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This academic year's
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COMMERCIAL AWARENESS SEGMENT

BY FARHIYA HAJI | 2ND YEAR LLB LAW

PROGRESSIONS IN THE TECH IPO MARKET

The recent successful public listings of Reddit and the semiconductor start-up Astera Labs have sparked a lot of interest and brought some excitement back to the IPO market, which has been moderately quiet since 2020/2021. Reddit's share prices jumping by 48% from the get-go, along side Astera Labs' strong entrance, shows that investors are once again keen on investing in innovative tech companies. This shift is especially noteworthy, considering the last few years where companies decided to hold off on going public due to uncertain economic times, high-interest rates, and worries about getting a good valuation for their shares. The impressive debuts of Reddit and Astera Labs could mean we're entering a phase where the market is more open to new listings, particularly for tech and digital-focused firms.

On a broader scale, the warm reception these IPOs have received might encourage other companies, especially those in tech and social media, to think about going public too. Before this recent upturn, the cooler market and valuation concerns had made many firms think twice about launching their IPOs. However, the success of Reddit and Astera Labs shows that investors are interested in companies that manage to keep their users happy while also making money.

This means making smart choices that both help the business grow and respect what the community values, like keeping ads to a minimum and protecting user privacy. Doing this efficiently can aid in a company's success without losing the support of its users. This change means we could see more companies choosing to go public in the near future, bringing fresh opportunities to the market and possibly signalling a new era of growth for IPOs after a period of caution.

ASK THE CAREERS DIRECTOR

A SPECIAL FEATURE WITH SOAS LAW SOCIETY'S VERY OWN
EYMAAN ZUBAIR | 2ND YEAR LLB LAW

OUR QUESTION THIS WEEK:

How can I make my CV stand out?

EYMAAN'S ANSWER:

Your CV is one of the most important summaries of your education and experience and should provide a clear and nuanced picture of your achievements. I am sharing five of my top tips for creating a good CV:

TIP
01

Make sure the language is clear and consistent and is formatted properly (little technicalities like font sizes and spacing is important!).

TIP
02

List each of the achievements in reverse chronological order, and make sure you highlight the main tasks you completed during your placement.

TIP
03

You don't need to include your picture or your address, and neither is a CV addressed to a certain person. Any 'Yo Grad Recruitment' at the beginning can be struck out, please.

TIP
04

Make sure your CV is tailored to the job description. For example, many Chambers discourage a summary at the beginning – and you can only know this by researching the firm thoroughly first.

TIP
05

Keep it simple, you are a law school student (or a fresh grad) and do not need a diploma in Canva for a good CV. A simple structure with more focus on the quality of text is all you need.

All the best for your future applications! As we conclude this term, I remain available on my mailing address at 691899@soas.ac.uk and am happy to answer any queries.



BAR DIGEST

BY YAËLLE LAWSON | 1ST YEAR LLB LAW

1. "Gold Standard Training"
2. Growing Diversity Within the Bar Standards Board

"GOLD STANDARD TRAINING"

"More than 8 in 10 have a positive pupillage experience" according to a new Bar Council survey. The survey, answered by more than 170 pupils over 2023 and 2024, found that a majority of pupils felt extremely supported in their chambers and were provided with great supervision and feedback. 94% of pupils said they would recommend a career at the Bar which is a reassuring result for the Bar Council in attracting a new generation of pupils. Sam Townend KC, Chair of the Bar Council, addressed the survey results: "Pupillage is the profession's investments in the future of the Bar, and I hope all who are considering a career at the Bar and barristers will take a look at the report". The declining number of younger applicants to the Bar has been a point of concern for barristers, this survey can only hope to create more interest in a career at the Bar.

GROWING DIVERSITY WITHIN THE BAR STANDARDS BOARD

On the 20th March 2024 the Bar Standards Board (BSB) published its annual "Diversity of the BSB Workforce and Board Members 2023". This report provides a direct overview of the positive evolution of diversity in the Bar. The Bar strives to become more representative of society and create a more equal space for the most underrepresented groups at the Bar. In alignment with the data collected for this report, the Bar follows its regulatory objectives and equality duties as much as possible, which is reflected in the results provided. Indeed, the BSB found that amongst its own board members "four members were female, and seven members were male and eight members were from white background, the remaining members were from other ethnic groups". As for employees of the BSB, the data showed that the proportion of workforce from ethnic minorities was significantly higher than the proportion of people in the working age population of England and Wales from ethnic minorities. Amongst many other key data, the BSB's report shines a light on the progress being made in older professions for ethnic minorities in the UK.

What You May Not Have Known About...

BY ALA STASKIEWICZ | 2ND YEAR LLB LAW

THE BOEING CRISIS: A TIMELINE OF LEGAL CHALLENGES

The Boeing 737 MAX crisis stands as a stark reminder of the complexities and challenges inherent in modern aviation. From initial design flaws to regulatory oversights, the saga of the 737 MAX has unfolded as a cautionary tale, prompting lawsuits, investigations, and a fundamental reassessment of safety protocols within the aviation industry.

The troubles began with Boeing's rush to compete with Airbus' A320neo aircraft, leading to intense production pressures and cost-cutting measures at the beginning of 2016. Faulty assumptions about critical technologies, notably the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS), were made, exacerbating the situation. Boeing's culture of concealment further compounded the issue, as crucial information regarding the MCAS system was withheld from regulators, airlines, and pilots, with Boeing prioritising its own interests over public safety. This lack of transparency created a culture where important safety-related details were intentionally hidden or downplayed, ultimately contributing to the tragic consequences seen in the 737 MAX crashes.

The situation took a turn for the worst for the producer in 2019 after the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines crashes in October 2018 and March 2019, respectively. These lawsuits sought compensation for the families of the crash victims and held Boeing responsible for design flaws and inadequate pilot training.

Lion Air Flight 610 crashed into the Java Sea 12 minutes after takeoff, and all 189 passengers and crew were killed. The Indonesian Komite Nasional Keselamatan Transportasi released a report which revealed the MCAS system pushed the plane's nose down 26 times in 10 minutes as the pilots struggled to regain control of the aircraft, clearly showing it was the reason for the crash. Following this, wrongful death lawsuits were filed in the state and federal court in Chicago by almost 30 of the families who lost relatives in the Lion Air crash. Similarly, the 2019 Ethiopian Airlines crash saw 157 deaths, with several lawsuits seeking compensation on the grounds of wrongful death. Boeing's shareholders also filed lawsuits against the producer, accusing the company of misleading investors.

Overall, the plaintiffs alleged that Boeing's MCAS system, designed to prevent stalls, was defective and lacked redundancy. They argued that Boeing failed to disclose critical information about the system to pilots, contributing to the crashes. Litigation also focused on Boeing's alleged concealment of MCAS-related risks from regulators and airlines. These lawsuits highlighted Boeing's accountability for the tragic consequences of the 737 MAX disasters, shaping subsequent legal actions and regulatory responses.

Further down the infamous timeline, in December 2020, the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation released the Committee's investigation report on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which found that Boeing influenced FAA simulator testing for the 737 MAX MCAS, compromising impartiality and safety standards. Following the findings, Boeing was faced with yet another legal action, led by Rapoport Weisberg & Sims, P.C. The lawsuit alleged violations of the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act. It is believed to be the first lawsuit against Boeing specifically seeking punitive damages. The plaintiffs argued that Boeing's corporate culture prioritised speed and profit and accused the producer of fraud, deception, and misrepresentations to rush the 737 Max 8 to market.

But legal actions against Boeing did not halt in 2020. In January 2021, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) charged Boeing with fraud conspiracy related to the 737 MAX certification process. Boeing agreed not to contest the charges and admitted to criminal conduct aimed at deceiving the FAA during the certification process. The company agreed to pay over \$2.5 billion in penalties, composed of a criminal monetary penalty of \$243.6 million, compensation payments to Boeing's 737 MAX airline customers of \$1.77 billion, and the establishment of a \$500 million crash-victim beneficiaries fund to compensate the heirs, relatives, and legal beneficiaries of the 346 passengers who died in the Boeing 737 MAX crashes of Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines. "The misleading statements, half-truths, and omissions communicated by Boeing employees to the FAA impeded the government's ability to ensure the safety of the flying public," said U.S. Attorney Erin Nealy Cox for the Northern District of Texas. Although the agreement did not address any misconduct of Boeing's top corporate officials, it did send a message that manufacturers like Boeing would be held accountable for their actions.

Fast forward to 2024, the manufacturer's 737 Max 9 lost a rear door plug in midflight. The cockpit door blew open following the rapid depressurisation on the Alaska Airlines flight this January, resulting in chaos amongst the 171 passengers and six crew members. Four passengers filed a lawsuit against Boeing and Alaska Airlines. The blowout caused "fear, distress, anxiety, trauma, physical pain and other injuries", and the plaintiffs seek to "recover damages caused by personal injuries while onboard Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 on January 5, 2024", as disclosed by their lawyer, Mark Lindquist. Lindquist has previously represented dozens of victim families following Boeing 737 MAX 8 crashes in 2018 and 2019. While the lawsuit's details are still forthcoming, it represents another significant legal blow to the manufacturer.

The lawsuits and legal battles against Boeing between 2018 and 2024 exposed systemic failures in the 737 MAX design and certification process. These legal actions underscored the importance of regulatory oversight, transparency, and accountability in ensuring aviation safety. The legal scrutiny faced by Boeing prompted industry-wide reforms and highlighted the need for robust governance mechanisms to prevent similar tragedies in the future.



SOAS LAW SOCIETY: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

As the year draws to a close, the SOAS Law Society Committee is gearing up to pass the torch, but not without taking a victory lap! This past academic year has been eventful. Let's enjoy a humble highlight reel of what it had to offer:

Events Galore!

We kicked things off with our legendary Games Night and Thames Boat Party, welcoming fresh-faced undergrads to the society and fostering friendships for the new academic year.

The energy then swiftly shifted from 'Play Hard' to 'Work Hard' with our two competitive-application networking events: the SOAS Commercial Speed Networking and the Legal Careers Carousel. Both brought legal professionals together with our brightest students, sparking connections and career dreams. Our gratitude to all the professionals and students for their spirited participation.

Talks to Inspire

Our Law Society also welcomed SOASians to several enlightening presentation evenings. Starting strong with an application workshop from Slaughter and May's Nick Pacheco and Olivia Harrison who shared helpful tips and insider's advice on how to stand out with your CV. Hogan Lovells' Jasmine Uppal offered her expertise on landing those coveted training contracts and vacation schemes with an energetic presentation with the SOAS Careers Service. We were also honored to have alumnus Hassan Kamal Wattoo back on campus, discussing the power of young voices in law and policy and reflecting on his own activism in his student days. Finally, legal whiz Dennis Viskovich gave us the lowdown on the competitive legal market, the importance of commercial awareness and how to cultivate it in small ways everyday for big results.

Law Ball for the Ages!

And let's not forget the Annual Law Ball. A huge shoutout to EXCO '24 for arranging what will no doubt go down in history as the best SOAS social of the year. Complete with all the tenets of a good time: dancing, laughter, fancy dress – the elegant Plaisterers Hall had it all! We hope you enjoyed the night as much as we did.

A Society Refreshed

This year wasn't just about events. We got a makeover with a new logo, [website](#), and [LinkedIn](#) page, ushering in a refreshed era of professionalism. By the initiative of your committee members, we also launched our bi-weekly newsletter, "Legal Lens"... ringing any bells? Since we began circulating, we've enjoyed tremendous growth and readership thanks to all of you! If you're interested in getting involved in the production or even featuring in the next publication shoot us an email at lawsoc@soas.ac.uk or submit your work [here](#) over the Summer!

It goes without saying that we can't wait to see what the new committee has in store for you. A massive thank you for all the support this year, future lawyers, and good luck with those upcoming exams!

Signing Off,

The Legal Lens Team 2023-2024



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THANKS FOR READING

LEGAL LENS



PRESENTED
TO YOU BY
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