

Fresh out of exams at Assas and straight into the final semester of our degree, we were ready for another challenge – this time in the form of a moot competition with a twist. Having both participated in moot court competitions at UCD and thoroughly enjoying the experience, we quickly jumped at the chance to apply for the 2018 edition of the Oxford French Law Moot. After a tough application process in which we had to detail our previous public speaking, debating and mooting experience as well as academic achievements, we and eleven other teams were selected to partake in this annual moot court competition organised by the Oxford Institute of European and Comparative Law.

We were sent the problem three months in advance giving us plenty of time to prepare our arguments. The problem was based on an allegation of sexual harassment in the workplace and the subsequent termination of the accused's contract of employment. The moot would be held over the course of a day, giving each team the opportunity to act as counsel for the appellant (the employee whose contract was terminated) and the respondent (the company). Unlike moot competitions we had done before, teams were given the complete liberty as to the presentation of arguments before the court and much to our relief, there was no need to prepare a memorial of any kind for the judges' perusal. The only real rules were that we presented our arguments in French within a maximum of 15 minutes per team. The problem, appearing quite simple at first glance, transpired to be a multifaceted one calling for in-depth research on questions of French employment law, French criminal law and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on these respective matters as well as on the ever present issue of the Article 8 right to privacy. On 12 March 2018, after months of practising and honing our arguments, it was finally time to put all what we had learnt into practice. We met with the other teams, each of them hailing from a variety of universities (Birmingham, King's College London, Galatasaray and Trinity College Dublin to name a few) and the high calibre of judges who would be judging the rounds and putting our knowledge of French law to the test. We mooted against Galatasaray and Oxford in the preliminary rounds, acting for the respondent both times and won both rounds, allowing us to advance to the semi-final. Although we lost to King's College London in the semi-final we could not have asked to moot against a better team and they eventually went on to be crowned the overall winners of the competition.

Taking part in the Oxford French Law Moot was an invaluable experience. It was an honour, not only to moot in front of but to merely be in the presence of notable figures in the French legal stratosphere, including judges from the *Cour de cassation*, France's supreme court in civil and criminal matters. Having the opportunity to put all our employment and criminal law knowledge into practice was also a bonus and if we could do it all again, we would!

Ayodele and Juliette