. In programs lasting one or two years, such as master's programs, the SCP contacts the students to start preparing their Curriculum Vitae (CV) as soon as the admissions process has been completed. At this early stage, the student is asked to fill in their preferences questionnaire in terms of future employment. In this questionnaire, they need to indicate their sectoral, functional, and geographical preferences. This questionnaire is then used to organize individually tailored training sessions on campus. The CV is also included in the Law School's promotional 'Curriculum Book' which is sent to all of the School's collaborating companies. This book helps promote the students and their professional experience to companies with the aim of helping them to secure employment at the end of their studies.

In contrast, for our degree program students, work with the Careers Service starts from their second year. At the beginning of this academic year, the Careers Service provides each Program Director with the following information designed to enhance their students' employability:

- i.** An overview of the careers tools that have been made available to the students. For example, their dedicated job portal, and the resource centre with resources designed to develop their skills as candidates, including the planning of group and individual activities.
- ii.** A detailed careers calendar which includes the options for a range of group activities. For example, skills seminars, market knowledge sessions, Assessment Centres, sector-specific training sessions, and Career Forums with companies.
- iii.** support activities for students. These sessions include general careers check-in sessions, mock interviews to help them master the selection process, optimization and adaptation of the CV for each type of company, and cover letters.

At the end of each academic year, the Careers Service works with every Program Management team to review the results of the previous year and propose improvements for the next academic year.

Placements and internships

From the beginning of the school year, the Careers Service starts group and individual activities with the students, which will last for the whole academic year. This includes several mandatory internship opportunities. The Careers Service maintains direct contact with national and international companies, to obtain internship opportunities and full-time job offers, which are then promoted among students through the ESADE job portal (see Figure 1):

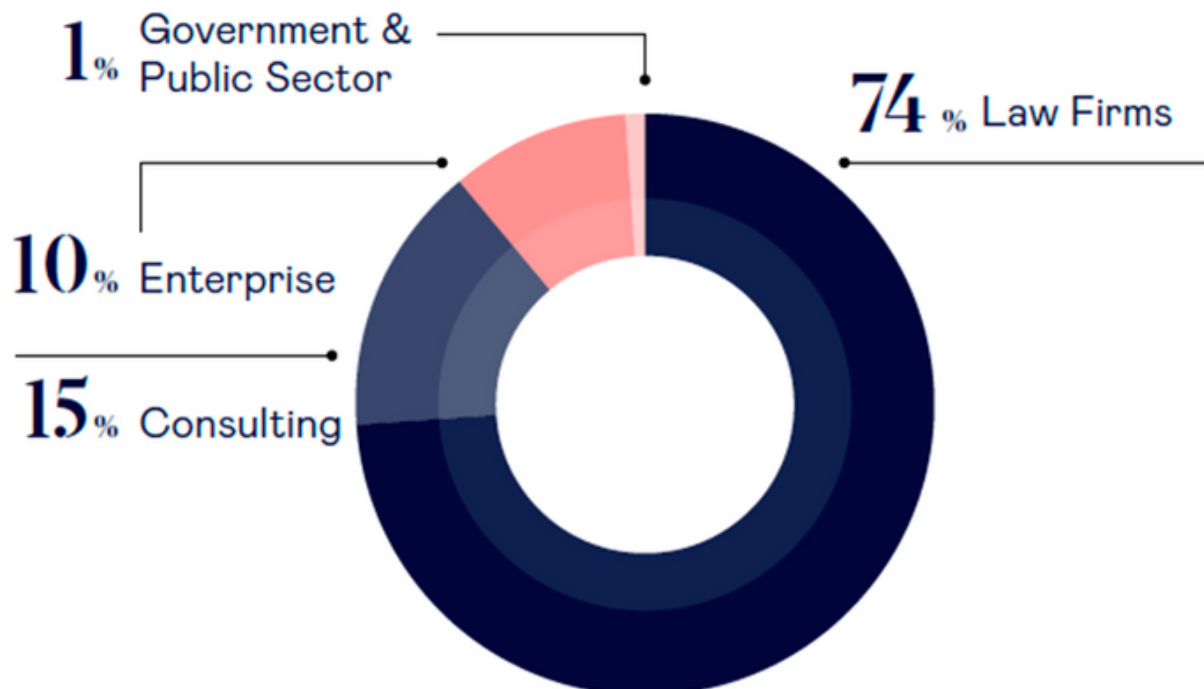


Figure 1: Placement of ESADE Master's degree in Law MUA by sector, 2022

The Careers Service is also responsible for managing internship agreements - both embedded and extra-curricular placements or internships - and full-time job offers. The Careers Service not only manages job offers and internships from companies, but even organizes the interviews with companies that result from them. Once the academic program is over, the Careers Service then monitors each student individually and sends them a questionnaire (Employment Form) to fill in. This questionnaire identifies their employment situation at the end of their studies. With this information, the Careers Service produces the final employability statistics for publication in our annual employment report[1]. For one year after graduation, the Careers Service provides job search support for those students who continue to look for work after completing their studies. ESADE Alumni also offer a specific 1-1 mentoring service for former students.

[1] Some additional information could be found here <https://www.esade.edu/en/careers>.

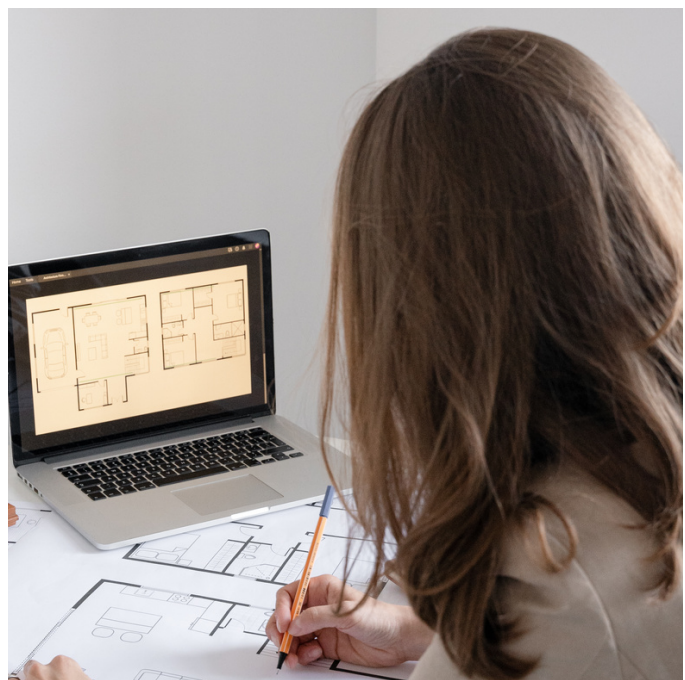
The internship mentioned above is mandatory for all students and provides the students with 4 ECTS credits. Students are monitored by two tutors - an academic tutor and a professional tutor. The academic tutor is always a professor of the faculty, and the professional tutor or workplace mentor is appointed by the company where the internship is to be carried out. The workplace mentor supervises the tasks performed by the student. These tutors will mentor the student for the duration of the internship and deal with any issues or queries that may arise. The tutors will also ensure that the tasks carried out by the student and the evaluation documentation required are submitted on time.

The final student evaluation is based on the assessment made by the academic tutor and within the Academic Report of External Internships, which is completed by the student themselves. In this report, which must be submitted at the end of the internship period, the students are asked to reflect on what they have learnt during their internship. The other half of the final evaluation depends on the professional tutor's assessment of the student's knowledge, engagement, learning capacity and adaptation during the internship.

Students are also provided with the opportunity to complete additional extra-curricular internships, which are worth 2 additional ECTS credits. Even though these additional internships are not mandatory, almost all students complete them.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The ESADE Law School Professional Development Program is designed to ensure the holistic embedding of employability across all programs and delivered to all students. Whilst there is currently no formal evaluation of the program itself, there is substantial evidence that the program has a significant impact on the students' career development, reflected in the high salaries and employment rates enjoyed by ESADE Law graduates.



The program has a strong reputation for providing students with excellent career prospects upon graduation. According to recent statistics, 91% of students who take the bar exam find work after completing their studies ([ESADE Bachelors Degree in Law, 2020](#)). This is testament to the quality of education that students receive at ESADE, as well as to the School's commitment to preparing students for successful careers in the legal field. One of the key factors that contributes to ESADE's success in placing graduates in desirable jobs is the support provided by the School's career services team. In fact, 90% of students find work thanks to the professionals at ESADE Careers, who provide guidance and assistance throughout the job search process ([ESADE Bachelor's Degree in Law, 2020](#)). This includes access to job postings, networking opportunities, and other resources designed to help students secure their desired job. The starting salary for ESADE Law School graduates is also impressive, with an average of €31,600 in 2020 ([ESADE Bachelor's Degree in Law, 2020](#)). This is a reflection of the high demand for talented legal professionals, as well as the skills and knowledge that ESADE students acquire during their time at the School. For those interested in pursuing a legal career within the civil service, such as a Judge, Notary, or Diplomat, the median amount of time in which students obtained a position was only 2-3 years - significantly lower than the national average of over 4 years ([ESADE Bachelor's Degree in Law, 2020](#)). This is a testament to the strength of ESADE's legal program and the success of its graduates in securing highly sought-after positions in the legal field.

The program is designed with input from a professional council composed of top legal professionals from both public and private sectors, which ensures that the curriculum is current and relevant to the changing legal market. As outlined in this case study, the SCP provides various tools and activities to increase the employability of students, including job portals, resource centres, skills seminars, market knowledge sessions, Assessment Centres, sector-specific training sessions, and Career Forums with companies. The SCP also maintains direct contact with national and international companies, to obtain internship opportunities and full-time job offers, which are promoted among students through the ESADE job portal. The SCP provides job search support for one year for students who continue to look for work after completing their studies.

REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

This case study provides a brief insight into the program implemented by the Professional Careers Service and the Quality Unit of ESADE Law school and its impact on the employability of their students. The program's focus on activities such as entry-stage CV formulation and career preference questionnaires, the organization of training sessions on campus, the effective communication of careers tools, and the development of direct contact with national and international companies, to obtain internship opportunities and full-time job offers, all contribute to the School's success. This focus on practical professional training ensures that our graduates remain employable in a rapidly changing legal market.

REFERENCES AND HYPERLINKS

ESADE Business School (2023), ESADE Careers Service. Available at: <https://www.ESADE.edu/en/careers> (Accessed 12 July 2023)

ESADE Business School (2023), Bachelor Degree in Law. Available at: <https://www.ESADE.edu/bachelor/es/programas/grado-en-derecho/salidas-profesionales> (Accessed 12 July 2023)

ESADE Business School (2023), Bachelor Degree in Business Administration. Available at: <https://www.ESADE.edu/bachelor/es/programas/doble-grado-derecho-direccion-empresas/salidas-profesionales> (Accessed 12 July 2023)

ESADE Business School (2023), ESADE Alumni. Available at: <https://www.ESADE.edu/es/conoce-ESADE/ESADEalumni> (Accessed 12 July 2023)

ESADE Business School (2023), ESADE Masters in Advocacy. Available at: <https://www.ESADE.edu/masters-law-school/es/master/universitario-abogacia-especializacion/futuro-profesional/datos-de-colocacion> (Accessed 12 July 2023)

Master Universitario en Abogacía:

Google (2020) Google terms of service. Available at: <https://policies.google.com/terms?hl=en-US> (Accessed: 11 May 2020).

APPENDIX I

ESADE ranks highly in skills and employability in several of the most prestigious national and international rankings. The most employability relevant and current positions include the following:

Educational experience and innovation

- #1 - Innovative Education (Iberoamérica) - El Economista EEMM
- #3 - Educational Experience (Europe) - The Economist MBA
- #3 - New skills & Learning Worldwide (new ways of thinking) - Financial Times Executive Education
- #5 - International Course Experience - Financial Times MBA
- QS 5 stars for Online learning
- #17th of the world Business & Management Studies / #8 Europa - QS World University Ranking

Pedagogical quality

- #4 - Best Executive Education Worldwide - Financial Times Executive Education
- #8 - Best EMBA Europe - QS#10 - Best MBA in Europe - Financial Times
- #2nd - Spanish faculty with best performing outcome- CyD
- #17 best European school- Financial Times

Diversity

- #3 - Diversity Worldwide - QS EMBA (Jun 22)
- #3 - International Students - Financial Times MIM
- #9 - Female faculty (Non-US) - Financial Times MBA
- #3 - Student/Faculty diversity (Europe) - The Economist MBA

Startup Ecosystem

- #1 - Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Size (m2) (Europe) - Poets&Quants
- #3 - Best MBA for Entrepreneurs Worldwide - Poets&Quants
- #2 - Best MBA for Entrepreneurial teaching (Non - US) - Financial Times MBA

Professional development

- #2 - Salary Increase (Europe) - Financial Times MBA
- #3 - International Course Experience Worldwide - Global Mindset - Financial Times MBA
- #3- Potential to network (Europe) - The Economist MBA
- #5 - Employability Worldwide - QS MSc Marketing



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



EPD
Feedback
Loop