

Legal Education & Legal Careers in Russia

Presented by:

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Legal Education

General:

- Best law schools of the country:
Moscow State University Department of Law and
Saint-Petersburg State University Department of Law.
- Usually law schools are part of a university (“**Law departments**”); they might also be separate entities (“**Juridical institutes**”).
- Most law schools are **state institutions** (*financed by the government*).
- More and more private law schools appear every year.
- The educational establishments are regulated by **federal laws** (*The Ministry of General and Professional Education oversees all educational institutions, and establishes educational standards for higher education*).



Legal Education

Admission to law school:

- Legal education takes from 4 to 6 years depending on the program:
 - 4y. – Bachelor's degree**
 - 5y. – Specialist's degree**
 - 6y. – Master's degree**
- Admission is generally based on **oral examinations**: Russian literature (oral and/or written), Russian history, Science of Law.
- Top students are exempt from most of the entrance examinations based upon their excellent secondary school records.



Legal Education

Tuition:

- Education in state universities is **free** (sponsored by the state) for students who earn a passing score on entrance examinations.
- In order to get additional financing state universities also accept students who do not earn a passing score on entrance exams; these students pay tuition.
- Private law schools charge tuition to all of the students because they are not financed by the state.

Legal Education

Studies:

- Law school curriculum combines **lectures** with tutorial style seminars and summer clerkships.
- Most classes are **mandatory** and cover almost all fields of law tested by oral exams at the end of each semester (*January and July*).
- Students may also take optional classes – “special courses”.
- Grading system: from **5** (“**Excellent**”) to **2** (“**Non-satisfactory**”). 3 (“**Satisfactory**”) is a passing score. 2 implies that the exam on the subject should be retaken (3 attempts are allowed).
- **No official GPA**, no credit limits.



Legal Education

Degree:

- Successful completion of state exams at the end of the final year in law school and defending of senior thesis makes students eligible for practice.
- The generally accepted degree – **Specialist** (5 years of studies).
Bachelor's degree is sometimes considered not sufficient by state institutions (e.g. courts).
Master's degree is not necessary but sometimes is desirable by an employer.
- Post-graduate education:
 - 3 years for **Candidate of Legal Science** degree after defending a dissertation;
 - **Doctor of Legal Science** degree after defending the second dissertation.



Licensing

- **Not mandatory** for those who provide legal consulting services.
- However, only advocates, i.e. members of professional associations of trial lawyers are admitted to represent legal entities in court (*according to the new 2002 Law on Advocacy*).
- Exceptions:
 - In-house lawyers and executives may appear in court on behalf of their employers;
 - Representatives of individuals who may appoint any person to appear in court on their behalf.
- In order to become an advocate one has to have **at least 2 years** of professional experience and has to sit for the Bar.



Legal Career in Russia

General:

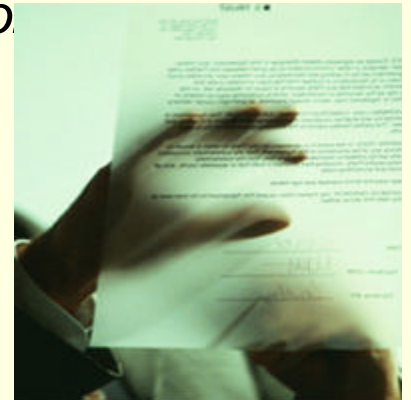
- Very **prestigious**, one of the best paid (*along with economist*).
- Has features of “**family heredity**” (*generations of lawyers*).
- Law students usually start to practice in their 3rd/4th year of studies (*part-time work as a paralegal or lawyer’s assistant in legal offices*).
- Demand for lawyers is **high**, thus job search is much less competitive than in US or Europe.



Career options

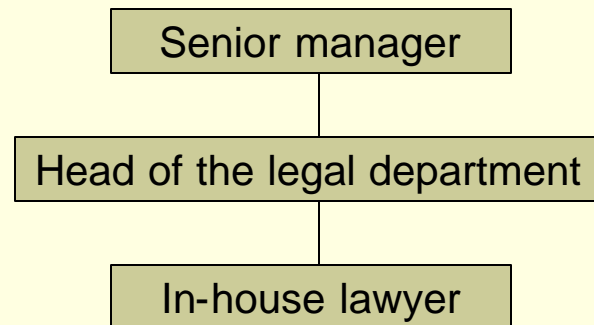
*Graduating from Law school at the age of 21-22 y.o
(on average) a young lawyer has
the following career options:*

- **Corporate (In-House) Lawyer**
- **Associate in a Law firm**
- **State lawyer**
- **Sole Practitioner**



Corporate Practice

- One of the **most popular** choices.
- Work as a sole **General counsel** (in smaller companies) or within a **Legal department** (for larger companies).
- General counsels have to deal with all kinds of legal issues the company may face (*general specialization*)
- Within legal departments each lawyer is responsible for his own branch, e.g. shareholders' meetings, mergers & acquisitions, licenses, copyrights, litigation (*narrow specialization*).
- **No strict hierarchy:**



- Career opportunities – **Head of the Legal department** or non-legal **managerial position**.

Law firms

- Mostly well-known **US law firms** (*Baker&McKenzie, White&Case, Jones Day, Coudert Brothers, etc.*).
- Russian law firms are **few**, they follow the structural organization and practices of Western law firms.
- Young associates do **not** have any particular specialization.
- Hierarchy is **strict**, promotion to a higher level usually takes more time.
- Young associates are **not** usually motivated by “making partner”.
- Work in a law firm is considered good background for position of In-House lawyer.



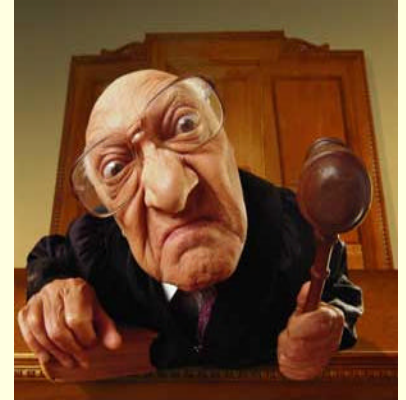
Legal advice offices

- **Intermediate position** between Law firms and State lawyers.
- Formed by the territorial Bars to provide legal assistance to citizens.
- All lawyers should be **members of the Bar**.
- Usually provide legal representation in courts as well as perform pro bono work (*mandatory according to the Bar rules*).



State lawyers

- Not very popular, not well-paid.
- Institutions: state courts, law enforcement institutions, tax inspections, state agencies regulating land, property, natural resources, and copyright issues.
- Hierarchy and terms of promotion are strictly defined by law.



Sole practitioners

- Getting more popular.
- Lawyers in private practice work mostly within self-managed Colleagues of Advocates (formed in accordance with territorial subdivisions).
- 19,000 advocates in more than 100 colleges.
- Separately: Notary (used to be within the state jurisdiction, but after 2002 it was fully transferred to the sphere of private practice; notaries are treated as sole proprietorships; subject to licensing).



Other issues

- Western influence: Growing prestige of working for **Western law firms** which compete with stable and popular In-house counsel positions.
- Ethical Rules: There are **no generally accepted ethical rules** for lawyers, but there is a certain movement in this direction (e.g. Corporate behavior code issued by Federal Commission of Securities Regulation in 2002) .
- Law & Politics: **No connection** between legal profession and politics, usually lawyers are not engaged in politics, nor do they strive for it in course of their legal careers.
- Attitude: **No negative attitude** towards lawyers in society (yet). It is a prestigious and respectable profession.

Questions



If you need any additional information about legal education and legal careers in Russia, please contact us by e-mail:

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