

FRESHFIELDS

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light beige blazer over a dark blue V-neck top and light-colored trousers, is sitting on a balcony. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. Her hands are clasped in her lap. She is wearing a watch on her left wrist and a necklace. The background shows a cityscape through a glass railing.

Shape Your
Ambition

Freshfields is what you make of it

We're a firm where your curiosity, contribution and hard work are expected but also valued. You can experience eight seats during your training and really find your niche.

You will do challenging work and be well rewarded for it. And our international mindset and global reputation will open up a world of opportunities.



Welcome to Freshfields

This brochure is something to help you decide.

I joined Freshfields more than 30 years ago and I'm now the chairman of our China practice. I'm also responsible, along with my colleagues, for helping to recruit bright graduates keen to make their mark as a lawyer in an international law firm in China.

If you compare Freshfields with other international law firms, we may go after the same work and have offices in many of the same cities. We may also offer similar legal services, and sometimes we even have the same clients. But there the similarities end. The big differences lie in our working style and personality – our culture.

I have asked my fellow partners and associates to help me paint an honest picture of the firm. I use the word honest because all too often when you read a brochure, life sounds perfect. Sometimes it is. But in between all the glamour and excitement it is also a life that is about hard work and long hours, which some firms may gloss over. You need to decide if life in an international law firm is for you, and whether Freshfields is for you.

We have an excellent training programme ready for you. You have to decide if you are ready for it.

Teresa Ko
China Chairman

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Read more online:

[Hong Kong Early Careers](#)

Introducing Freshfields

We are one of the world's oldest and most successful global law firms, but we are constantly reinventing ourselves.

About us

As a leading global law firm, we advise our clients wherever they do business. Although we have offices in the world's main business centres, more than a third of our revenue comes from markets where we don't have a permanent presence. That's why we look for graduates who are creative, open-minded and curious about different cultures.

Our clients come to us for advice on their most complex challenges and value our ability to work together across practice groups and geographies. To meet their expectations, we need people who think globally and are at their best when working in teams.

One of our core principles is to add value in everything we do. So as well as dealing with our clients' immediate issues, we anticipate how future legal, commercial and political developments will affect them. This is why our lawyers need to understand not just the law, but each client's business and the sector in which it operates.

Our clients span a variety of sectors and include leading national and international corporations, financial institutions and governments, as well as charities, for whom we work on a pro bono basis.

The work we do for clients

Our work falls into three broad categories:

- 1. Grow**
By grow we mean transactional work – buying and selling, ranging from stock market flotations to big-ticket M&A deals.
- 2. Strengthen**
By strengthen we mean regulatory work from financial services regulation to combating bribery and corruption.
- 3. Defend**
By defend we mean risk management and disputes work to help protect businesses and reputations – litigation, arbitration and handling major global investigations.

These match up to the three compulsory seats for trainees in our corporate, dispute resolution and finance teams. Our eight-seat training contract offers plenty of opportunities to specialise in these or one of our many other areas of law.

A few facts about Freshfields

- We work in **150+** countries
- We consistently rank at the **top of league tables** for cross-border M&A
- We have **32** offices worldwide
- At **282** years old, we are the oldest international law firm in the world
- **85,000** hours of pro bono advice to **270+** clients



Jason's Story

Jason Hu joined the firm in 2022 as a trainee and is an associate in the Financial Services Group team, Hong Kong. He studied law at the University of Melbourne and finished his training contract in 2024.



The collegiate, **collaborative culture** at the firm is great for trainees who are trying to learn and absorb as much knowledge and experience as possible.

Given the variety, size and complexity of the mandates that Freshfields undertakes, each day as a trainee is different and the day-to-day work is always challenging but engaging.

We work closely with partners and associates, and support them by:

- preparing first drafts of legal documents, such as memorandums or contracts;
- conducting legal research and briefing senior colleagues on our findings; and
- communicating with clients, counterparties and local counsel.

A key highlight of training with Freshfields is the global training and the firm's practice.

In particular, the opportunity for international secondments to our Beijing, Shanghai, Singapore and London offices is unique, rewarding and eye-opening. Additionally, whilst at the Hong Kong office, I have also had the opportunity to work with colleagues from around the world, including colleagues across the US, Europe and Asia, as well as working in-person with German referendar and London trainees seconding in the Hong Kong office. I am particularly grateful for these experiences given my interest during university in pursuing a career that would allow me to live and work overseas.

One of the challenges of being a trainee is the pace of the learning required.

You're working with some of the biggest companies in the world on large, complex, cross-border deals. Despite these challenges, I have felt supported throughout my training with exceptional mentors and colleagues – all with unique perspectives and insights – that guided me through each stage of my development. This speaks to the collegiate, collaborative culture at the firm, which is great for me and other trainees who are trying to learn and absorb as much knowledge and experience as possible.

Why choose Freshfields?

Every lawyer has a different reason for choosing the firm they join.

Here's why people choose us.

Experience an eight-seat training contract

Most law firms offer four seats of six months each. At Freshfields, our trainees benefit from a much broader experience. Trainees do core seats in dispute resolution, corporate and finance, and can also select seats from Antitrust, Competition and Trade, Financial Services Regulatory and IP/IT. You then have the opportunity to delve deeper during your international secondments. This gives you the opportunity to work out which practice group suits you best and helps you build a strong foundation and network.

Work with the best people

If you aspire to handle high-stakes work for high-calibre clients, look no further. Working at Freshfields isn't always easy and the hours can be long, but you'll be surrounded by dedicated, supportive people who will lead by example and help you learn.

Do international work

Almost everything we advise on crosses international borders in some way. If you're interested in this kind of work, Freshfields in Hong Kong is a great place to get started. And – if you are native in other Asian languages such as Japanese, Korean or Indonesian – we can even offer you a training contract split between London and one of our offices in Asia. For further details, check our website.

Be part of a team

We're a big law firm, but you don't need to worry about feeling lost. In each seat, you'll be part of a team and build close links with other trainees in your intake. We strive to create a collegiate atmosphere full of friendly faces, market-leading training and the support you need to thrive. At the beginning of your training contract, you'll be assigned a buddy and a mentor to support you throughout the two-year programme. You'll also have a dedicated supervisor for each seat and a senior associate mentor across your two year training contract.

Join a responsible business

'Responsible business' describes the way our firm delivers value to society, both by the way we manage our own business and by the lasting positive contribution we can make to our communities. The way we do business at Freshfields reflects who we are and what we stand for.

We consider responsible business at every decision point, from client advice and mandate acceptance to the impact we choose to make on the society and environment around us.

Everyone in the firm is actively encouraged to do pro bono work, which spans all of our legal practice areas. We work for a wide range of pro bono clients from individual victims of trafficking to some of the world's largest NGOs.



Hong Kong office participates in rice packing with Foodlink Foundation in August 2024.

Community Impact

Our community impact programme focuses on access to opportunity, with an emphasis on social mobility and racial inclusion. We support the underprivileged and under-represented in our communities by working with local NGOs and other local projects.

Pro bono

We provide free legal services in the public interest to a wide range of clients, from individual asylum seekers to some of the world's largest charities. We believe everyone should have effective access to their legal rights, and focus our efforts on enabling our target groups - including women, children, LGBT+ people, refugees and trafficking survivors - to access their rights.

Environment

Freshfields is committed to an environmental strategy which aims to purchase 100% renewable electricity by 2030; reducing carbon from business travel; reduce paper usage and eliminating the use of single-use plastics. Our commitment to the environment has been longstanding; the firm has been carbon-neutral since 2007 having invested in verified carbon offsetting programmes, most notably our Freshfields REAP (Reforestation in East Africa Project), which benefits the climate, local communities, and biodiversity.

Work placements

We partner with NGOs to offer work placements which help students gain work experience and others to develop their careers in law and business functions.

Culture and inclusion at Freshfields

We aim to create an environment where everyone is empowered to succeed and thrive. By challenging ourselves, collaborating seamlessly, and engaging openly, we build a culture of trust, respect, and extraordinary outcomes.

Our people are our most important asset – across generations and geographies, with different perspectives and backgrounds. We want to ensure that people from all backgrounds – regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background or other dimension of difference, can realise their ambitions with us.

Our diversity and inclusion efforts are aligned to our purpose and values as we are working to ensure that all our colleagues can belong, engage and excel.

This includes fostering an inclusive culture where colleagues feel supported to succeed and thrive. We are strengthening connections and engagement with colleagues, clients, and the broader community. It means focusing on fair access to opportunity, ensuring everyone is supported to reach their potential.

Our drive for excellence underpins all we do. We build global teams from a broad talent pool to enable us to deliver outstanding client service around the world.



Hong Kong office celebrating
pride month in June 2025.

Mental health and wellbeing



Hong Kong office participating in Swire Charity Spin in October 2024.

At Freshfields, we believe in the importance of wellbeing, that means providing support for your mental and physical health as well as providing support to help you balance work and non-work priorities.

We take a holistic approach to wellbeing. Our aim is to support healthy practices that enable our people to focus on the important things at the right time resulting in sense of purpose, value and ability to thrive.

“

It's about potential and not background.



Emma's Story

Emma Leung joined the firm in 2023 as a trainee and will be a newly qualified associate in the London office. She studied law at Durham University and finished her training contract in 2025.



One of the fulfilling parts of my traineeship was witnessing my own growth, **turning challenges into confidence and complexity into clarity**

It's a little stressful at first – but once you adjust, you realise you're developing an incredibly valuable skill: adaptability.

Before starting as a trainee at Freshfields in August 2023, I had already worked here as a paralegal, but the training contract was a totally different experience - and it's been one that I've greatly enjoyed.

During my training, I've moved through dispute resolution, finance, antitrust, and even spent six months in London with our financial institutions disputes group. Each new seat felt like a fresh start, which was both challenging and exciting. Early on, I remember feeling overwhelmed by how quickly we rotated through practice areas. You're thrust into a new discipline every three months, and need to get your bearings quickly.

At Freshfields, 'being there for each other' isn't just a tagline – it's genuinely how we operate.

I discovered early that I'm drawn to disputes work – maybe because it's analytical and closely tied to the substantive law itself, with plenty of research, strategic thinking, and a real intellectual challenge. A definite moment came just three weeks into my first seat, I pulled an all-nighter alongside two associates on an urgent case. It was intense, but strangely, it was one of my best moments at Freshfields. Sitting together in the office until 11am the next day, buoyed by an early morning McDonald's, created a real sense of camaraderie. To this day, I'm very close with those teammates. That experience not only defined my enthusiasm for disputes – it made me feel like part of the team.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my traineeship has been sensing my own growth.

During my second stint in corporate, I was able to see how far I've come. Tasks that initially seemed daunting now feel manageable. I have a better sense of what questions I should be asking, I'm calmer when faced with new projects, and I have greater confidence navigating complex tasks. It's a quiet but genuinely satisfying feeling.

Another part I've truly valued is the supportive culture among trainees and the teams. Whether it's stepping in to help another trainee who's busy or knowing I can count on colleagues when I need support myself, it's made a huge difference in how much I've enjoyed my time here.

Outside of work, I enjoy trying new things – recently it's pottery, which turned out to be much tougher, but also more rewarding, than I anticipated. When I can, I still love training for half-marathons, which keeps me disciplined and motivated.

My advice to new trainees is simple: stay open-minded, embrace challenges, and don't hesitate to lean on those around you. This programme is meant to be challenging, but in a good way. With the right mindset, you'll finish your traineeship feeling stronger, more confident, and ready for whatever comes next.

Our expanding presence in the US

Freshfields is a top-tier firm in the U.S. for corporate transactions & governance, regulatory and litigation. Combined with our cross-border and international platform, our upsized U.S. offering and caliber of work serves to further strengthen our global and local reputation.

Our U.S. team now comprises more than 400 lawyers across New York, Silicon Valley and Washington, DC. Our U.S. strategy is targeted and curated, and 100% client centric. We have built — and will continue to add to — a multi-generational bench of elite lawyers delivering complex business solutions for our clients. Our platform is built around the best talent — including undisputed market leaders — working together to address our clients' most critical needs.

In February 2024, we opened the doors of our new state-of-the-art office at 3 World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. The firm now occupies floors 51 through 54 in a stand-out building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Richard Rogers. The new office is modern and sophisticated, designed to provide the highest levels of service and comfort for clients, lawyers and professional staff alike. The space is equipped with a split-floor conference center, café, barista coffee bar, conference catering and the latest workplace technology. Additionally, the amenities available at the World Trade Center complex include a vibrant neighborhood, restaurants and shops, with easy access to transportation.





We are living in a period of unprecedented change, and our continued success is dependent on our ability to innovate, adapt and challenge pre-conceived ideas. Our people and their willingness to continuously innovate and embrace change are key to keeping us at the forefront of the legal market.

Edward Freeman, Partner



We put **innovation** at the heart of what we do – and what you'll be doing.

What can Freshfields offer me?

We will support you from the moment you accept a training contract to the moment you qualify – and beyond.

Flexible Training Contract

If you like the sound of the firm, why not apply to join us as a Hong Kong trainee? If successful, you'll have secured one of the most sought-after, flexible training contracts in the legal profession.

Seats in corporate, dispute resolution and finance are standard for all trainees. Seats in other teams are also available. You can visit core practice groups more than once. Many trainees want to try out more than one specialist team or return to a seat they want to qualify into.

As a Freshfields trainee, you will also go on secondment to our London office and either Beijing, Shanghai or Singapore.

London-Asia Trainee Associate Programme

If you are fluent in English and have business proficiency in another Asian language such as Japanese, Korean or Indonesian, you can apply to spend your first year in London and your second year in Hong Kong. Once you have completed your trainee associate programme, you'll be qualified in England and Wales but will practise in one of our Asian offices.

US Summer Associate Programme

If you are studying for a JD in the United States and thinking of joining an international law firm, Freshfields offers you a great career.





The firm runs a 12-week programme in Hong Kong especially for US JD candidates.

You would work with our US team to advise American and other multi-national firms investing in China, or Chinese enterprises wanting to invest in the US.

Legal Assistant Programme

If you are studying for or have an LLB or LLM from a university in China and want to work on major international deals, this is the place.

As a legal assistant you will join one of our teams in Hong Kong, Beijing or Shanghai. You will help leading enterprises to list in Hong Kong or to invest abroad.

You will help us to advise companies on their mergers and acquisitions – some of the largest and most high-profile M&A in Asia.

Visit our website to find out more at [China Internship programmes | Freshfields](#).

Hong Kong training contract

\$52k starting salary

\$54k in the 2nd year

High-profile clients

Secondments

Wellness room

Global opportunities



Yoonji's Story

Yoonji Lee joined the firm in 2020 and is an associate in the Dispute Resolution department, Singapore. She studied law at the University of Oxford and finished her training contract in 2022.



The best things about Freshfields are the **people and the quality of the work we do**. Freshfields colleagues are incredibly intelligent, talented and top-of-the-market for what they do, but at the same time they are lovely to work with.

I completed my London-Asia training contract and qualified into the Dispute Resolution team in Singapore.

The diverse experience that the London-Asia internship and training contract provides is truly one-of-a-kind. I was given the exciting opportunity to work on a wide range of matters with a diverse pool of colleagues in nine different teams across our London, Hong Kong and Singapore offices.

The systemic training as part of the trainee cohort and bigger teams in London gave me a very strong foundation, which I could then build on in the Hong Kong office, where teams are smaller and junior members are naturally expected to step up and play a more substantive role. The London-Asia training contract offers a year-long secondment (compared to the usual six-months), which was an amazing experience.

The three-month trainee seat rotation at Freshfields means you need to learn fast.

On top of that, the mandates we work on are complex and involve unprecedented challenges. Often you might read about the work you've been doing in FT headlines. The learning curve has been steep but also very rewarding.

Values and principles are important at Freshfields, especially being there for one-another.

Having worked with nine different teams across three different offices, my experience is that, regardless of office or team, collegiality underpins Freshfields culture. Everyone here I have worked or interacted with has been caring and supportive. As a trainee, partners and associates I work with genuinely trust my capabilities, but are also ready to step in where needed.

I would advise Freshfields trainees to stay fearless. You'll be stretched and constantly feeling out of your depth, but you can be sure that you are in safe and very able hands. Secondly, I'd advise trainees to stay open-minded. You might (or might not) already have an idea of where and into which practice area you would like to qualify into, but let the journey take you where it may. Finally, get ready for a blast!

What we look for in our people

Expect to be challenged. If you're a bright, commercially-minded and adaptable team player, you'll thrive in our fast-moving and challenging environment.



There's no 'Freshfields type' but there are a number of shared values. We take work seriously but we don't take ourselves seriously.

Who you are

To succeed at Freshfields you'll need to be creative enough to see the solutions that others miss. You'll be open-minded and intellectually curious enough to consider new ways of doing things. But you'll also be pragmatic, quick to adapt to an evolving situation and commercially minded enough to give clear, direct advice. Your interest in the business world means you aspire to be involved in the events that make the headlines.

Of course, given the high-profile work we do, you'll be committed and organised, with a close attention to detail. We don't expect you to know everything before you arrive – you're here to learn – so you'll need to be flexible and receptive to feedback. Working at Freshfields isn't always easy and the hours can be long, so you'll be someone who keeps your cool under pressure and you'll be able to prioritise calmly in demanding situations.

The legal industry is constantly evolving, so you will need to be adaptable and forward-thinking to stay ahead of the times. We want people who can use new technologies to maximise efficiency and find the best ways to help our clients.

Most of all, you'll be a team player, willing to pitch in and work seamlessly with colleagues across the globe.

How do I apply?

We aim to make applying to Freshfields as simple as possible.

How do I apply?

You can apply for a training contract, or internship programme online at [Hong Kong Early Careers | Freshfields](#).

We have produced a handy guide to help you through the application process and provide some additional advice on how to showcase the best of your abilities. You can access this online.

We look at every application individually and shortlist applicants on merit alone. So it doesn't matter what your background is – if you think you can make it as an international commercial lawyer, you should apply.



An interview is a two-way street: an opportunity for you to assess the firm and for us to see if you have what we are looking for.

An insight from our Graduate Recruitment partner

A job interview can be pretty daunting, but remember that everyone you meet wants to be able to offer you a place, so think positively and don't let nerves get the better of you.

A good lawyer at a firm like ours has various attributes: a desire to be constantly learning and improving; an interest in business; the ability to make a valuable contribution to teams; and so on. Think of some examples that demonstrate these traits.

Most importantly be yourself. Don't try to second guess what we want to hear - but rather be genuine about what you will bring to the firm.

Finally, come prepared for an enjoyable conversation and a lively discussion of themes coming out of a recent business article. If you are enthusiastic, engaged and well-prepared, you will do very well.



Creating an inclusive environment at Freshfields, where diversity of thought is valued, and people feel they belong and can thrive is central to making us a stronger firm and delivering better outcomes for clients. This has been a focus for us for some time, and we are proud of the progress we have made, but we need to go much further.

Georgia Dawson,
Senior Partner

We want to make a real and positive difference and have integrated **responsible business** practices into everything we do.

2025/26 programmes and application windows

Hong Kong Summer Internship Programme

Application

1 Sep – 31 Dec 2025
(From 1 Aug 2025 for
Australian students)

Programme

Jun and Jul 2026

Singapore International Arbitration Group Summer Internship Programme

Application

1 Oct – 31 Dec 2025

Programme

May – Aug 2026

London-Asia Trainee Associate Internship Programme

Application

1 Sep – 31 Dec 2025

Programme

Jun and Jul 2026

Singapore International Arbitration Group Winter Internship Programme

Application

1 Apr – 30 June 2026

Programme

Dec 2026 – Jan 2027

Legal Assistant Internship Programme

Application

1 Sep – 31 Dec 2025

Programme

Jun and Jul 2026

Law Fairs and Panel Presentations

Open House Events

Aug – Sep 2025

Singapore Law Fairs

Aug 2025

Hong Kong Law Fair

6 Sep 2025

UK Law Fairs

Nov 2025

Australian Law Fairs

Mar 2026

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Mailing list



Apply now

FRESHFIELDS

