



First Year Guide

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President's Welcome

Isa Martin, President

On behalf of the Griffith LSA, and the Griffith Law School, I would like to welcome you to Griffith Law! The next few years of your life will be the most challenging, exciting, and—dare I say—fun rollercoaster you've ever been on. I know that when you start law there's so much information floating around that it can be simply overwhelming. This guide is designed to hopefully answer all the questions you have as you take your first steps into the legal community. However, before you move on to the articles prepared by our fantastic LSA members, I have a few drops of wisdom to impart on you!

First of all, welcome to the LSA. By enrolling in the Griffith Law School you're automatically a member of the Law Students' Association, or LSA for short. (You'll also be able to become a financial member of the LSA by purchasing membership at orientation, or any time throughout the year—you'll need to if you wish to compete in our legal competitions or run for a place on our committee). The LSA is your representative body to the university and the legal profession. Our role is to facilitate the most enjoyable and smooth transition through university and beyond. Each year we hold numerous professional development and social events ranging from *Meet the Profession* and *Careers Day* to our annual *Law Ball*, which marks the end of each year.



Once you feel comfortable with your university workload, I cannot recommend highly enough that you enter yourself into our legal competitions. Ranging from the traditional moot (mock court) to



client interviewing and negotiation, these competitions are tailor-made by our Vice President of Competitions for both junior (1st and 2nd years) and open competitors, and are the perfect opportunity to develop the practical legal skills that will be invaluable in the workforce. You won't have many

opportunities to practice these skills in your university subjects, so I urge you to try them out!

Don't worry though; we are not all work, work, work in law school. The LSA also organises several social events throughout the year. Whether it's partying into the night with your fellow law students at our traditional pub crawls and *Start-of-Semester (SOS) Drinks*, or watching the more creative actor-types among us stage our annual Law Revue, there's something for everybody.

I won't go into too much detail about what to expect in your first year of law, as I'm sure the rest of the articles in this guide will fully prepare you for that. But if I had to choose one tip to give you as a first year it's this...

Find a friend group, and set some 'Squad Goals'

Some of you may not have this in mind when you start university—you might already have friends coming from high school



or work, or you don't think there's any need to make friends at uni, instead opting to just turn up, sit in the front row, do your work and go home. Thankfully, my experience has been anything but that. My friends had other ideas. We've enjoyed everything from clubbing, swimming, fishing, sporting, and even uni-bar-ing, although my friends did draw the line at crossfit-ing.

Seriously though, I think I've learnt just as much by throwing ideas around in the library pods with my friends as I have in lectures and tutorials. Yes, university may be intimidating. Yes, you may not know anyone. And yes, you may even be a lot older than most of the students. But you know what? Making friends is important. The law degree is a long, hard slog and having people to share that with is invaluable. As far as making them goes, you all have a common interest. You are all first-year law students. And if that isn't a reason for a solid 'watup?', I don't know what is. So, next time you're in that contracts lecture, try turning to the person next to you and asking "How about that snail in a bottle?" I guarantee it'll kick-start something—hopefully not them moving seats and declining your offer.



This degree is a marathon not a sprint. Go too hard and you *will* burn yourself out. Don't go hard enough and you'll be stuck in Foundations of Law forever. You've got to have balance. Yes, your GPA is important but it's not everything. Make sure you have room in your timetable for the stuff that makes university such an amazing experience.

If you still have some burning questions that you can't find the answers to, feel free to approach myself or anyone else on the LSA and ask away! We're here to make life easier for you, so make the most of us! I'll be dropping by your first few lectures to introduce myself more formally. But, until then, good luck and have fun!

How to: Résumés with Heart

Kiarah Kelly, Vice-President (Marketing)

After working in a firm for almost a year, getting paid for the pleasure, and juggling my fourth year of law school, I'm in good stead for the cold, grim slog of post-graduation employment. However, this isn't what I'm most proud of on my LinkedIn profile. No—the high distinction secured at the expense of sanity and personal hygiene during exam week doesn't rate too highly either. Instead, it's the community work—those warm, fuzzy charitable feelings that are most important to me.

1. Find your passion

Community engagement can only be founded on passion. Let your passion find you or do some soul searching and discover which fires you've got burning up in there. Walking down the street and next thing you know you've been chatting to the Greenpeace guy for forty minutes? Your favourite TV journo delivered an amazing monologue about an issue that you knew nothing about, but now you can't let anyone walk by without garnering their support for said cause also?

If any of the above sound familiar you need to utilise this energy now and get world-savin'. The good news is that there are plenty of causes out there that need your voice.

2. Hold on!

After you've found your passion, you must follow it unreservedly—you never know where it'll take you. Remember what it was like when you first decided to pursue this dream, and never look back. Speak up whenever you have the chance.



3. Boots on the ground

Attend any event or fundraiser for your chosen charity that you can. If you follow the right pages on social media, you'll be notified when something big is happening within the cause you care

about. Now is your chance—don't miss this opportunity to get out and smell the activism.

Don't be ashamed to be a Social Media Activist—you never know who is watching.

Look out for Community Internship-type electives at Griffith. You'll be awarded credit points for your efforts (as well as the warm fuzzies) and Griffith might even help you get up the volunteer hours.

4. Be bold

So now it's time to get out and get your hands dirty for some actual volunteer work. It's very possible that you'll be pushed outside your comfort zone whilst volunteering. Remember, you're very fortunate and at the end of the day you'll go home to your nice warm bed. Everything you do between this moment and the moment you crawl back into bed that night will be a change for the better for someone out there. Keep your head up.

For me, personal experiences meant that road safety would be the biggest concern of my young adult life. One day when I was scrolling down Instagram, I saw an ad for a road safety forum for young people to attend. It was this event that ignited the fire in my belly and at which I made myself heard. The Honourable Mark Bailey, Minister for Road Safety (*squeal*), invited me to be a part of the team that would create a youth road safety campaign. After numerous visits to Parliament House, ministerial meetings (*squeals again*) and even an advertising agency, I produced a road safety campaign in conjunction with the Department of Transport and Main Roads—a campaign that is still live today.

You never know what you're capable of; if you put your mind to it you can change the world (or at least a little piece of it) for the better. But, for goodness sake, remember to put it on your CV!

Introduction to Mentoring

Eliza Walker, Internal Education Officer

When I first started university, I was enrolled in a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice. While I wasn't the first in my family to go to uni, I didn't have any friends who'd been before and no one I knew was starting with me either. The Gold Coast campus seemed huge, my class profiles seemed terrifying, and I had no clue what to expect.

Luckily for me, at my orientation day I was assigned to a mentor group led by a fourth-year student who was studying the same double degree as me, who was incredibly passionate about it, and had been at uni long enough to know exactly what she was doing. By the first week of semester, she'd set up a Facebook page for us and had already fielded many frantic first year questions as well as



organising a dinner where we could all get to know each other. I don't know what I would've done without her. She taught me lots of the important stuff, like how to reference and use the library printers (you'll need a tutorial, trust me—they're the

worst), where to find the best food on campus, and introduced me to some of my best friends. Two years later, I nominated to facilitate the 2017 LSA mentoring program.

The primary purpose of the program is to provide support in whatever way, shape or form you need. Your mentors have been assigned to you (we've done our very best to assign mentors who share the same degree, but this has not been possible in every case and we apologise for that), and Facebook pages have been set up for each group for you to chat, ask questions, set up events—whatever

you need. Additionally, your mentors are available to meet in person throughout the trimester! Whether you're looking for someone to sit with in the library or a quick check in and a coffee, they all have classes on campus and will be around to give you some face-to-face time if you need it.

So, what can your mentor help you with? Pretty much everything, with a couple of key exceptions. Firstly, specific assignments. This is tricky for older students as the university takes academic misconduct issues very seriously, so mentors won't be sharing their old assignments. But they can give you advice on how to approach them! Secondly, drafts. Our mentors are super committed to helping, but having to proofread a whole bunch of extra assignments isn't a feasible task so we ask that you don't expect it of them! So, when it comes to the specifics of assignments, your lecturers and tutors are the best people to approach. However, that doesn't mean academic help is completely off the table—mentors can still give you pointers about how to handle exams, referencing, contacting your lecturers or other university staff, or anything else you may have trouble with, as well as the more day-to-day stuff like what to do in a tutorial, finding your lecture theatre or getting involved with the LSA. There's no such thing as a stupid question, so if there's anything you're wondering about ask us!

It's important to keep in mind that it isn't mandatory for you to get involved with the program — we're here if you need, but, if you don't, no worries! Despite this, I *really* urge you to give it a chance. Law school can be a really intimidating experience when you're starting out and it can be comforting to have someone there to talk to, especially when they've been through the exact same classes, assignments and exams.

If for any reason you feel as though you're not being supported by your current mentor, please don't be afraid to reach out to them! Everyone involved has signed up to help you out and they're here for you, even if they may need a reminder. However, if you do require any extra assistance or advice regarding your mentor, or if you have any queries about the program in general, please contact e.walker@griffith.edu.au.

Griffith Competitions

Jean Fischer, Vice-President (Competitions)

Griffith LSA competitions are an essential part of the law school experience which help develop practical legal and argumentative skills, and offer many opportunities and benefits to the students who compete in them.

Currently Griffith Gold Coast offers four competitions:

- *Mooting*: The most popular of the competitions. Mooting involves presenting a legal argument to a panel of judges against an opposing team. Competitors will be given their facts, and a legal side to argue.
- *Negotiations*: Reaching a conclusion for your client against another team. Both sides are given public facts and confidential facts, exclusive to them, and must sit down with an opposing team to try to reach an outcome their client will be happy with.
- *Client interview*: Asking a client, or an actor for the sake of competitions, questions to try and discern what their legal issues are, what their legal avenues are, and what the client needs to do next. Client rapport is also assessed.
- *Witness examination*: Students interview prosecution and defence witnesses to prove the guilt or the innocence of the defence witness. Competitors may object, and ask witnesses nearly any questions of their choosing, within the general rules of evidence.

All competitions cover a vast array of practical skills a lawyer may need, whether it be interviewing a client, a witness, speaking before a judge or negotiating against other lawyers. Success in competitions may lead to competing in Australian championships, or perhaps even be funded to go abroad in world level competitions.

These skills are viewed in high regard by potential employers. Many larger firms sponsor the competitions, which gives students competing a chance to meet the partners of these top-tier firms, and

the partners a chance to assess potential clerkship candidates. Many lawyers who are in high positions at top-tier firms have competitions experience.

Griffith Health Services: Reach Out

Grace Norris, Vice-President (Education)

Counselling at Griffith

Sometimes it's so, so hard to get out of bed and go to uni. Sometimes you're going through something that you can't just ignore.

Thankfully, Griffith Uni makes it so easy to get help, with both face to face counselling and online video counselling. Appointments are free and confidential, and can be booked online or in person. Simply visit www.griffith.edu.au/student-services/health-counselling-wellbeing/counselling-wellbeing.

No one needs to know except you and your counsellor. No obligations. No pressure. Getting help could make your day or your month or your year.

Health Services

Sex health checks — Yeah, we've all been there.

Quitting smoking — Griffith offers a free program to help kick the habit.

Immunisations and travel vaccinations — don't end up vomiting in a foreign country, unless it's from too much booze.

Pap smears — these are *important* and really not that bad.

Specialist referrals — special treatment for your special rash.

Pathology — they can tell so much from your saliva these days.

GP services — for everything else.



Who told you that you couldn't have it all?

Credits

Griffith LSA would like to extend its sincere thanks to all those who contributed to this guide including the authors of the articles.

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