



SINGAPORE LEGAL | PRIVATE PRACTICE

Industry Trends & Salary Guide

edc
2025

PRIVATE PRACTICE IN SINGAPORE

2025 INDUSTRY TRENDS & SALARY GUIDE

LOOKING BACK ON 2024 - A MACRO ROUND UP

Amidst the geopolitical tensions regarding Greater China, Singapore has proven to be an attractive proposition for various international law firms coveting cross-border investments in South-East Asia. In the same vein, the local Big 4 law firms have prioritised regional growth through establishing of law firm networks, such as Drew Network Asia, A&G Asia, Rajah & Tann Asia and WPG Network. Against the backdrop of the second presidency of Donald Trump, many international law firms see growth opportunities in countries with large domestic and emerging markets, such as India, Indonesia and Vietnam.

With the new Admission Regime that came into effect in July 2024, we have seen an increase in demand for junior Associates and trainees as law firms scramble to ensure that they have sufficient manpower at the junior level. With the new practice training framework commencing in January 2025, law firms are providing differentiated honorariums and benefits for trainees, the majority of which have adjusted their trainee honorariums upwards to an annual quantum of S\$40-55k.

Law firms have observed in 2024 that they have to focus on building up relationships and reputation instead of building institutional presence in order to cater to an increasingly astute and selective client base. There is a strong need for law firms to have specialised expertise, paired with deep industry understanding. Accordingly, many seasoned Partners have begun to set up their own specialist boutique law firms (e.g. Sreenivasan Law Chambers, Siraj Omar LLC, Dauntless Law Chambers, etc.).

NEW ENTRANTS

Adding to the list of PRC firms to establish a Singapore office, Wintell & Co and Fangda Partners have established their first overseas branch in Singapore. Other notable new entrants include Tokyo International Law Office, Wotton & Kearney, Trowers & Hamlan, Quinn Emanuel, Trinity International, etc.

PRIORITIES FOR JOB SEEKERS

Salary

With the increased honorariums provided to practice trainees, many mid to large local law firms have increased Associate salaries to match or even exceed the local Big 4 law firms. Numerous law firms have started to move away from a lockstep model to provide more differentiated salaries especially for more seasoned employees.

Flexible Working Arrangements

With the new Tripartite Guidelines on Flexible Work Arrangements, many job seekers consider flexible working arrangements to be a sign of a progressive and employee-friendly environment. This has become a key consideration for many job seekers, and some have gone further to presume that this is a sign of a rigid and conservative management.

2025 OUTLOOK & SALARY GUIDE

2025 looks to be a year of significant change, with investments in legal technology starting to bear fruit. Lawyers can now rely on Copilot for Microsoft 365, a generative artificial intelligence tool which acts as a platform for lawyers to view and track common work processes, such as status updates and deadlines. This has been adopted by firms such as Clifford Chance, while other firms like WongPartnership have partnered with other providers of generative AI solutions such as Harvey.

According to LexisNexis, 82% of lawyers are using or planning to integrate AI into practices, a huge increase from 39% last year. 2025 marks a turning point in the way lawyers work, and lawyers will need to embrace this change and find ways to offer innovative solutions to clients who are starting to embrace legal technology as well.

Amidst these changes in the global economy and legal landscape, payscales in law firms have remained largely consistent with a slight increase. We account for this in our guide below.

International Firms Base Salary

Experience	Mid Tier UK Firm	Silver Circle	Magic Circle
NQ	\$120K - 150K	\$160K - 180K	\$185K - 200K
1 PQE	\$130K - 155K	\$170K - 190K	\$195K - 210K
2 PQE	\$140K - 160K	\$180K - 210K	\$210K - 230K
3 PQE	\$150K - 170K	\$190K - 220K	\$230K - 250K
4 PQE	\$165K - 175K	\$200K - 240K	\$250K - 280K
5 PQE	\$170K - 200K	\$220K - 260K	\$280K - 300K
6+ PQE	\$190K & Above	\$245K & Above	\$310K & Above

Experience	Mid Atlantic US Firms (USD)	Cravath Class of 2024 (USD)
NQ	\$200K - 250K	
1 PQE	\$220K - 270K	\$225K; Bonus \$20K
2 PQE	\$240K - 290K	\$235K; Bonus \$30K
3 PQE	\$260K - 310K	\$260K; Bonus \$57.5K
4 PQE	\$290K - 330K	\$310K; Bonus \$75K
5 PQE	\$310K - 360K	\$365K; Bonus \$90K
6 PQE	\$340K - 380K	\$390K; Bonus \$105K
7+ PQE	\$360K & Above	\$420K; Bonus \$115K

SG Law Firms	Big 4	Mid-Sized Firms	Boutique Firms
1 PQE	\$7.5K - 8K	\$7K - 7.6K	\$5.5K - 6.8K
2 PQE	\$8.5K - 9K	\$7.5K - 8.3K	\$6K - 7.5K
3 PQE	\$10K - 10.5K	\$8.5K - 9.4K	\$7K - 8.5K
4 PQE	\$11.5K - 12K	\$9K - 10.5K	\$8K - 9.5K
5 PQE	\$12.5K - 13.5K	\$11K - 12.5K	\$9K - 11K
6+ PQE	\$14K & Above	\$12K & Above	\$10K & Above

Business Support Base Salary

Role Type	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years
Paralegals	\$45K - 55K	\$48K - 60K	\$55K - 70K	\$65K - 80K	\$75K - 90K	> \$85K
Legal Secretary	\$35K - 48K	\$48K - 55K	\$55K - 60K	\$60K - 65K	\$65K - 72K	> \$72K
Risk & Compliance	\$40K - 45K	\$45K - 55K	\$55K - 65K	\$65K - 72K	\$72K - 85K	> \$85K
Corporate Secretary	\$35K - 45K	\$45K - 55K	\$55K - 60K	\$60K - 65K	\$65K - 80K	> \$80K
Knowledge Management/PSL Lawyer	\$60K - 70K	\$70K - 80K	\$75K - 90K	\$80K - 100K	\$90K - 110K	> \$110K

Business Development & Marketing Base Salary

Role Type	Senior BD Executive	BD Manager	Senior BD Manager	BD Director
Business Development & Marketing	\$6K - 8.5K	\$9K - 15K	\$15K - 20K	\$18K - 25K

OUR LEGAL DESK

Recruiting best-in-market talent across fee earning, as well as business and professional support, for in-house and private practice, globally. We provide executive search and specialist recruitment solutions for international, PRC and leading local law firms in Asia. With both breadth and depth in experience, we go beyond skilfully recruiting and providing consulting and solutions to help law firms assemble exceptional teams. Our consultants are seasoned search professionals in local and regional markets in these areas:

Qualified Lawyer

- Head of Legal & Compliance
- General Counsel
- Senior Legal Counsels

Corporate Governance & Legal Support

- Risk & Compliance
- Company Secretary
- Paralegal
- Contracts Specialist (Trading)

- Legal Executive
- IP Brand Manager
- Contract Manager
- Document Negotiator



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