Managing London’s courts
Kate Briden, in her role as Director of the Royal Courts of Justice Group, takes organisation to a whole new level. Her role encompasses overseeing the Court of Appeal, High Court, Central London County Court and the National Probate Service.

‘I have a team of 950 staff, and work closely with the senior judiciary and leadership Judges at all levels, to ensure that we provide an effective and efficient system for the administration of justice.’

An alternative legal route
After graduation and before deciding to enter law, Kate decided to make the most of her time at the University of Hertfordshire and worked in the Students’ Union, first as VP Commercial Service (now Union Development) and then as SU President.

After further study at BPP Kate had not yet secured pupillage, and so began to look at other career options that would allow her to use her legal knowledge. She applied to the Civil Service Faststream scheme, and started work in the Lord Chancellor’s Office, working on judicial pensions.

After a year, Kate decided to stay in the Civil Service and progress her career, rather than moving to the Bar.

She began working for the Lord Chief Justice as his assistant, and after a year was promoted to his private secretary.

She then became Cluster Manager of the London Crown Courts, before becoming Head of Civil Family and Tribunals for HMCTS London, before being appointed to her current role.

‘My role gives me a different way to use my legal knowledge; before applying to the Civil Service I had never considered it as a career option, but the Faststream scheme, whilst extremely competitive, provides fantastic opportunities to see a different side to the law in departments such as the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and Department of Health.’

Words of advice
Kate has kept her links with the University and previously sat on the SU’s Trustee Board.

She believes that the law is slowly changing and becoming a more modern profession. ‘In my role I do encounter some prejudice, although this is as much due to my age as gender. As you become more senior, more doors open although a lot of it is still about how you ‘sell’ yourself and your skills.’

‘My role gives me a different way to use my legal knowledge; before applying to the Civil Service I had never considered it as a career option. It provides fantastic opportunities to see a different side to the law.'