



TRAINEE INSIGHTS KATIE GERASIMIDIS | PODCAST TRANSCRIPT



Kwasi Yeboah



Emilio Fabrizi



Katie Gerasimidis

Kwasi Yeboah: Hi, my name is Kwasi Yeboah.

Emilio Fabrizi: Hello, and my name is Emilio Fabrizi.

Kwasi Yeboah: Welcome to our *Trainee Insights* podcast series, home of discussions about life as a trainee or junior lawyer at Ropes & Gray in London. This podcast is for anyone who has an interest in building a successful career at the firm's London office.

Emilio Fabrizi: We seek to provide you with insights into the culture of our firm, and practical advice about how to excel as a trainee, or make an application to Ropes & Gray London.

Kwasi Yeboah: Today, we are delighted to be joined by Katie Gerasimidis.

Emilio Fabrizi: Katie joined the firm as a trainee in September this year, and is sitting in the tax team alongside Kwasi for her first seat. She holds a first-class honours degree from Durham University and recently finished her LPC/LLM distinction, so congratulations again, Katie. As a recent joiner, and having been a paralegal before joining Ropes, Katie can provide present-day insights into her experience of the culture at Ropes and the trainee experience overall.

Kwasi Yeboah: Katie, how are you doing today?

Katie Gerasimidis: Hi, Kwasi. Hi, Emilio. I'm very well, thank you. Thanks for inviting me onto the podcast.

Kwasi Yeboah: It's a pleasure having you and thanks for agreeing to join us today.

Kwasi Yeboah: Katie, I guess we'll get right into it, then. You seem to have a diverse range of experience in the

legal sector across both city firms and in Chambers. So, following on from those experiences, what specifically made you want to become a corporate lawyer?

Katie Gerasimidis: I think I have a lot of experience in criminal law mostly, growing up with my father as a criminal barrister. So, I spent a lot of time working with him on his cases. I really enjoyed the analytical side of that kind of work—for example, looking through correspondence and witness accounts, creating timelines of events and then trying to spot inconsistencies in those. I really enjoyed that kind of work, and I thought, initially, that was what I wanted to do. But I think as time went on, I felt like the content of the cases didn't change as much—criminal law is definitely more static than commercial law. In my second year of uni, I got a vacation scheme at a global law firm in London. There I had the opportunity to sit in mergers & acquisitions and in litigation, and I found that both seats were really engaging. The work that I was doing was different on a daily basis, and I think it's that evolving nature of commerce really that drew me in—the ability to problem-solve and also the international element of the work.

Emilio Fabrizi: Definitely. I think those points that you made are incredibly interesting in relation to this variety that comes with the work that we do. It certainly isn't static, and it's forever changing—I think that's definitely notable at Ropes & Gray. Irrespective of what department you're in, you will find that no one task is the same, which is fantastic for your development because even though in many ways it's fantastic to become, say, a specialist at drafting a particular document or being used to a certain process, overall, for us as junior lawyers, it's only beneficial to constantly be on our toes, and do new tasks, and find new ways to develop our understandings. So, beyond what you've said in your first answer, what made you specifically choose a firm like Ropes & Gray? And did you explore a lot of other options?

Katie Gerasimidis: I would say I did explore other options, but Ropes & Gray was definitely a top choice for me. I really wanted to start the training contract somewhere with a relatively small intake. I think having paralegaled before at Euclid, there were just partners and paralegals there,

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—Katie Gerasimidis, Trainee Solicitor

so I was used to taking a lot of responsibility for my work. I wanted to be at a place where I could have the same amount of responsibility, and that, combined with the high caliber of the work at Ropes, along with the people, made it the place where I wanted to start my career.

Kwasi Yeboah: I think having been in a few departments now, that definitely resonates with me. In every department, there have been a few people who took an active interest in development and gave guidance. Hopefully that will be your experience as well. What was your impression of the graduate recruitment process and the individuals that you met during the process? Did that influence your decision in any way?

Katie Gerasimidis: Yes, I think most people are naturally very nervous when going through the graduate recruitment process. There were definitely some parts (like my interview) where I really enjoyed the experience, getting to speak to two Ropes & Gray lawyers and sharing my experiences and my interest in the firm. But it's obviously a daunting process. For example, you guys will remember the pitching exercise—it's something I found quite scary. I think you never really know how you're going to perform under pressure like that, but I remember the partners being really encouraging, and that definitely had a big impact. It just helps people to be able to do the best they can, when you're surrounded by people that really want you to develop and grow.

Kwasi Yeboah: For sure. How does your experience so far match up with any expectations you'd had before you started your training contract with Ropes?

Katie Gerasimidis: I think because I did my vacation scheme so recently, my expectations were high. The scheme was a really great experience, but that has absolutely matched up with my experience so far as a trainee. During my vacation scheme, the thing that really stood out to me was how friendly and helpful people

were—everyone would give up their time to speak to me, whether that was trainees, associates, or partners. My experience, generally so far, has been fantastic.

Emilio Fabrizi: That's really good to hear. We're glad that you have been able to settle into the firm, particularly in light of the year that we've had and everything that's gone on. It's nice that trainees have really been able to come together in the office and form a strong cohort as we have. But specifically, in relation to your department, how have you found your experience in tax so far? Has it been a massive learning curve, and have you felt supported through the onboarding process?

Katie Gerasimidis: It's been really interesting. It's quite a complex area of law. I wasn't expecting to have it for my first seat, so it definitely has been a massive learning curve. There are lots of rules and lots of exceptions to these rules. I think often, the answer to research questions is found just spread out across multiple different, so that's been quite a difficult thing to get to grips with, to start off with. But I've been really lucky to have a supervisor who is constantly drawing structure diagrams—he'll spend a lot of time thoroughly explaining tasks to me. I think that's just had a massive impact on my learning process, so that's been really great.

Kwasi Yeboah: That's great to hear. Sitting in tax myself, I definitely agree with you that it's a complex area. And oftentimes, you're doing a task and there are these nuances that come up that you don't expect, which make it distinct from maybe when you work on a small part of a transaction. So, yes, tax is definitely interesting in that respect as well. Whenever we have people on the podcast, we always end with a question that gives us a bit of an insight into their personality and their interests. And so far, we've had some pretty interesting responses—we've been joined by a movie star and a hip-hop connoisseur. I guess the question goes to you now, Katie. Do you have any secret talents or passions?

Katie Gerasimidis: Passions, yes. I'm a keen traveler, I would say. After college, I decided to head off to Australia for a few months. I managed to do my first ever scuba dive on the Great Barrier Reef, which was a really, really cool experience. Then after university and before joining Ropes, I went to Ho Chi Minh City and got a teacher's qualification, and then I became a teacher in Hanoi in both the language school and in an orphanage. I definitely think that traveling is one of the coolest ways to get to know a culture, to really immerse yourself in something completely different, and get out of your comfort zone. I would say that's probably my hidden passion for you, Kwasi.

Emilio Fabrizi: That's great to hear. I think something that makes Ropes & Gray quite unique is certainly down to its people, and its varied backgrounds and experiences. So, we have another special person to add to the list at our firm in terms of their uniqueness. That's everything for today—we hope you enjoyed this discussion. Thank you very much, again, to Katie for her time. For more information about Ropes & Gray in London, including career opportunities, please visit ropesgrayrecruiting/UK. Please follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), both @RopesGrayGrads, and feel free to get in touch with us via those social media handles if you have any questions or thoughts for future episodes.

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