

TO MASTER OR NOT TO MASTER? JUNIOR LAWYERS SEEKING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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This current year has seen sweeping changes for law students in Spain but at last, the ongoing uncertainty experienced over the past 6 years seemed to end when the law was passed by Parliament. Under new regulation, finally approved in May 2012, one must now possess a Master's degree in Legal Practice (Master de Acceso a la Abogacía) to take the bar exam, which one needs to pass in order to become a practicing lawyer.

However, in July 2012, it was confirmed that those who graduated before 31st October 2011 are exempt from the bar exam, and therefore the Master's as well. This means that from September 2012 onwards the Master's will be in high demand by new students and that every lawyer-to-be will have to seriously consider their options when selecting a University to assist in their preparations for their bar exam and their future career.

Who are those undertaking the Master's in Legal Practice now?

In the extremely competitive world of junior lawyers, acquiring a master's degree is an attractive way to put an edge on your resume or CV and increase your employment chances. These young lawyers, recent graduates, are turning to the already in place master's programs that begin in September and face the complex decision of choosing where to invest their time and money.

Not all Spanish universities offer the official "Acceso a la Abogacia" Master's. To make matters more complicated, the Master is not titled consistently by the universities that do offer it. So looking at the content and options for specialization becomes a key for differentiating programs and for deciding which fits you best. Ticket2law.com has conveniently compiled a list of all the universities that will be offering the program this fall and beyond!

Furthermore, the details of each master's program such as tuition cost and internships should be understood and carefully considered because these can make a large difference in your post-master's financial and employment situation.

Master's can cost anywhere from €4.000 to €30.000. This depends not only on course content, faculty, and the type of school, public or private, but also on internship and specialization opportunities. In terms of internships, all universities are required to integrate internship periods into their curriculum and it is important to consider caliber of the company and work you will be doing.

Universities such as the [Autónoma de Madrid](#), the [Universidad de Navarra](#), [Universidad CEU San Pablo](#), [Universidad Carlos III](#), [ISDE](#), [ESADE](#), [IE](#), [Universidad Abat Oliva CEU](#) and [Centro de Estudios de Garrigues](#) have signed agreements with over 20 entities to ensure internship placement for their students.

Many universities also offer a specialized master's. For example, La [Universidad de Navarra](#), la Facultad de Derecho of [IE](#), the [Universidad San Pablo CEU](#) and [ESADE](#) offer bilingual modules, valuable for anyone interested in cross border transactions, in ultimately practicing abroad or in diversifying their skill set.

Beyond cost or specialization we have to consider scholarship possibilities. Some universities offer law firm sponsored scholarships. The schools offering such internships include the [Universidad de Navarra](#) and [IE](#), which have special scholarships in cooperation with firms [Cuatrecasas](#), [Uria Menendez](#) and [Garrigues](#) among others. The scholarships ensure entry into the firm's office upon completion of the Master's, an invaluable aspect in context of the hard financial times.

The Master's is the final step for students into the career world and a step for junior lawyers on the career path. Although the financial times are hard, the added value of a master's is large and a necessity in the extremely competitive legal world.