

## Seán Farrell Cover Letter

As a graduate of English, coming from the marketing sector, I've taken a circuitous route to enter the world of law. However, working to solve clients' strategic problems in small and large agencies, with clients ranging from global technology and drinks giants (IBM & Diageo), to large Irish semi-states (Bus Éireann), over three years in the advertising sector I've gained a strong strategic skillset, and indeed, the sharp nose for business that is mandatory in prospective solicitors today.

However, I am cognisant of the fact that the road to qualification as a solicitor has many variants, with each training programme offering unique opportunities and challenges. As a firm that was the recipient of the Client Service Award 2017 from Chambers Europe, I was already aware of the culture of excellence that ByrneWallace had cultivated. However, having been lucky enough to attend the excellent open evening on October 17th, I was left with an even greater impression of the opportunities afforded to trainees with ByrneWallace. From the generosity of senior partners such as Jon Legorburu, who I was lucky enough to speak to one to one for an intriguing conversation about the firm's recent move into white-collar crime, to the firm's focus on strong trainee partner bonds as articulated by Michael Walsh, and how the exclusivity inherent in a small trainee pool helps to cultivate this, I was left with a strong sense that the ByrneWallace trainee programme was the best place in Ireland to develop as a solicitor. This was further compounded by my exposure to current trainees at the evening, such as James Connolly, and Kevin Armstrong, who spoke candidly of a culture unique in the legal sector, and of a traineeship where you would be given proper work, and not just chained to a photocopier.

I always had a nascent interest in the law, and considered sitting FE1s following graduation from Trinity College with first class honours in English Studies. However, I felt that I needed greater corporate experience, and thus began work in the advertising sector. I was lucky enough to work for Ogilvy & Mather London, on the IBM account, the largest advertising agency in the world, with IBM one of its blue chip accounts. While I was quite successful in my time in London, I began to feel less and less satisfied with the challenges the advertising sector was providing, and the dormant interest I had always had in the law began to rear its head again. I requested that I be placed on the Ashurst LLP account in addition to my IBM responsibilities, to gain a better understanding of the realities of the sector, and found this first-hand exposure to a Silver Circle firm provided exactly the type of challenges that I was seeking, the nature of the work conducted stoking my rapidly expanding interest in a career as a solicitor.

I've followed this interest through to tangible action, sitting, and passing my first four FE1s this Spring. Indeed, I received the Gold Medal in Criminal Law from City Colleges (where I had attended lectures prior to sitting), for the highest score in the Criminal Spring sitting, receiving 72% in my examination. My success with these examinations confirmed that a career as a solicitor was not just something I was capable of achieving, but a profession where I could thrive - my strong academic scores a testament to an intuitive comfort with the subjects I studied.

In addition, following my exams, I interned in a busy general practice in Dublin, Barron Morris. Here, I was predominantly focussed on Family and Criminal law (along with a less developed exposure to Probate and Conveyancing). While there I worked very closely with a recently qualified solicitor, managing the Legal Aid caseload of the office. This was very much a baptism of fire, the large workload, and lean staffing ensuring that I received a fantastic exposure to the inner workings of both a busy general practice, and the Courts system. Since finishing I have sat my final set of FE1 exams in October, and have turned my focus to the next step in my legal career.

Throughout four years of study in Trinity College I consistently demonstrated my strong academic ability, graduating with a first class honours degree in English Studies. In my years of study there I was exposed to vast and complex texts, and expected to place them within their larger philosophical and historical context before expressing their meaning with precision and clarity, developing a theoretical and analytical framework not dissimilar to that developed by undergraduate students of the law.

University also allowed me to engage with people with vastly differing intellectual perspectives through my involvement with a number of different societies focused on the charity sector, predominantly Suas Trinity, and

the Vincent De Paul society. I was also fortunate enough to be chosen to participate in Suas' volunteer programme in 2011, working with educational development charities in Calcutta for three months, and managed Suas' homework clubs, and Refugee Football programme in my final two years of study. I've continued to stoke this community involvement since graduation, working with a number of national policy groups in the Green Party, along with some consultative work for Pavee Point in Dublin.

Ultimately, over 27 years, I've accrued a wealth of personal, professional and intellectual experience that's provided me with a unique professional perspective. When coupled with my strong academic ability, and my determination to succeed as a solicitor, I feel that the value I would derive from working with Byrne Wallace, would be more than returned in full to you.