

This is intended to be a guideline only. Firms should refer to the United Kingdom submissions information page for the full list of practice areas researched by jurisdiction.

Capital Markets

Capital Markets (Only in Guernsey and Jersey)

Equity capital markets work will be key in submissions for this section, but teams may benefit from evidencing a breadth of expertise in the practice area, including relating to IPOs or secondary offerings. Debt capital markets work is additionally covered in this section and, to a lesser extent, other corporate transactions involving public companies.

CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL

Corporate and commercial

This section covers a significant range of work relating to commercial transactions, including M&A, commercial contracts, reorganisation/restructurings, and private equity matters. Strong examples of work may include multiple jurisdictions, high-profile clients, compressed timelines, or novel elements which mark a transaction as innovative.

Corporate tax

This category covers all forms of direct tax, with particular emphasis on tax-led structuring, restructuring, and reorganisations – in particular, those that span multiple jurisdictions – and transfer pricing. Digital taxation expertise is an increasingly important factor for forward thinking firms. Advice on the tax aspects of corporate-led transactions can be included in your submission but will not be given as much weight as work where tax is the central focus.

EU and competition

Factors considered here include advice on merger control, abuse of dominance, restrictive practices, state aid, cartel investigations and enforcement. Top firms in this space often benefit from the wider firm's corporate acumen, especially in the merger space, but will also be strong in their own right, providing a full range of competition advice.

CRIME, FRAUD AND LICENSING

Civil fraud (only in West Midlands)

This section looks at firms' work for both claimants and defendants on contentious matters, with defrauding claims, freezing injunctions, and contractual disputes strongly represented in this area. Negligence and fraudulent trading work also features, with stronger firms able to evidence breadth across these areas. Work may be for individuals or businesses, and at the upper end involves multiple jurisdictions.

Crime: Fraud (only in Scotland)

Submissions to this area cover a broad array of fraud work, including both civil and criminal fraud, and work for both businesses and individuals. Regulatory work, as well as investigatory expertise and experience in criminal representation may all be covered, with firms encouraged to showcase the full breadth of their offering in this area.

Crime: General (only in Scotland)

This ranking covers the full spread of general crime matters, including violent crime, drug crime, sex crime, gang crime, firearms, and driving offences. Firms should evidence broad expertise and experience in the practice area. Work for high-profile and high-net-worth clients is particularly well regarded, particularly with respect to cases facing significant public scrutiny.

General crime and fraud

General crime and fraud is a broad ranking, encompassing the full range of general crime matters, including violent crime, drug crime, driving offences and gang crime, in addition to fraud and other financial crime issues. Benefit fraud, cyber crime, tax evasion, and investment scams may all be included in this section, and the highest achieving firms may demonstrate coverage of all these areas. However, sufficiently impressive expertise within a more limited swathe of this practice area may also be well received in rankings.

Licensing

Gambling and alcohol work are key in this section, with licensing work for retail and hospitality clients considered alongside mandates for casinos, sports arenas, and trade bodies. Other licensing work, including firearms and explosive licenses, is also covered here. We are looking for firms to demonstrate a diverse mix of both contentious and advisory work, including licensing hearings, new applications, and changes to existing applications.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Banking litigation

This ranking covers litigation involving retail and investment banks. Ranked practices will have experience in acting for and/or against banking institutions in litigation, including single, multi-party and group claims. Fraud and Quincecare duty are prominent areas of work, but other areas touched upon may include PPI matters, insolvency disputes, and asset recovery.

Commercial litigation

This section relates to work advising corporates and individuals on contentious matters stemming from commercial contracts. This may include matters relating to M&A/finance related litigation, IT/outsourcing agreements, shareholder disputes and breach of contract matters. In regions which do not have dedicated Banking Litigation or Property Litigation sections, this work may be touched upon here in order to demonstrate breadth. Firms may additionally wish to evidence capacity in arbitration and other out-of-court dispute resolution methods, but this will not be the main emphasis of this section.

Debt recovery

This ranking looks at a combination of legal and non-legal expertise - factors considered include debt recovery technology and CRMs; monitoring services and arrears management; and access to data tools and support staff. This is entirely focused on creditor-side work, whether corporates or government agencies. Areas covered include pre-legal and legal collection, disputed claims, insolvency actions and payment agreements. Forensic recovery expertise is also a plus.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment

Covered by this section are all areas relating to the representation of employers and employees (except where a distinct employee ranking exists). Both contentious and non-contentious work is covered, including discrimination claims, trade union work, whistleblowing, restrictive covenant disputes, and employment aspects of transactions, restructurings, and investigations. Redundancy consultations, outsourcing, and TUPE transfers are frequent areas of focus. Firms which have retainer agreements with clients to provide day-to-day HR advice should look to convey the significance of the client in question, as routine work for small clients will not be ranked strongly. Work for senior executives is additionally included in this section, as are issues of health and safety, immigration, and pensions, in cases where a region does not have a dedicated ranking for these areas.

Health and safety

This ranking primarily assesses advice to companies, insurers, and individuals with regards to health and safety, both pre- and post-incident. The top firms in this ranking will be acting for both major corporates and insurers, handling a mix of contentious and non-contentious matters. Firms that predominantly act for insurers will handle a larger volume of cases, but greatest weight will be

placed on advice on incidents of the most serious nature for high-profile clients. These may be headline-making health and safety failures, including fatal accidents and corporate manslaughter, and inquests resulting from such incidents. Proactive risk management advice is also another key factor.

Immigration

This section covers firms' ability to advice across the spectrum of an employer's immigration programme, including recruitment, workforce planning, HR policy, and global mobility. Relevant work may include standalone counselling as well as immigration mandates connected to cross-border corporate transactions. Firms are also encouraged to highlight their depth of regulatory experience and government relations expertise. Additionally included in this section are immigration issues outside the business sphere, including those relating to the human rights of private clients, covering matters such as detention, bail and deportation, asylum and citizenship applications. In addition to the business and human rights areas, the section additionally includes work for private clients, particularly high-net-worth individuals, senior executives, and high-profile public figures.

Pensions

Firms in this section will represent both scheme sponsors and pension scheme trustees, with higher ranked firms generally having a spread of both clients. Non-contentious work will typically involve de-risking transactions, scheme rectifications, funding agreements and corporate support. Particular emphasis will be placed on the value of the work, the complexity of the transactions, and the significance of the client. Dispute resolution typically involves indexing claims, Pensions Regulator and Ombudsman investigations, GMP equalisation claims, fraud and professional negligence. Corporate support work, such as due diligence on corporate transactions, is additionally considered.

FINANCE

Banking and finance

Work in this section may include acquisition finance, bank lending strategies, securitisations and structured projects. Work for borrowers, lenders, and sponsors may all be included in submissions to this practice area, with an emphasis on complex and high-profile work. Key clients include private equity houses, major banks and alternative lenders, as well as roles for corporate borrowers involved in leveraged finance mandates. Asset based lending is additionally considered.

Insolvency and Corporate Recovery

Insolvencies, bankruptcies, administrations and other distressed financial restructurings are all covered in this area, as are CVAs. Domestic and cross-border restructurings are covered by this ranking. Greatest weight will be given to firms in the lead role on major matters; advising companies/administrators or key creditors such as banks and funds. Contentious work such as creditor claims is additionally covered in this section, though greater weight will be given to the firms in the lead non-contentious roles.

Investment Funds

This ranking covers the full life cycle of funds, through fundraising, structuring, investment, and exits. Alternative and private capital fund asset classes are included in this section, and submissions may feature work on behalf of private equity, venture capital, secondaries, infrastructure, and real estate funds. In addition to advising on commercial issues, regulatory considerations such as licensing, and related contentious matters may additionally be showcased here.

Gambling

Gambling (Only in Isle of Man)

Included in this area are all facets of gambling, including commercial and regulatory negotiation for gambling companies, prize draws for other corporate entities, and B2B agreement drafting. M&A and contractual work in the eGaming, gambling and lottery industries is relevant here, as is day-to-day advice, although in this case evidencing the high-profile and leading status of clients will be key.

INSURANCE

Clinical Negligence – claimant / Medical Negligence – pursuer (Only in Scotland)

The top firms will be handling the most significant claims, and should aim to demonstrate a diverse practice covering a variety of medical fields and types of injury (brain injury, birth injury, wrongful birth claims, spinal cord damage, failure or delay in diagnosis of medical conditions, fatal claims etc). The complexity of injuries is a factor, as is the high value of the claims handled – the top firms will be handling high-value (£500,000 up to multimillion-pound settlements) and medium to low-value (below £500k) matters, with the very best firms regularly handling cases worth £1m or higher.

Clinical Negligence – defendant / Medical Negligence – defender (Only in Scotland)

This ranking has similar criteria as the claimant ranking in terms of the cases. In terms of clients, strong submissions may include work for major public and private sector insurers and healthcare providers – panel roles for major insurers and the NHS are obviously very important. demonstrate they act for major public and private sector insurers and healthcare providers – panel roles for major insurers and the NHS are obviously very important.

Insurance (Only in Guernsey) / Insurance and Pensions (Only in Isle of Man)

This section ranks firms handling complex contentious insurance Work covered in this ranking includes a range of advice on long-term insurance issues and regulatory matters, in addition to transactional work in the insurance industry. Leading submissions may include evidence of expertise relating to captive insurance, insurance linked securities, reinsurance, distribution and broker relations, policy wording, and life assurance. Pensions and annuities are additionally covered in this section. Both contentious and non-contentious work are included, and evidence of expertise in both may be key to demonstrating breadth of offering.

Personal Injury – claimant / Personal Injury – pursuer (Only in Scotland)

This section looks at work for claimants in relation to fatal accidents, serious injury, road traffic accidents, employers' liability, industrial/occupational disease, public liability claims, historical abuse claims. The complexity of injuries is a factor, as is the typical value of the claims handled – the top firms will be handling high-value claims (£500,000 up to multimillion-pound settlements), with the best firms regularly handling cases worth £1m or higher.

Personal Injury – defendant / Personal Injury – defender (Only in Scotland)

This ranking has similar criteria as the claimant ranking in terms of the cases; we are looking for firms to demonstrate they are acting for a wide range of major clients, including public and private sector insurers and healthcare providers, with panel roles for major insurers viewed favourably.

Professional negligence

This section covers all types of professional negligence work, including construction, legal, financial, pensions, and tax. The rankings include both claimant and defendant work. Complex work for large defendant clients is generally given more weight for the purposes of the rankings. For defendant firms, insurance panel

appointments are a key factor. High-value claims and a broad client base are key to secure a high ranking, although firms with a strong specialism in key areas will be given serious consideration.

PRIVATE CLIENT

Agriculture and estates

This ranking covers all aspects of large-scale rural work for significant landed estates and agricultural land. This practice area covers the full spectrum of work for agricultural estates, including those with substantial country houses as well as issues such as the exploitation of sporting and mineral rights and rural development by way of renewable energy schemes and public rights of way.

Contentious trusts and probate

This ranking assesses a firm's strength in contentious trusts and probate matters both in an onshore and offshore context. Handling large-scale multi-jurisdictional litigation and high-value cases may distinguish upper ranked teams from those in the lower ranks.

Family

Included in this section are divorce and financial remedy work, and children work. Divorce and financial remedy work may involve complex finance matters involving trusts and other wealth structures, with firms advising on wealth protection measures such as nuptial agreements, evidencing expertise managing the financial implications of divorce for high-net-worth clients. Children work may cover private and public children law cases, including contact disputes, child abduction, and relocation matters. Parental disputes, safeguarding, and welfare are considered, as well as modern family formation issues such as surrogacy and fertility law. Family mediation work may additionally be included in this section.

Personal tax, trusts and probate / Private Client, trusts and tax (Offshore only)

Firms ranked in this section act for many of the wealthiest families nationally and globally, and are adept at advising them on complex projects, including cross-border projects, such as lifetime tax and estate planning matters in addition to offshore assets, trusts, and landed estates. These firms are also well regarded for their advice on inheritance tax and the administration of estates as well as advising on family businesses.

PROJECTS, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Energy and projects

This ranking covers transactional matters and project finance work, with clients drawn from a broad range of infrastructure stakeholders including borrowers, lenders, sponsors and corporates. PFI/PPP matters are frequently covered here, with major local government, health, and rail matters key areas of work. Projects may include work relating to mining and minerals, water, and other infrastructure matters. Energy mandates featured in this sector cover oil and gas, nuclear, and the full range of renewables and green energy, such as wind farms, solar farms, geothermal and tidal projects.

PUBLIC SECTOR

Education

The education rankings assess firms based on broad service to clients in this sector, with a focus on the areas typically of greatest importance to such clients. For schools and higher education institutions, this includes restructurings, mergers, and spin-offs, as well as real estate and employment matters. Disputes concerning discrimination, academic freedom, hate speech and sexual harassment are covered, as are sensitive matters concerning children or historical abuse. Charity law expertise is also highly regarded as it pertains to this sector.

Health

This ranking focuses on public sector healthcare work, with a heavy emphasis on work involving NHS bodies. Real estate, regulatory compliance, employment, and procurement matters may be covered here, including contentious issues. Public inquiry work is valuable as an area of expertise, particularly high-profile cases. While private sector work in this practice area may be featured to evidence relevant expertise, it will not be weighted as heavily, and may be more appropriately placed into other sections.

Local Government

This section ranks the firms advising local government clients around the UK on a broad range of relevant work including finance matters, shared service agreements and regeneration projects, as well as matters concerning devolution of powers. Other work of relevance for this section includes planning, environment, education, housing, compulsory purchase, public procurement and PFI/PPP. The top ranked firms will be advising local authorities on matters of particular regional/national significance.

Parliamentary and public affairs (only in Scotland)

The section functions to cover work relating to the Scottish parliament, in addition to public law matters. Advice and litigation

in all areas of parliamentary and public affairs may be covered, with legislative drafting, public inquiries, judicial reviews, and public procurement all covered in this area.

Public sector

Included in this section is work for regulators, public bodies and commercial clients. Work may include judicial and administrative disputes, disciplinary procedures, and public inquiries, and may cut across many different practice areas. Breadth of expertise – covering judicial review litigation, inquests, public inquiries and non-contentious regulatory and administrative work – is highly regarded, as is broad sector expertise.

REAL ESTATE

Commercial property

This table covers real estate transactions from all stages of the project lifecycle, including developments, acquisitions and disposals, and lease and letting work. Higher ranked firms are adept in all manner of schemes including mixed-use, retail, office, hospitality and alternative assets, and may evidence strength in the management of large-scale property portfolios as well as high-value trophy real estate, including corporate headquarters. Residential property work is additionally included in this section, with conveyancing work, landlord and tenant work, and property development matters all considered.

Construction

This section considers work for all types of participants in the construction industry. Construction mandates covering commercial and residential property, energy and infrastructure projects, and mixed-use developments are all relevant in this section. The ranking additionally includes contentious work, and firms may look to evidence strength in litigation, arbitration, adjudication and mediation, encompassing claims relating to breach of contract, defects, delay and design liability. While non-contentious work is weighted more heavily than contentious, top ranked firms will evidence strength in both to demonstrate breadth.

Environment

This section primarily focuses on the environmental aspects of land and property-related matters, including environmental litigation, advisory work and transactional support. Regulatory/ advisory environmental work features compliance and enforcement actions in relation to air, water, land, and any living organism systems supported by those media (as well as activities/

operations related to such media). The environmental aspects of transactional matters, including due diligence and environmental insurance issues, are also relevant here.

Planning

The two major fields of work in the planning sector are development and infrastructure. Development encompasses urban regeneration, housing developments, mixed-use developments, garden cities – typical work includes advising on section 106 agreements, compulsory purchase order applications, highways agreements, planning objections (via judicial review), environmental and affordable housing compliance. A good mix of these is desirable. Infrastructure encompasses Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPS), energy projects, construction of roads and highways, rails and other transport and utilities. Typical work covers Development Consent orders and Transport and Works Acts Orders. Firms that work on both large-scale infrastructure and development projects are likely to be ranked in the upper tiers. We are assessing projects based on size, significance and complexity and whether there are contentious elements – firms should also attempt to demonstrate a diversity of matters.

Property litigation

This section covers all types of disputes involving property, including landlord and tenant litigation, disputes arising from project developments, property insolvency matters and CVAs as well as Electronic Communications Code-related disputes between operators and landowners.

Social housing

This section encompasses finance issues relating to social housing, in addition to corporate transactions and commercial agreements in this space. Bank lending, debt restructures, structured finance and securitisations are covered here, as are development and regeneration work and governance advice.

Regulatory and White-Collar Crime

Regulatory and white-collar crime (Offshore only)

Included in this section is work carried out for individuals involved in investigations and prosecutions arising from allegations of white-collar crime and serious fraud. These include internal, criminal, or regulatory investigations brought in the UK or other jurisdictions by regulatory bodies such as the SFO, FCA, CMA and HMRC. Work that this category takes into account includes bribery and corruption investigations, financial crime/FCA investigations, serious and complex fraud, corruption and money laundering.

Submissions may additionally cover advisory work, covering issues such as sanctions and compliance-related mandates.

Shipping and Aviation

Shipping and aviation (Only in Isle of Man)

Covered in this section are matters of shipping and aviation finance, in addition to registration and regulatory issues. Both contentious and non-contentious mandates are covered in this section, which will consider work for the full range of those active in the sector, including family offices and high-net-worth individuals as well as lenders, managers, operators and insurers.

TMT (technology, media and telecoms)

Biotechnology (only in East Anglia)

This section is focused on the biotechnology industry, and may include a wide range of transactions for public and private companies, as well as venture capital and investment firms. Financings, M&A, and licensing transactions are included in this area, as are regulatory issues and intellectual property matters. Dispute resolution is additionally included here, though the emphasis of the section is primarily non-contentious work. Higher ranked firms work internationally and frequently globally, acting for prestige clients on high-value transactions.

Intellectual Property

Patents, trade marks, copyright and design matters are included in this section, with both contentious and non-contentious work key to demonstrating breadth. Sector strength is an important factor, with expertise in areas such as life sciences, telecoms, and construction frequently a distinguishing factor. Top tier non-contentious matters should include large-scale licensing deals, collaborations, or any other exploitation exercise. M&A assistance is less relevant, but interesting work in this area can still be noteworthy. The strongest lawyers will have clear specialisms in these areas, and will not split their time with other areas.

IT and telecoms

Top-ranked firms should be able to demonstrate a breadth of expertise across IT and telecoms, covering big IT projects, complex contractual issues, outsourcing and procurement, commercial and regulatory telecoms work and the capabilities to advise on innovative/disruptive technology. Firms further down the rankings may have a less broad practice, but a strong specialism in a key area.

Media and entertainment

The media and entertainment section extends to advertising and marketing, film and television, music, video games, digital content, theatre, and publishing. Commercial, financing, regulatory, and licensing work are among the areas covered, and clients may include brands, publishers, developers, and studios, as well as individuals such as artists, writers, or actors. Reputation management work may additionally be included in this section. Broad coverage of these areas is desirable, but leading firms may alternatively be characterised by focused expertise in particular subsections.

Sport

This section covers a broad range of work including broadcasting rights; regulatory and governance matters; disciplinary and antidoping issues; commercial rights; event organisation; player transfers; e-sports; and stadium construction. Clients may include governing bodies, clubs, investors, elite athletes, sponsors and agencies.

TRANSPORT

Transport

Rail, shipping, and aviation are areas of focus in this section, with highly ranked firms advising on a wide range of work including projects, finance, franchising, procurement, and infrastructure, as well as commercial issues, contractual matters and regulation. Highly ranked firms are likely to be handling significant contentious work, and evidencing expertise specific to transport subsections.