# Higher education

## Helping you achieve your goals and aspirations

Bevan Brittan

# Higher education

**Bevan Brittan has a dedicated Higher Education legal and regulatory team. We focus on what matters most for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in terms of the provision of high quality education whilst ensuring financial and commercial sustainability.**

Our extensive HEI market knowledge is applied across a comprehensive range of legal and regulatory services to deliver commercial strength to your organisation, including education law, corporate, commercial contracts, disputes, real estate, regulatory, public law and issues surrounding your workforce.

You can access our legal services either directly or via a range of frameworks including the major London, North Eastern, North Western, Southern and Wales Universities Purchasing Consortia Legal Services Framework PA23 Lot 1B, CCS RM6240, University of Essex (all lots), Government Commercial Agency Wider Public sector (RM6240) - Lots 1 & 2, EM Lawshare and a range of other frameworks.

> This practice is unique in its ability to match their advice to the capability and capacity of their client.
>
> **Legal 500, 2026**

Chambers TOP RANKED UK 2026
Bevan Brittan LLP

Legal500 TOP TIER FIRM UNITED KINGDOM 2027
Bevan Brittan LLP

THE TIMES Best Law Firms 2026
In co-operation with statista

EducationInvestor Awards 2025 FINALIST
Legal Advisor of the Year to Education Institutions

# Working with you

**A positive relationship is fundamental to any instruction. By understanding your goals and working closely with the in-house team, we see ourselves as an extension to both your legal and wider project team.**

## We provide

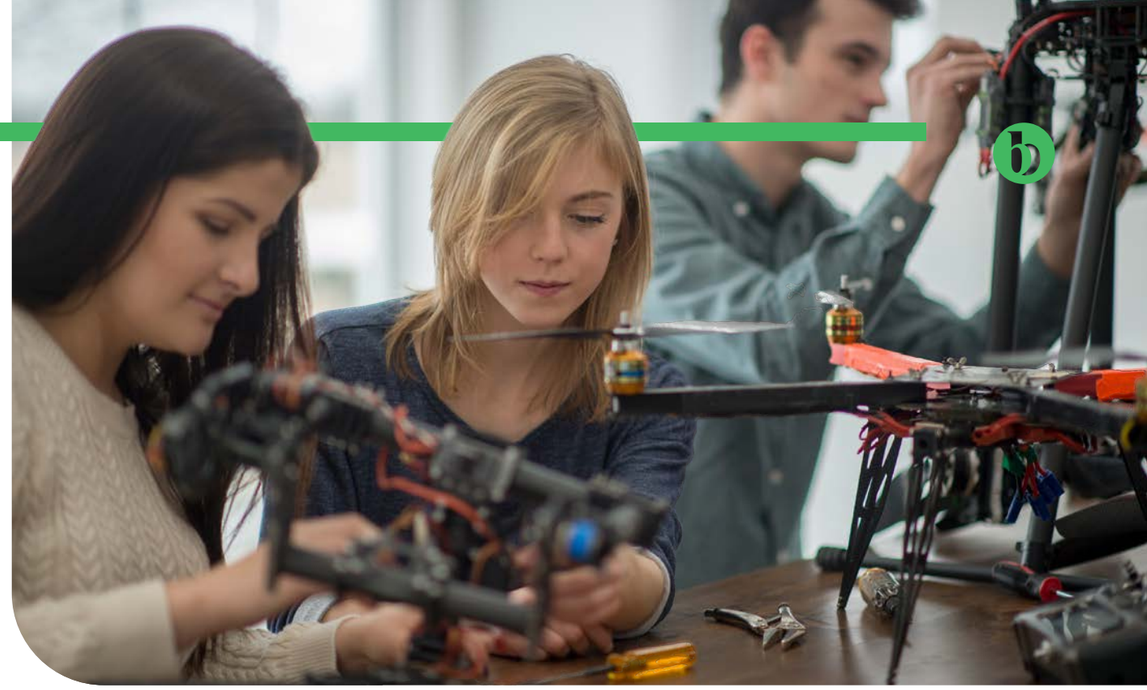
**Focal point of contact** – through a client relationship lead (CRL) supported by a dedicated and consistent team of professionals

**A responsive service** – with clear lines of communication and KPIs for responsiveness

**Risk management** – ensuring clear and straightforward advice about the risks that may arise during a matter and recommendations

**Cost management** – with clear fee estimates, regular financial and management information reporting and transparent billing





**Regular reporting** – through regular monthly meetings to proactively manage our service delivery

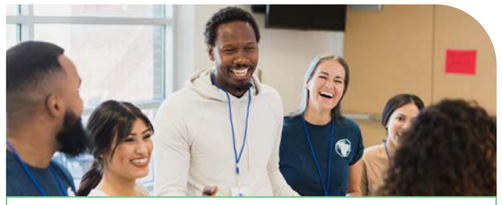
**Quality management** - in line with our quality accreditations and quality and case management systems

**Value for money** - through appropriate allocation of staff, working with your in-house team, using technologies where appropriate, working with you to improve process efficiencies and template documentation; and through our range of added value benefits such as shared know how and training

# Responsible business

**At the core of our continued growth and success is our Responsible Business Programme, founded on four strategic pillars - environmental sustainability, community engagement, equality, diversity, and inclusion, and wellbeing - all underpinned by robust governance.**

**Environmental sustainability**
We are UN-certified carbon neutral and achieved ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) certification as we work towards net zero. We have been accredited as a Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation and have established a Carbon Reduction Plan to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2040.



**Community engagement**
We actively contribute to the local communities in which we work using the commitment, skills and enthusiasm of our colleagues. In December 2025 we donated £100,000 to our four office charities.

**Equality, diversity and inclusion**
Bevan Brittan is an inclusive place to work. We support talented people to succeed at all levels regardless of background, race, gender, sexuality or disability.

**Wellbeing**
Our Wellbeing Working Group has developed an established programme of initiatives that aim to foster resilience and support colleagues' mental and physical wellbeing.

# What matters to you, matters to us

Our clients say we are good people to work with based upon a foundation of partnership, market insight and delivering commercial strength as we proactively and passionately deliver legal advice that generates outstanding results and truly delivers value for our clients.

If you or any of your colleagues would like to discuss your corporate and legal needs and/or the trends we are seeing emerging across the sector, please do contact our team.

# Our experience to support you

## Education law and student related issues

**Student contracts** - We advise on the impact of consumer law and CMA guidance. We also advise on the importance of pre-contract information, and provide input into the development of prospectuses and website content.

**Student disciplinary process** - From policy and rule making; advising on whether conduct meets the threshold to initiate the student disciplinary process; and advising on decision making, in particular from a public law perspective. We also advise on implementation of the GMC's guidance for medical schools and their students on professional behaviour and fitness to practise.

**Academic processes** - Such as admissions, examination requirements, scholarships and bursaries, and requests relating to extenuating circumstances.

**Dealing with student complaints** - Including complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

**Reasonable adjustments** - Including dealing with requests and any resulting disputes under the Equality Act 2010.

**Policy development** - For example, in relation to student welfare and what is appropriate behaviour in a learning environment.

**Regulatory requirements** - Including advising on the Office for Students' regulatory framework.

**Governance advice** - Relating to compliance with relevant requirements including under Statutes and Regulations.

## Employment, HR, pensions and immigration

**Advice on all aspects of the employment relationship** - Including the construction of terms and conditions of employment and relevant legislation. We also input on the drafting and implementation of policies. We have wide-ranging experience of dealing with major HR projects with significant TUPE implications. We advise HEIs on international HR issues in relation to workers on HEI premises overseas.

**Dispute resolution and settlement agreements** - We provide advice on disciplinary and grievance processes, including inputting into investigatory reports; as well as advising on severance payments. We have an extremely broad range of experience in acting in Employment Tribunal proceedings.

**Redundancy agreements** - We advise clients of all types and sizes on how to approach redundancies. We also have specialist experience acting for HEIs including on whether expiry of fixed term funding-linked research posts carries the risk of redundancy and if so, how to manage the potential redundancy and redeployment opportunities in accordance with HEI policy.

**Pension advice** - We have a team of pension specialists who are experts in dealing with the USS and other university pension arrangements, together with pension arrangements which may arise out of service provision changes and TUPE transfers.

**UKVI/PBS** - We advise on existing right to work protocols and report on UKVI compliance, and can provide training and knowledge sharing sessions for EEA staff at HEIs. We also advise on staff and student visas.

## Litigation and dispute resolution

**Civil law disputes with students** - Including defending alleged negligence and breach of contract claims, Equalities Act 2010 litigation, and Judicial Review challenges. An example is - Siddiqui v. University of Oxford [2018] EWHC 184 (QB) – we acted for the University of Oxford in relation to a claim alleging negligent teaching. We successfully defended the claim.

**Claims with third parties** - In contract tort and public law including claims brought by suppliers and visitors, personal injury and disease claims, insurance coverage disputes. We can also advise on ADR and mediation.

> The team understands how universities operate and they always provide sound, practical advice… I have instructed them on a range of matters including land law, employment and insurance. They meet deadlines and can be relied on to respond quickly in the event of an emergency.
>
> **Legal 500, 2025**

# Property and estates

**Property acquisitions** - We take time to understand what our clients intend to use the premises for, when they would like to take entry, and provide advice in relation to approvals and consents required. We have a wealth of experience in preparing and negotiating the purchase documentation, undertaking all necessary searches, providing reports on title and documents, completing land registry and SDLT forms.

**Property disposals** - When land is being sold we work closely with clients to understand their objectives. For example we seek to understand whether they are looking for a quick receipt, whether conditional offers will be considered and whether they want to include overage. Where appropriate we assist with negotiation of the heads of terms as the sale will proceed much quicker if all commercial issues are agreed at an early stage.

**Property management, leases and licences** - we have an excellent suite of precedents that are applicable to every type of transaction. We also have extensive experience of reviewing draft leases to ensure they comply with the heads of terms and meet your goals. We take a pragmatic approach on lease amendments and can advise on issues relating to renewal leases and rent review provisions.

**Procurement and tendering** - We can help, should your university need to carry out an FTS compliant procurement exercise, when procuring a development partner or contractor. We regularly advise on the procurement options available and the advantages and disadvantages in the context of the project and can then advise from the issue of notices through to conclusion of the procurement process.

We can develop various frameworks to assist in maintaining university properties such as repairs and maintenance, minor works, consultancy frameworks.

**Development, funding and PPP projects** - We can assist on development schemes from initial consideration of whether a site is suitable for development (by providing a development constraints report), through to consideration of the type of development partner or contractor, negotiating the property, construction and funding documentation and, if required, agreements with end occupiers. We regularly advise on public/private partnerships.

**Construction** - We offer full construction legal support from inception to Practical Completion advising on a range of building contracts and other collateral documents. We advise on the suites of construction precedents required for developments and can tailor such precedents to individual requirements. We also provide advice on the appropriate construction procurement method.

**Planning** - We are very experienced in advising on town and planning issues including obtaining planning permission for new developments within an existing estate or providing planning support in relation to acquisitions or disposals. This support ranges from pre-application advice, masterplanning, environmental impact assessments, listed building, heritage or conservation issues to negotiating planning and highways agreements, submitting planning appeals and managing the appeal process.

**Property litigation** - We advise on all types of residential and commercial tenancy and leasehold issues including dealing with possession proceedings, from pre-issue through to enforcement, injunctive relief, access issues, disrepair and hoarding and advising on nominations agreements. Specific experience includes advising a university on a £500,000 dilapidations claim against a commercial tenant and advising on court proceedings to evict trespassers in occupation of a disused university building.

**Construction dispute resolution** - Our specialist construction disputes team provide both advisory and dispute management advice for clients across a wide range of sectors. Experience includes mediation and arbitration; we extricate clients from difficult situations as early and as constructively as possible. Where there are wider considerations at play we build these into our resolution strategy and that's why we are relied upon to handle particularly sensitive and complex disputes, as well as those that are more easily resolved.

**Renewable Energy** - We have a full service energy and resource management team who can assist you on your net zero decarbonisation journey. Our team have specialised in the sector for many years and can advise on both the installation of renewable power and on integrated schemes. We can also assist with PPAs, EPCs and O&M agreements. We can also advise of project structuring and finance.

## Corporate, commercial, finance and corporate governance

**Joint ventures and partnerships** - We advise HEIs on joint venture vehicles to achieve their commercial and educational objectives, taking into account VAT/tax considerations, funding and risk ring-fencing concerns and regulatory requirements. We can also advise on exit strategies and structuring when joint ventures are collapsed.

**Mergers and acquisitions** - We advise HEIs on both the corporate and education regulatory aspects of mergers and acquisitions in the higher education sector, including both share sales and asset transfers, as well as mergers between institutions.

**Corporate structuring** - We advise clients on corporate structuring including the setting-up of subsidiaries and group structures, the reorganisations of HEI groups, governance, charity law considerations, VAT grouping and tax matters and directors' liabilities and duties.

**Academic collaborations and research grants** - We assist HEIs on academic collaborations and strategic alliances, both nationally and internationally. We can also help HEIs and research bodies with the negotiation of research and development grants.

**Tax support** - Our tax consultant has significant experience of working with our corporate team to provide HEIs with practical tax advice, including VAT considerations.

**Finance** - We advise HEIs and investors in the higher education sector on a wide range of finance, funding and banking matters including real estate and project finance, lending, borrowing and investment terms, refinancing, bonds and private placements.

**Corporate governance** - We can support on constitutional matters, OfS registration, OfS reportable events, charity law considerations and the rights and duties of Council members.

**Competition** - We advise on a wide range of competition law matters including both general support relating to preventative actions, policies, training and specific transactional advice.

**Bonds, warranties, guarantees and insurance** - Security documentation in all types of building, refurbishment and maintenance projects are particularly important to clients in the context of numerous high-profile contractor insolvencies. We can provide HEIs with robust and commercial advice to provide necessary protection for capital works. We have week-to-week dealings with many insurers and bondsmen in the construction market so we are available to provide up-to-date advice on current positions on risk items.

> They have amazing technical and legal knowledge, and they are true human beings and care about doing the right thing for their clients.
>
> **Legal 500, 2026**



## Information law

**Advising on data sharing arrangements** - Including international data transfers, as well as data sharing aspects of student and staff complaints and disciplinary processes. We are also working with Universities UK to promote its data sharing guidance (written by Elizabeth Dunford).

**Advising on FOI requests** - We advise HEIs on FOI requests, including from the press.

**Drafting and reviewing policy documents and advising on GDPR compliance** - Such as privacy notices, individuals' rights, policies and procedures and data breach policies and procedures.

**Reviewing contractual provisions** - We can review and advise on information law provisions in all contractual arrangements.

**Individual Requests** - we can assist with DSAR and other information law rights requests, and have specialist software than can help reduce the burden of identifying relevant documents.

**Data Breaches** - We work with clients on all aspects of data breaches – from risk reduction through to notification of the ICO and data subjects, as well as helping HEIs deal with data breach claims.

**Research** - The team has experience of advising in relation to complex data sharing arrangements for research purposes, particularly those involving other HEIs, central government and private organisations where a TRE is used to host data. Our expertise covers both data protection, confidentiality and relevant legal gateways.

**Training** - We provide GDPR training bespoke for an organisation for all seniority of employees.

## IP, IT and procurement

**Protecting IP** - We advise on the identification, protection and registration and commercialisation of IP.

**Collaborations** - We assist on R&D and the protection of IP within collaboration agreements, particularly where clients are looking to generate an income from their R&D.

**Advice on start-ups and spin outs** - We recognise the importance to HEIs in the commercialisation of research activities through working with academics, investors and industry. We can advise on funding structures and route-to-market initiatives, as well as providing IP support to ensure innovations are fully protected.

**Defending and commencing disputes and settlements** - We regularly advise on disputes and litigation involving IP or relating to technology contracts.

**Procurement** - We work with clients to consider the best method of procurement to meet their objectives and play an active role in the process to make sure they achieve their goals.

**IT Procurement Projects** - We advise in relation to IT Procurement projects across digital estates, including in relation to EdTech solutions, online learning, and transformational projects.

## Health and safety / criminal regulatory

**Compliance and due diligence** - We advise on compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, as well as on a wide range of more specific regulations, including those dealing with fire safety, construction (including client duties and managing contractors), building safety, statutory compliance (such as asbestos, legionella, gas safety, electrical safety etc.), waste licensing, food safety, transport and white collar crime (such as bribery, fraud etc.). Our aim is to provide our HEI clients with proactive advice and policies which are easy to understand and quick to implement and adapt.

**Enforcement and litigation** - Our specialist team can help ensure clients have the knowledge and robust frameworks in place in order to minimise the likelihood of incidents occurring. When they do occur, we can assist HEIs with immediate incident response, helping ensure that the response is effective whilst protecting the HEI, we can assist with internal investigations, dealing with regulators, interviews under caution inquests, regulatory prosecutions and challenging regulatory decisions (such as enforcement notices).

**Training** - We provide comprehensive training covering all aspects of regulatory law to specific teams and frequently to senior leadership teams.

**Available 24/7** - We can provide dedicated out of hours emergency advice and support any day any time via a specific telephone and email service.

## Health, care and regulatory law

**Collaborations** - We regularly advise on collaboration within the commercial healthcare market. We have, in particular, worked on international projects for the NHS for over ten years.

**CQC inspections** - We have extensive experience of supporting organisations on all aspects related to CQC inspections as part of our wider healthcare regulatory offering.

**Medical law and ethics** - We have a market leading team of specialist medical law experts and can assist with managing inquests, Court of Protection cases, mental health, mental capacity, consent, medical ethics and best interest issues.

**Clinical trials** - We can assist with medical law issues connected to clinical trials as well as commercial matters such as preparation of legal documentation.

**Student welfare and safeguarding** - Our team can provide advice on student mental health; disability and special needs as well as HEI's meeting their duty toward care leavers. This includes training, policy formulation and investigative support using a trauma informed approach.

# Our experts

## Education law and litigation, dispute resolution

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