

## Getting ahead

Uría Menéndez and MLGTS are perceived to be the law firms offering the best career opportunities for young lawyers in Spain and Portugal respectively, according to a new study which highlights the firms' prestige, excellent senior lawyers and good opportunities for career progression

Uría Menéndez is widely considered to be the law firm that offers young lawyers the best career prospects in Spain, while MLGTS is seen as the leader in this area in Portugal, according to new survey conducted by *Iberian Lawyer*. A survey of more than 100 law firm partners and in-house counsel in Spain and Portugal found that Uría Menéndez is viewed as being prestigious as well as having excellent senior lawyers from whom younger lawyers can learn. Consequently, it was the firm most commonly mentioned when research participants were asked which firm they would recommend to someone who was beginning a career in the law. Meanwhile in Portugal, MLGTS was the most highly-recommended law firm largely because it is viewed as having excellent senior lawyers to learn from, as well as being seen as prestigious and providing an opportunity to do sophisticated and innovative legal work. The study was conducted at a time when law firms are facing the challenge of having to attract the brightest young talent in a fiercely competitive recruitment market. The study sought to identify which law firms had the best market reputation for offering young lawyers good career prospects.

The methodology for the study was as follows: partners and in-house lawyers at leading law firms in Spain and Portugal were asked which three law firms they would recommend to someone beginning a career in the law and why. The

more mentions a firm received, the higher they appear in the rankings.

The most significant factor when survey participants recommended firms as good places to work was prestige. A total of 84 per cent of respondents said their recommendations were based on the fact that they perceived the firms to be prestigious. The second most important factor was the perceived opportunity to learn from "excellent senior lawyers from whom younger lawyers can learn a lot" – this was a factor in 72 per cent of respondents' recommendations. The next most significant factors were providing "fantastic opportunities for lawyers to progress their career" (66 per cent); having prestigious clients (57 per cent); providing the opportunity to do the "most sophisticated and innovative" legal work (56 per cent); and offering "excellent training and development" (56 per cent).

With regard to the Spanish rankings, in addition to the aforementioned qualities, Uría Menéndez also scored highly in the area of remuneration – it was generally seen as a firm that "pays well". Meanwhile, the firm was also seen as having a "good atmosphere", while also being noted for its "team ethos" and the "many opportunities for

promotion it offers".

Garrigues was ranked second in Spain and was noted for its prestige, the excellent opportunities it gives lawyers to progress their career, the excellent training and development it offers and the opportunity it provides to do sophisticated and innovative legal work. The firm was also widely recommended because it offers lawyers a "good work-life balance", has excellent senior lawyers from whom to learn and also pays well.

While it may come as no surprise that Uría Menéndez and Garrigues, two of the biggest law firms in Spain, were the top two ranked firms, it was a considerably smaller firm, Pérez-Llorca, that was placed third. Pérez-Llorca is perceived as providing lawyers with excellent opportunities to progress their careers, a "good atmosphere in which lawyers thrive", as well as offering excellent training and development. The firm is also perceived as having prestigious clients, excellent senior lawyers to learn from, as well as offering a "good work-life balance". Pérez-Llorca is also considered to have an "innovative spirit", as well as having a reputation for providing "excellent support for women lawyers".

Next in the rankings, and the highest ranking non-Spanish firm,



is Clifford Chance. As well as being viewed as a prestigious firm with prestigious clients, the firm is also considered to “pay well”. Meanwhile, Clifford Chance is also seen as offering lawyers good opportunities for career progression as well as being seen as having excellent senior lawyers “who are willing to help newcomers”. The firm is also seen as having a positive atmosphere that allows lawyers to flourish.

Cuatrecasas was placed fifth in the rankings. The second-largest Iberian law firm by revenue is considered to be prestigious and also viewed as offering great opportunities for young lawyers to further their career. The firm also scored highly for training and development, while also being considered as a firm that pays well, has a good atmosphere and a “team ethos”.

In sixth place was Gómez-Acebo & Pombo, which is viewed as having high-quality senior lawyers from whom to learn and a good atmosphere. It is also considered to be a firm that provides “excellent support for women lawyers”. Twelve (or 18 per cent) of the firm’s 67 partners are women, which is higher than the average ratio at Spanish firms.

Linklaters – which is seen as a firm that “pays well” in addition

Spain: The law firms offering young lawyers the best career prospects	
Rank	Firm
1	Úria Menéndez
2	Garrigues
3	Pérez-Llorca
4	Clifford Chance
5	Cuatrecasas
6	Gómez-Acebo & Pombo
7	Linklaters
8	Ecija
9=	Allen & Overy
9=	Baker McKenzie
9=	Eversheds Sutherland Nicea
9=	Freshfields

to offering excellent training and development – was ranked the seventh best law firm in Spain to work for, while Ecija, which is viewed as a very innovative firm that is very in tune with the latest technological developments, was ranked eighth.

#### Portugal: MLGTS on top

In addition to being seen as prestigious, having excellent lawyers from whom to learn and offering opportunities to do sophisticated and innovative legal work, MLGTS – the top ranked firm in Portugal – is also noted for its “prestigious clients”. Meanwhile, the firm also scored highly for offering “excellent training and development”, as well as excellent opportunities for career progression.

The second placed law firm in the Portuguese rankings is Vieira de Almeida, according to the study. The firm is widely seen as prestigious, with excellent senior lawyers to learn from and also viewed as offering opportunities to do sophisticated and innovative legal work, as well as providing high-quality training. In addition, the firm is also widely regarded as having a positive atmosphere in which lawyers are able to thrive a “team ethos”, and a “good working environment”. It was also broadly noted that the firm’s offices provide good facilities.

Linklaters is rated third in Portugal – the firm is seen as being particularly prestigious, while also viewed as offering excellent training and development, in addition to having very talented senior lawyers who give younger lawyers the opportunity to learn from their wealth of experience. The firm is also seen as having a good atmosphere, which helps lawyers thrive.

Úria Menéndez – Proença de Carvalho is ranked fourth in Portugal. The firm is recommended largely because it gives young lawyers the opportunity to do sophisticated and innovative legal work, while also offering first-rate training and “fantastic opportunities for lawyers to progress their career”.

Portugal: The law firms offering young lawyers the best career prospects

Rank	Firm
1	MLGTS
2	Vieira de Almeida
3	Linklaters
4	Úria Menéndez – Proença de Carvalho
5	CMS Rui Pena & Arnaut
6=	Abreu Advogados
6=	PLMJ
8=	AAA Advogados
8=	CCA Ontier
8=	Cuatrecasas

CMS Rui Pena & Arnaut – which is considered to have prestigious clients, excellent senior lawyers to learn from and high-quality training and development – is the fifth placed in the Portuguese ranking. In equal sixth place was Abreu Advogados (which is considered to have prestigious clients and a “good record with regard to equal opportunities” – more than a third of its partners are women) and PLMJ, which is viewed as a prestigious firm, with prestigious clients, that offers lawyers the opportunity to do sophisticated and innovative legal work.

Three firms were ranked in equal eighth place in Portugal: AAA Advogados, which is considered to be a firm that pays well while giving young lawyers the “opportunity to work directly with partners who are really hands-on”. CCA Ontier, which is viewed as a firm with a good atmosphere with excellent opportunities for career progression; and Cuatrecasas, which is seen as a prestigious firm offering excellent opportunities for career progression as well as the opportunity to do sophisticated and innovative legal work.

The study suggests that law firms that convey a message of being highly esteemed, with senior lawyers that are willing to share the benefit of their wisdom and expertise with younger lawyers will have the best chance of attracting the stars of the future.