



Griffith Law Students' Association  
and College of Law

# Careers Guide 2018



THE COLLEGE  
OF LAW

# *Table of Contents*

Message from the Editor	3
Message from the Griffith LSA President	3
Your Industry Engagement Officer: Karen Collier	4
Reaching your Career Goals: Steps to Success	6
Competitions: What are they and what do you get out of them?	8
Tips and Advice from Later-Year Students	9
What is a Clerkship, and how do you get one?	14
Tips and Experiences from Past Clerks	16
So you're about to graduate...what next?	19
Post-Graduate Study	19
What is PLT and why do you need to do it?	22
Some Career Options....	24
Judge's Associateship	24
Solicitor	24
Boutique firm	24
In-house Counsel	24
Government	25
Barrister	25
International Opportunities	25

## Message from the Editor: Jamie-Lee Carter



The career you choose will impact just about every aspect of your life, so making the right decision is important. Just by starting your law degree, you are on the path to your future career. You may not know exactly what that is right now, and that's perfectly okay. This guide will contain just some of many options available for a career in law, and the kinds of things you can start doing from your first year to get you there. While gaining law-related skills and relationships is important, non-law skills can set you apart from other applicants to your dream job, and those non-law relationships can even help you discover that dream job. Trying to figure all of this out can be quite overwhelming, so please remember you're not going through this alone. This is where later-year students, your tutors and lecturers, and other industry professionals you meet along the way are important—they are your future employers and colleagues and they have been through what you're

dealing with now. They are your support system and can at the very least point you to some resources or a more knowledgeable person to help you in the right direction.

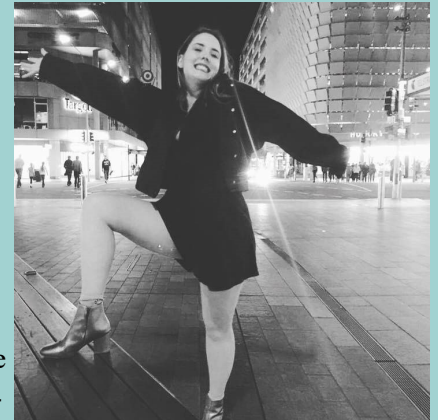
So, while this Guide is a great starting point for your career in law, it is just that: a guide. There are *so* many more options and pathways out there, and where one doesn't exist, you might just have to create your own.

If you find yourself struggling and you're not sure where to turn next, please email me at [careers@griffithlsa.org.au](mailto:careers@griffithlsa.org.au) or message the Griffith LSA Facebook page.

## Message from the President: Grace Norris

From your very first year of university, you can already feel the weight of the employment market on your shoulders. While you are meant to be enjoying and learning and being curious, you are also always trying to secure your future. This guide is a resource intended to give you an insight into all of the things that you can do with your law degree. Griffith Law graduates and students are doing so much and are already making their mark in the professional world. What they want to say to you is: if I can do it, you can too.

My only piece of advice when it comes to your career is to look outside the box for experience. It doesn't have to be all about your grades and your traditional work experience in the legal industry. Volunteer your time anywhere, whether that's outside of university or within a student organisation. Learn about marketing and self-branding to keep up with the ever-changing industry and the way that we all conduct our business. When I got my first job in a firm, it was because I had worked two years in a SupaIGA in my hometown, and, as such, had experience in customer and client relations. Do not reduce yourself to a number – employers are looking for more than 7's because they know that *you* are more than just 7's.



Once again, our incredible Careers and Alumni portfolio have released an equally incredible guide. Every year this guide provides professional insights on a personal level by our peers and colleagues, reassuring us that we are all in this together. This guide is no different, and I hope that you find the piece of information in here that sets you off on your path of greatness.

All the best,

Grace Norris

Griffith LSA President - 2018



## *Your Industry Engagement Officer: Karen Collier*

The purpose of my role as Industry Engagement Officer is primarily the management of employment opportunities, both graduate and work experience placement opportunities, for Griffith Law students.

I facilitate opportunities between industry and students and act as a point of contact for external employers within the legal profession wishing to create and develop partnerships with Griffith Law School, with the view to achieving enhanced employability outcomes and careers opportunities for graduates and students.

The graduate employment market is a very competitive one and employers are increasingly looking for graduates with a skill set gained through a variety of experiences. Employers are looking for individuals who can offer broad-based experience, transferable skills and who are able to present themselves in a professional manner.

This is why career planning is vital for graduate success and students should begin to consider this early on in their University studies. Career planning involves exploring career options, researching the industry, determining where your interests lie, finding out what employers look for, starting to build a resume and identifying your skills, strengths and any skill gaps before commencing your job search.

Luckily there are some great resources available at Griffith to assist you with this process including Griffith Law School events (guest speakers, clerkship preparation, legal research skills seminars etc.), activities organised by GULS and also some fantastic information and resources available on the Griffith University Careers & Employment website.

<https://www.griffith.edu.au/careers-employment>

<https://gradaustralia.com.au/career-planning/five-steps-to-writing-a-SMART-career-plan>

<http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/careerplanningandresources/starting-your-search/acareerplanningdevelopmentmodel/>

Gaining some practical experience during your studies is advisable and can be great for your resume. I would encourage you to engage in some work experience, an internship or clinic during your degree. However, it is also interesting to note that transferable skills such as communication, teamwork and problem solving ability are generally ranked as the most important by employers looking to recruit graduates, and these can be gained in most workplaces.

I would encourage all students to attend graduate and industry related events throughout their time at University such as the Griffith Law School Meet the Profession events and the QLS Legal Careers Expo. This will help to ensure that you are aware of the opportunities available and equally to help you perfect the ever increasingly important skill of networking!

For Law students heading into the penultimate year of studies, clerkships will be a huge topic of conversation and are undoubtedly important for those interested in employment within top tier firms. However please keep in mind that a law degree can offer incredibly diverse employment opportunities, and I would encourage student to investigate the options open to them.

If you are looking for any advice regarding career planning, career options, industry networking, industry mentoring or resumes, please email me at [k.collier@griffith.edu.au](mailto:k.collier@griffith.edu.au)

I look forward to meeting you in 2018!







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# *Reaching Your Career Goals: Steps to Success*

Your road to graduate employment begins on your first day of Law School. There are many things you can do from even your first day of classes to increase your chances of obtaining employment after University, but there are others that cannot be completed until your penultimate (second-last) or final year. The list below is merely a guideline, and there are many more out-of-the-box ways to enhance your employability.

## **Do your research!**

Enrolling in a law degree suggests that your future career will involve law in some way. Now is the time to do your research on the profession, the types of careers you can have with a law degree, and the (traditional) pathways to achieve these. Law is one of those degrees that will be useful in any and every career that you could enter into, so now is the time to start looking into your options.

## **Develop efficient and effective study skills and habits**

Not only will efficient and effective study skills and habits improve your grades, but they will also better your work-life balance. Modern law students have many responsibilities outside of university—some work, whether that be casually, part- or full-time, some have families, some play sports—so it is necessary to manage your time and workload efficiently and effectively to meet all of your other obligations, and to also keep you sane.

## **Do well in your classes**

In saying that, your GPA isn't necessarily the greatest indicator of whether you'll get a graduate position or not. These days, employers take other things into consideration that are, in most cases, at least as important as your grades. These can include your extra-curricular activities, work experience, volunteering experience, leadership skills, unique skills, and whether they believe you'll fit in at the firm and its culture.

## **Create and update a resume and (template) cover letter**

If you don't already have them, you should make these ASAP. You will use these time and time again throughout your time in Law School—whether it be for casual work, scholarships, internships, clerkships, or volunteer positions. There are many online resources (even templates) to create these documents. Student Guild also runs workshops to assist you in making these.

## **Get involved with clubs and sports**

There are SO many clubs and sporting teams to join on (and off) campus. These are good not only for your resume (and we all know that's at least *some* of the reason why people join them), but also for networking and developing other skills and interests.

## **Enter competitions**

Competitions are a fun way to develop your advocacy and communication skills within and outside the law. These competitions are run throughout the year by the LSA, and you can find more information about them on page 8 of this Guide.

## **Consider going on exchange**

It's pretty amazing that you can travel to a new country AND get course credit at the same time, right? Learning about a new culture, and maybe even learning a new language, are great ways to set yourself apart from the rest of the applicant pool. Griffith University is partnered with many other universities around the world, so there are plenty of awesome places to choose from, and there are even scholarships available to help fund your adventure.

## **Complete an internship, work placement, and/or clerkship**

These positions are how most law students gain experience during university, but they usually aren't on offer until at least your second year, and clerkships in particular are offered only to penultimate year students. The easiest way to find these positions is to contact the firm/company of interest directly and asking if they have any availabilities. There is more on these positions later in this Guide.

## **Volunteer**

Volunteering at Community Legal Centres, and other places, is a great way to develop relationships and your soft skills, like communication, team-work and task management. CLCs assist all types of people from all walks of life, and learning how to communicate with diverse groups of people is an invaluable skill to employers.



## Attend networking events

These events increase in importance the further you get through your degree. Although very intimidating to begin with, these events give students the opportunity to speak with practitioners from all areas of law and in all kinds of roles to get a feel for the profession, and the people that it is made up of. Some of our alumni also attend these events, so you can find out from them how they went from Law School to their current role. And you never know, you might just get a mentor or even a work placement opportunity from someone you meet there!

## Attend court

If you plan on being a solicitor who appears in court, or a barrister, attending court is a great way to get a feel for the court system, the roles different people play, and the way things work. It is also recommended that you attend different types of hearings for more rounded knowledge. You'll also find that at least one of your assessments will require you to attend court, so this knowledge will be an advantage. As long as the "Closed Court" sign isn't lit up outside the courtroom, you're allowed to sit in on the hearing.

## Develop non-law related skills

These days, it's not just your GPA and work experience that land you a job—it's also the things that set you apart from other applicants that might make you a better fit for the firm/company. Developing other skills like learning a new language, playing an instrument, writing a blog, and even skills like coding will get your potential employer's attention.

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## *Competitions: What are they and what do you get out of them?*

Griffith LSA hosts various legal competitions to enable law students the opportunity to learn, demonstrate and evaluate their practical legal skills. Competitions are also a fantastic opportunity to establish new friendships with other law students in a completely stress-free environment. In the past, these competitions have seen students competing on national and international scales. Additionally, students can be offered to present in front of highly reputable legal practitioners.

Mooting, negotiation, client interviewing and witness examinations are the key competitions that I would invite you to get involved with in the year to come:

**Mooting** – A simulated court proceeding where students act as lawyers and are required to argue before judge/s. Mooting involves both a written and oral component which involves in-depth research into the relevant law and how it should be best applied in their client's case.

**Negotiation** – Two teams, each of two solicitors, meet to discuss a dispute between their clients and reach an outcome that best serves both clients' interests. Each team is provided with a general description of the facts and also a set of secret facts. Subject to client instructions, teams strive to reach an agreement before it is too late!

**Client Interviewing** — Arguably, this competition is the most practicable in terms of important skills a solicitor must have. Teams of two must gain the trust of the client and ascertain all the information necessary to provide them with some short-term and long-term advice. Some clients can be much more difficult to work with than others...

If you would like any further general information regarding 2018 Competitions - please keep an eye out for our 2018 Competitions Guide. Alternatively, if you would like further information about getting involved in competitions, please do not hesitate to contact me (Amy Hohns) via [competitions@griffithlsa.org.au](mailto:competitions@griffithlsa.org.au).

Your Competitions Team: Amy Hohns and Jean Fischer



## *Tips and Advice from Later-year Students*

### **Jayson Cooke— Parent and Full-time Law student**



People often ask how I can possibly manage full-time study, work commitments and raising a twelve-year-old, a six-year-old, and a five-year-old. The simple answer is I manage because I have to, because I want to, and because there is no preferable alternative. The reality is, the lessons learned in raising a family are integral to the person I am today; without them I may well have not had the ability to do what I now do.

Being a parent has taught me the value of leadership, compromise, being flexible and open-minded, collaboration and consistency, all in very real and demonstrative ways. My family, and our children in particular, are also an incredible motivating force for me in both my studies and my career aspirations. I want the world to be a fairer place for all, and I want to be able to demonstrate that positive changes on a micro and macro scale are possible, and that hard work and goal setting is a reward in and of itself.

Eventually all of us will become responsible for managing our time, our expectations, our workload and our finances. We become responsible for ourselves, and have a degree of control over how we manage our day-to-day, and face consequences if we get something wrong along the way, but hopefully learn from and don't repeat mistakes.

Similarly, being a parent does bring further responsibility, but also great joy, great lessons and an in-built degree of purpose. Any parent giving the idea a moment of reflection will recognise that they are constantly influencing and shaping the person their child will become, and the effect their child will one day have on the world.

This is no different from the effect we have on our colleagues, social circles, careers, and on various scales the world at large, and recognising this is invaluable to both studying and beyond.

### **Community Legal Centres: What's the Deal? - Kiarah Grace Kelly**

I call it my 'aha!' moment; my first ever shift at the Robina Community Legal Centre. I found myself in a big, empty room adjoining the local library and I had been asked to fill in as the Centre was short on student volunteers for their weekly Thursday evening drop-in advice session. My first job was to set out some desks and chairs so that the big, empty room I found myself in could become a pop-up law office just for the night. Well this wasn't too hard, was it? Next thing I know, I was being shuffled into the next room where I found 40 people of all ages, cultures and walks of life furiously filling out their intake forms.



A student volunteer within a Community Legal Centre can expect to answer client questions about administrative matters, to sit in on advice sessions and assist in taking notes, attending to ringing phones and keeping up with the copying and filing.

So back to that 'aha!' moment then; about four hours after I arrived, each and every client had been seen. Visitors had sat with a Solicitor, had their matter looked over and were given practical and clear instructions for their next move. I went on to volunteer permanently and have seen a woman with a three-week old baby seeking advice on how to leave her abusive partner, a grandparent trying to gain access to their grandchild in foster care, and a young single parent who'd been evicted from their home. Each and every person who left that room had a visibly noticeable lightness and hope in their stride, and I was left feeling that this was what being a good lawyer was all about.

If volunteering with a CLC isn't on your radar, it should be. Before you leave law school you should hope to understand the struggles faced in the community and be exposed to the things which make us all so different.



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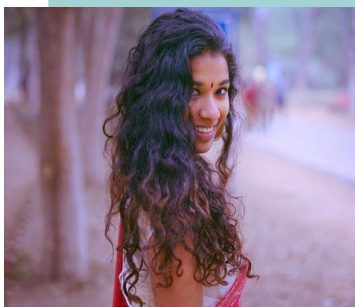
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## My Internship in Delhi - Aditi Manoharan



For six weeks I stayed in India's capital city, New Delhi, and learned the way lawyers lived, spoke and breathed. Working hours in India are extremely long, generally a 12-hour day from 9am to 9pm. However, lawyers work until the wee hours of the morning. My internship was with TRS Law Firm, where the two resident lawyers, Mrs Talish Ray and Mrs Sunieta Ohja, are very well known both nationally and internationally for the kind of cases they handle.

During my Internship, I went to arbitration meetings, wrote up a petition for a divorce case, and did research for articles which the law firm publishes in local newspapers, in addition to going to court and observing the legal system of India. I have also learned that India still follows the old British Constitution and has not significantly progressed with time. For example, adultery is a crime in India but a woman cannot be prosecuted, nor can she file a case against her husband for adultery. Though there are now more laws that protect women, they are very specific to the particular gender, such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, while men have no such acts.

Since the firm largely works with women's rights, I got to travel to Hyderabad, a city in South India, to attend a workshop by Sristhi Bakshi, an Indian woman who is walking from South India to North India to educate and create awareness about the rights of women. TRS Law firm provided the legal aspect at these workshops. I also got to interact with a lot of women who have suffered from domestic violence or violence in general and learned the many ways India is trying to help them legally.

Overall, it was an enriching, educational experience and what I can take back from my internship is the work ethic of the lawyers and the care and dedication that goes into every case.

## Volunteering at Gold Coast Community Legal Centre—Dale Maden

Volunteering with the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre (GCCLC) was an eye opening experience. The GCCLC is a not-for-profit organisation providing free legal advice to the Gold Coast community. My role on the front desk was to take calls and book clients with an available solicitor, or refer them elsewhere. Sounds easy right? After the first 5 calls of panic, tears, and very poor English on the other line, you learn quickly that this isn't going to be as smooth as you thought it was, and that there are some really desperate, often aggrieved people out there who need advice, and it felt good to be their point of call. What I gained most from my time with the GCCLC was the exposure to clientele, which taught me valuable phone skills like speaking with empathy, filtering out irrelevant information, and maintaining professionalism under pressure. It is not until you are placed under a situation of pressure that you learn just how novice your skills really are, but after repeated exposure they improve and become automatic. I'd encourage anyone to take on a similar role if they get the opportunity, because you can actually back up those claims to have "advanced interpersonal skills" on your resume! And, in the few job interviews I've had since, prospective employers have always been interested in my time with the GCCLC. I'll definitely take some improved social competence to my future career, and you can only improve your skills through situations like these.



## Into the Deep End—Heidi Greenwood



Applying for a position in a law firm, whether it be volunteer or paid, can be a daunting experience for any law student. The fear of rejection or not feeling good enough can lead to many students not even putting in a job application to a firm in the first place. Speaking from personal experience, I can testify to that. Even as a fourth-year law and criminology and criminal justice student, the idea of approaching firms and making a case as to why you'd be an excellent candidate is a scary one.

Luckily however, I have been fortunate enough to gain some amazing experience working with an impeccable legal team in a renowned Body Corporate law firm at Mathews Hunt Legal. What I learned while working at Mathews Hunt Legal far outweighs what any School of law could ever offer – practical experience. It is so important for any student to get a feel for what it will be like working as a lawyer. You learn how to communicate with your professional peers, how to compose court documents, how to lodge documents in court and all of the other fundamental attributes and skills that make up being a lawyer that law school can never teach you. The only way you learn those things is to actually do them.

So, my proposition to you is: go for it! Get in early and show your future co-workers that you are an ambitious law student who is willing to forego their comfort zone in order to achieve a successful legal career.

## Volunteer student experiences: *The Griffith Journal of Law of Human Dignity* - Michelle Gunawan

For anyone interested in law reform and social justice, an editorial position on our student-run journal — the *Griffith Journal of Law & Human Dignity* — is a perfect volunteer role for you.

The *Journal*'s mission is to advance personal freedom and human dignity through fearless and novel scholarship, and provide a platform for the silenced, disenfranchised, and marginalised. We have also created a space for novel legal narratives alongside critical legal scholarship, creating a unique space in academia. A few examples of topics the *Journal* has published articles on include euthanasia, sexism in politics, trans issues, and surrogacy — and authors such as former Justice Michael Kirby and Julian Burnside, among others, have addressed contemporary social justice issues in the *Journal*.

As we are student-run, editors have the capacity to propose different topics to pursue authors on, or even special themed issues. In my former role as Editor-in-Chief, I had the opportunity to lead a talented 18-person team of editors to produce the Special Issue 'Gender, Culture & Narrative', consisting of 10 manuscripts and authors speaking from a range of different perspectives, including an intersex person's experience with the medical profession, sexism in politics, the Asian-American diaspora, and more. This particular Special Issue was more than two years in the making and as a *Journal* we were really proud of the depth and diversity we achieved, as well as providing a platform for such powerful and interesting stories.

Despite these obvious positives, the *Journal* has also provided me with an important talking point for work experience. The *Journal* is a highly collegial environment, with tasks including maintaining correspondence with authors, coordinating peer-review and copy-edits, and providing and receiving constructive feedback. All of the articles we publish are a team effort, and the whole editorial board participates in negotiating and resolving complex issues involving research ethics that may arise. With hours spent reviewing manuscripts in painstaking detail, you also develop strong professional writing skills and attention to detail — very important skills in the modern workforce — and the opportunity is there to form connections with the legal profession, whether they be judges, researchers, journalists, or other commentators.

As a final-year law student, I can definitely say that being a part of the *Griffith Journal of Law & Human Dignity* was the highlight of my university experience! It was a perfect way for me to follow my interests and passions while also gaining valuable experience.



## International Experience of a Lifetime— Siân Lord



I am currently in the final year of my double degree (Bachelor of Laws (Honours) / Bachelor of Politics, Government and International Relations) and have had some amazing international opportunities spread across my degrees; opportunities which have provided both unique learning experiences and a brilliant forum in which to network. During my year on exchange at Lund University in Sweden, I was able to study new areas of international law whilst also working in conjunction with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. Whilst expanding my knowledge of the law itself, I was given exposure to current issues as well as the projects being conducted by those currently in the field. Additionally, I became an active member within the United Nations Youth Association of Denmark which involved lectures and visits to various sites (including the UN City based there). Following this, I was chosen to attend a conference on International Comparative Law (Criminal & Commercial) hosted by the European Law Student Association in

Poland. The conference provided a fantastic forum to interact and network with lawyers, academics and law students worldwide.

A few months later, I was selected as 1 of 35 worldwide participants to attend the 2016 Hague Symposium on Post-Conflict Transitions & International Justice at The Hague. Upon completion, I graduated with a Post-Graduate certificate with distinction from the International Peace and Security Institute for my work on reforms within the International Criminal Court. I would highly recommend fellow students to consider completing a semester abroad or to undertake these kinds of courses, especially given the increasingly competitive graduate market. I believe it is these kind of experiences which make you a strong candidate and provide you with a distinctive edge.



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We work across borders too, thanks to our alliance with Linklaters. This strategic partnership opens up worlds of opportunity for our business and our people, including rotations in Linklaters London, Hong Kong and Singapore for our graduate lawyers.

In a rapidly changing world, we seek opportunities to innovate, embracing creative thinking, new approaches and emerging technology. And we don't just use them to benefit ourselves and our clients. We believe strongly in driving positive change to do right by our community too.

Our teams are open, inclusive and encouraging, giving you the chance to learn and grow, but your development will be down to you. You'll have the flexibility to drive your career, and we'll recognise your achievements and hard work as you progress through the firm. Are you ready to begin?

### Clerkship program

A clerkship with Allens is the first step in a rewarding legal career. The program will give you invaluable insight into our work and culture. With support from a buddy and development supervisor, you'll work on real matters for real clients and be involved in projects.

### Graduate program

Comprising two 12-month placements in different practices, our graduate program offers exposure to stimulating legal challenges. In each rotation, you'll gain a depth of experience that comes from seeing matters through. However, at Allens we don't work in silos so you won't be limited to working with one partner or by your practice areas. Working with different teams and leading organisations, you'll grow a solid skills base and develop the agility needed to thrive in our ever-changing world.

Early careers at Allens provide highly tailored training through the Allens Academy. Developed in partnership with the Australian National University, our Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice will help you transition from law graduate to legal expert and trusted business adviser.



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### Clerkship

- > Programs run from three to ten weeks
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- > Ongoing support and buddy system
- > Exposure to one or two practice groups

### Graduate program

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# *What is a Clerkship and How do you get one?*

## **What is a clerkship?**

Clerkships are work placement opportunities offered to penultimate year law students by mid-tier and top-tier law firms. These placements allow students to gain practical legal experience by working at a law firm. Generally speaking, clerkships are completed over university vacation periods, but the total duration and number of days' work required each week varies between firms. Additionally, while it is mostly commercial law firms which offer clerkships, some general practice firms and those specialising in criminal law also offer them.

Clerkships are great opportunities to gain real-life experience in the legal world, and are also helpful when it comes to deciding what type of law you want to practice. Additionally, clerkships allow firms to successfully hire applicants that have impressed them during their time as clerks.

## **What are the application dates for 2018?**

Vacation clerkship application dates for 2018 open on Monday the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, and close on Monday the 26<sup>th</sup> of March at 9am AEST. Offers by participating firms are made on Monday the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, and must be accepted or declined by Tuesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of May by 5pm AEST.

## **Firms who have expressed interest in 2018:**

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Clerkship & Government Careers Officer—Nayab Shah

**NOTE:** Press 'Ctrl' + click on the firm's name to take you directly to their website!

## **How do I apply?**

Applications are completed online and will need to include: a cover letter, your resume, and a copy of your academic transcript (this can be found on mygriffith). Other requirements can vary between firms, so it is important that you check the firm's criteria when applying.

## **What do firms look for?**

When it comes to clerkship applications, law firms generally look at: your academic transcript and GPA, any previous experience you have had working at other law firms, and your involvement in law careers events, clubs and competitions. Law firms also look at any exchange programs you may have undertaken, and any skills you may have gained from working or volunteering.

If you have any questions about Clerkships or the application process, head to Queensland Law Society's website, individual firms' websites, or send us (the LSA Careers portfolio) an email at: [careers@griffithlsa.org.au](mailto:careers@griffithlsa.org.au).

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## Clerkship Program Hints & Tips

Ebony Back

### What were the highlights of your clerkship at Allens?

Everyone I worked with was friendly, helpful and had a good sense of humour. This made the clerkship really enjoyable and a lot less daunting than I thought it was going to be. In particular, my buddy, Kate, was a huge help, and was always happy to lend a hand or answer one of my many questions.

### What sets Allens apart?

Start-ups and new technologies are areas I am involved in, and Allens stood out to me because of the work it has done in this space. I really admire the Allens Accelerate service and the work that the Allens a+ group has done. Additionally, Allens' recent work advising Power Ledger on one of Australia's first initial coin offerings proves that it is a leading firm in this sector. I hope to be involved in this space when I come on board as a graduate.

Additionally, I was always inspired by and admired the people I knew who worked for Allens in Perth and in other states. This included people I met overseas and through the Women in Law Mentoring Scheme. Meeting people who are interesting, genuine, and happy to share their knowledge and experiences, always made me think a lot of the firm.

### During your time as a clerk, what sort of work did you get exposure to?

During my clerkship in the Litigation team, I worked on a number of research tasks relating to fiduciary duties, interpreting contract clauses and civil procedure. Additionally, I spent time drafting a settlement deed and a case note on the *Hammersley Iron v Forge* decision of the Western Australian

Supreme Court, which discussed the limitations of set-off rights in a liquidation context. I was also fortunate enough to be able to attend a hearing in the Court of Appeal, which was a highlight, because I hadn't had much exposure to court proceedings before.

### What did you find challenging about your clerkship and how did you overcome this?

The clerkship process was challenging at times, particularly when I was given tasks relating to areas of law I hadn't studied during my degree and didn't have the faintest clue about. Fortunately, I learned early on to ask the library staff, the legal research staff or Kate for help when I got stuck. Consequently, I learned a lot about how to conduct legal research more effectively and efficiently.

### Were you given the opportunity to get involved in any of our communities – eg Women at Allens, Allin, pro bono?

During the clerkship, my fellow clerks and I were involved in AIME Hoodie Day, as part of NAIDOC Week, to support Indigenous kids in finishing school at the same rate as other Australian children. The firm put on a great event to help raise money and awareness. I was also really pleased that I was exposed to the work that the Women at Allens Committee does. I attended a presentation that was really insightful, and got to meet lots of different Allens people who are passionate about this area.

Ready for great change?

Find out how to apply via [allens.com.au/yourcareer](https://allens.com.au/yourcareer)

Allens is an independent partnership operating in alliance with Linklaters LLP.

## *Clerkship Tips and Experience from Past Clerks*

### **Isa Martin**

*Clerkship with Herbert Smith Freehills*

*Now Graduate with Herbert Smith Freehills*



I started my law degree (graduate entry) in 2015 and applied for clerkships in what was my penultimate year in 2016.

All in all, I made 10 applications spanning across mid- to top-tier firms that offered Winter or Summer clerkships. From this I was invited to 5 interviews, and was subsequently offered a single 4 week clerkship taking place between January-February 2017 at Herbert Smith Freehills in their Land Access and Native Title team.

Whilst it was a bit daunting starting work at a top-tier law firm for the first time, the induction process was incredible, introducing the clerks to the firm culture, what was expected of us, and how to operate their IT systems, etc. After my first week as a clerk, I realised that the subject which prepared me most for the work I was undertaking was surprisingly 'Foundations of Law' - legal research, legal memo/case note writing, and letter drafting constituted the bulk of my tasks. Occasionally we were pulled from our teams to join the other clerks in team-building exercises or social events (most notably a cocktail-making competition and coffee tasting class), which allowed the opportunity to socialise and learn about the other practice groups from your peers.

I cannot comment on how the culture at other firms differs, but I cannot express how supportive and friendly the team of lawyers I worked with were. Eagerness to support, provide advice, and guidance by those around me, made the entire experience enjoyable, and the excellence exhibited by the experienced lawyers made it clear that top-tier firms have certainly earned their reputation.

To wrap things up, my tips for those who are interested in the clerkship experience are -

The application process –

Your resume should be limited to 2 pages and your cover letter kept to a single page, and addressed personally to the HR manager/ clerkship coordinator. Only detail your most relevant work experiences (preferably legal), extracurricular activities and skills. And make sure to explain why you have applied to each firm individually (referring to their recent work or cases).

The interview –

Congratulations! Your resume and cover letter caught the attention of the HR manager or clerkship coordinator, and you've been invited to an interview with a partner or senior associate at the firm. The interview can be intimidating, but try to relax! Just be yourself. The interviewer is determining whether you are a good fit for their firm and work culture. Expect questions about things you have placed on your resume, your interests, and why you want to work at their firm specifically.

Some firms will have multiple interview stages, with most holding an evening cocktail meet and greet with the solicitors at the firm and other clerkship candidates - make the most of these events by asking as many questions as you can, and try to move around the room.

Clerkships –

The clerkship itself is a rollercoaster, and depending on which practice group you are placed in you can expect some very busy days! If you are ever unsure of something, don't be afraid to ask for help or clarification from your supervisor or graduate buddy.

The clerkship is not only a chance for the firm to see if you are a fit for them, it's also a chance for you to do the same, so don't feel bad if corporate top-tier work isn't for you – it isn't for everyone!

If you miss out on a graduate position, don't be disheartened! There are always firms that offer graduate positions to graduating students towards the end of your final year.



## Christian Lang-Lemckert— Clerkship at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers

I undertook my clerkship with Maurice Blackburn from November to December 2017. My time was spent in the Comcare team which concerned itself with Commonwealth compensation claims. The overall experience was fantastic; not only did I have the chance to practically apply legal theory in the ‘real world’ but I developed a greater appreciation for what the role of a lawyer in society is. It opened my eyes to the complex and often overlooked aspect of client management. Law school is great for teaching you ‘what’ law is, not so much ‘how’ it is administered. I was working on very tragic and emotional cases, with clients suffering from chronic conditions or family members who had lost a loved one. It’s the raw emotion of what lawyers face every day which I discovered most about. As a result, you also learn the importance of working as a team, whether that be simply asking a question of your colleague or collating documentation for an upcoming trial - everybody has a role. The legal profession is best when people are communicating with one another and it is something I would stress for all students to focus on as it will prove to be an invaluable resource.

As clerks we place high expectations on ourselves with how we want to perform, but we need to monitor this. If you are successful with your clerkship applications, I would stress the importance of always asking questions when you’re unsure or want to learn more about the task at hand. Not once was I criticised for wanting to better understand the firm or a case I was working on. On the contrary, my inquisitive nature and ability to question was one of the positive points of feedback I received.

My clerkship was a wonderful experience and something I would do again in a heartbeat. Even if corporate law is not the area of law you strive to enter, I would give it a shot and apply as the experience you gain is invaluable in developing your legal understanding.



## Harley Ward—Clerking at a Boutique Law Firm



I am currently one of two Griffith Law Students working at Steindls Lawyers and Notary in Surfers Paradise. I assist the Partner and Associate as part of the commercial litigation team. The role includes some long, tedious tasks, high performance expectations and some stressful moments, but it is the best job I have ever had.

It is a great feeling applying the little knowledge you have learned at uni to real life legal situations. Gaining a work experience or a clerkship position is the best way to get a feel for what your legal career may be like and to help you determine the types of law you may or may not want to practice. I feel very lucky to hold this position. I have two great legal mentors who have taught me more than any uni course and I highly recommend doing everything you can to gain a clerkship or work experience. Don’t wait until your final year to start applying, as some firms take people on in earlier years too and some would prefer someone with no prior experience at all.

Unfortunately, there isn’t a secret formula for getting a clerkship or an in-house legal position and I’m certainly no expert either. However, I did manage to get myself a clerkship position, so here is a few tips that you might find useful:

When applying for a clerkship, my first piece of advice is to ensure every application is tailored and personalised for that particular firm. Make sure that the interests and goals you express in your cover letter align with the types of law the firm actually practices. You will struggle to get an interview at a commercial firm if you only tell them about your interest in criminal law. Ensure you have read the job description and know which type of law the firm specialises in, and tell the recruiter how interested you are in gaining the experience offered by their firm.

The second main point is to ensure that, right from your first email attaching your cover letter and resume until you either land that job or get turned away, you display a high standard of professional etiquette. You should write and speak to potential employers at the same standard that they would expect you to speak to people on behalf of the firm. That includes the structure of your emails and documents, the words used and a professional and respectful greeting.

The third and final tip is, don’t be afraid to talk about yourself outside of your university results or your previous work experience. Tell them about your experiences and try to sound interesting. As well as the obvious need for good legal knowledge and a good work ethic, interviewers are looking for someone that they would want to work with. Don’t be afraid to be funny whilst remaining within the professional bounds of an interview and show them your interesting side, not just your “law student hoping for a clerkship side”.



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We recruit people with the desire and ability to be exceptional, commercial lawyers. This means that we look for more than just a great academic record and strong technical aptitude. We seek people who are curious, empathetic and understand the importance of building relationships with clients and colleagues. We also look for an international mind-set and a desire to work within our global network, not just one office.

Complex cross-border deals. A market-leading Disputes division. Worldwide reach. If you're ready to be a part of it all, we're looking forward to hearing from you.

### Clerkship program

There's nothing more important than finding a role and an organisation that's right for you and there's no better way to really get to know our profession than gaining practical, hands-on experience. Our vacation clerkships will immerse you in our business, networks and the international world of law. We encourage students to participate in our vacation clerkship program and we fill the majority of our graduate positions through this program.

As a vacation clerk, you will be given extensive training on all aspects of the firm, drafting and research skills. Current lawyers and partners will speak to you about what they do and the nature of work in each part of the firm. You'll attend workshops and presentations that will give you an insight into the depth and breadth of our practice areas and international reach.

You'll be invited to a range of events giving you the opportunity to network with partners, associates and graduates, as well as with your fellow vacation clerks.

### Joining us

We offer a range of summer and winter clerkships across our Australian offices. If you have queries about graduate or vacation clerk positions, please visit our website: [careers.herbertsmithfreehills.com/au/grads/vacation-clerkships](https://careers.herbertsmithfreehills.com/au/grads/vacation-clerkships) or contact one of our graduate recruitment team.

### Key dates and deadlines

BRISBANE	
Approximate number of positions	25-30
Clerkship programs	summer
Applications for all 2018/19 programs open	26 February 2018
Applications for all 2018/19 programs close	26 March 2018
Offers made	14 May 2018

**Please note:** An application should only be submitted to the office where you intend to start your career as a graduate. Multiple applications will not be considered.

### Our global practice groups

- Alternative Legal Services (ALT)
- Competition, Regulation and Trade
- Corporate
- Dispute Resolution
- Employment, Industrial Relations and Safety
- Finance
- Projects and Infrastructure
- Real Estate

### Contacts



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## *So you're about to graduate...what next?*

### Post-Graduate Study

#### **Mark Brady— Solicitor and Academic**

Following university, I took a 3-month holiday to forget all about study. Upon my return to Australia, I doorknocked on half a dozen firms on the Gold Coast and told them I was looking for work. I was offered a clerkship, which I accepted, from a local firm and spent the next 12 months learning all aspects of general legal practice, including property settlement, titles, trial, personal injury, family matters and criminal law. Throughout this time, I maintained contact with the university as an alumnus and participated in Meet the Profession events. To broaden my base of potential opportunities later in life, I also made an application to commence a doctoral degree. I maintained part-time practice and ensured my currency with the practicing certificate and experience throughout this time, which has resulted in my dual qualifications of teacher and solicitor, whilst maintaining a relatively comfortable work-life balance.

I would recommend students look outside the typical paradigm of the 'successful lawyer' as portrayed in the media, and focus instead on their own enjoyment and lifestyle while pursuing a legal career, so they don't burn out too soon in life or have their hopes and aspirations disappointed when the cubicle life of working in a large law firm materialises as their future. More people graduate from Law School than become solicitors, and every graduate has something more to offer to private industry, in-house counsel and non-law related jobs because of their ability to research and problem-solve to a deadline. Never devalue the skills you've learned at university; even if you don't get a legal job you will still be a leading light in any company that employs you as you will be over-qualified for the position.

Regarding undertaking post-graduate studies, I would advise students to attempt to get articles published before applying for candidature. This will raise their profile in the eyes of the faculty, as decisions are made based on output and qualifications, as well as grades. Obtaining scholarships and candidature usually requires first-class honours, or publication and second-class honours. I highly recommend students to undertake an Honours degree if they wish to pursue an academic career. Remember: every well-written assignment has the potential to be submitted for publication, thereby increasing your value to those assessing you for candidature. Students are well-advised to also ensure that their writing is to the standard of the journal they wish to target at the outset. One thing is certain: more publications increases likelihood of gaining employment as full time academic.







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Scott Vanderwolf  
Mullins Lawyers

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## Samuli Haataja—Full-time Academic

Generally, to be an academic, you need to have a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy). In Australia, you can complete a PhD provided you have completed your Honours, though elsewhere in the world you may also need to hold a Masters degree. For domestic students, PhDs are usually ‘free’ (you don’t have any tuition fees like for Bachelors or Masters degrees) and you can also apply for competitive scholarships (if successful, you basically get paid a small tax-free wage). Usually PhDs take 3-3.5 years to complete, and this involves writing a thesis, which is like a small book, or a series of journal articles about a particular topic. Depending on university-specific requirements, generally it’s around 100,000 words. You can pretty much research anything you’re interested in (human rights law, commercial law, legal education, legal theory, etc) and you can also draw on other disciplines to combine multiple interests (psychology, international relations, economics, etc).

Doing a PhD is not like an undergraduate degree – you don’t have huge classes of students that are all doing the same assignments and exams, and your ‘teachers’ (supervisors) will not give you a list of readings and questions for you to answer. Instead, you (and the small group of PhD students around you) are often doing completely different topics and are at different stages of your studies, and you will need to find the ‘readings’ and formulate the research questions yourself (though of course your supervisors will help with this). It’s best to think of it as a job as an ‘early career researcher’ because it’s part of your training to become an independent researcher. As an early career researcher, you will have plenty of opportunities to obtain experience in things like teaching, publishing, presenting at conferences, and so on.

To then obtain a full-time position as an academic, you will often need to have (in addition to a PhD) things like teaching experience, a couple of good publications, and experience in miscellaneous activities is also helpful (these include everything from administrative tasks, being active in professional organisations or communities within your field, and so on).

Working as an academic generally involves research, teaching, and various administrative duties (though some positions are more research-focused and therefore involve less (if any) teaching). In terms of starting salary as a lecturer (provided you have a PhD), you can expect between 90-100K depending on the university.



## *What is Practical Legal Training (PLT) and why do you need to do it?*

To be admitted as a solicitor in Australia, additional education and training needs to be completed after graduating with a law degree. In Queensland, you can either complete a PLT course or complete a supervised trainee program (though PLT is the most common route).

PLT courses can be completed in person or online, full-time or part-time, depending on the institution. These courses further educate law graduates in the practical usage of various lawyering skills and areas of law. In addition to completing coursework, PLT students need to complete 75 days of work experience. There are a number of ways to gain this experience, including volunteering in community legal centres, working as a legal secretary or paralegal (though this is highly dependent on the work carried out in your role), internships and work placements. Please keep in mind that most PLT positions are unpaid.

There are a number of institutions around the country that offer PLT programs (press 'ctrl' and click on an institution's name to go directly to their website):

- **College of Law** (all States except TAS)
- **Bond University** (QLD)
- **Queensland University of Technology** (QLD)
- **Australian National University** (ACT)
- **Leo Cussen Centre for Law** (VIC)
- **University of Adelaide** (SA)
- **University of Tasmania** (TAS)
- **University of Technology, Sydney** (NSW)

NOTE: your choice of PLT program does not need to be completed in the same State in which you wish to be admitted to practice law.

If you plan to be admitted and practice law, it is a good idea to plan ahead of time what type of PLT program you will undertake and at which institution. The most difficult part of PLT will be getting those 75 days of work experience, unless you already work in the legal field.

For more in-depth information about PLT programs, please visit institutions' websites and attend the PLT information sessions that will be held on campus a number of times throughout the year.



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### Maggie Quach

Lawyer  
Lander & Rogers Lawyers  
Graduate of the Practical Legal Training program



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## *Some Career Options...*

While there is a lot of emphasis put on working in a top-tier law firm, they are not the only careers that exist in the legal world. There are many types of positions in many fields, so it's a good idea to keep updated on position availability in the area of law you would like to practice. Applications for general graduate positions tend to open in August of each year, though this may vary slightly across practice areas and law firms. A great place to start, is keeping an eye out for Karen Collier's emails. She sends emails several times a week with all kinds of opportunities across all areas of law. These will at least get you started and looking in the right places.

Other than individual law firms' websites, some other places to find job openings are:

- Seek
- Beyond Law
- Lawyers Weekly

## *Judge's Associateship*

Judge's associates are recruited via the QLD Courts website. Applications open in late December and close late January. You should apply for a position the year before you graduate. For example, if you graduate at the end of 2019, you would apply at the beginning of 2019 to start the position in 2020. The application itself involves filling out the application form, an official transcript (which needs to be certified by a Justice of the Piece or a Solicitor), a resume and cover letter, and one or more interviews. There are a few options regarding which judges to apply to: you can choose to apply for judges in only a couple of districts, by level and type of court, and you can apply to individual judges and/or all the judges in those districts or courts. You should also take the time to personalise each application form, resume and cover letter for each individual judge you apply to. While applications have a set due date, the interviews themselves have no set period—it is dependent on when judges are available to conduct them.

## *Boutique firm*

Finding available positions at boutique firms can be difficult because most aren't publicly advertised. Instead, it would be beneficial to contact those firms directly to ask about their available positions. Approaching these firms about shadowing or work experience opportunities is an easy way to make yourself and your interest in the firm known. This website has a directory of all lawyers and law firms on the Gold Coast and is a great place to start finding these firms: <http://www.goldcoast-lawyers.com/find-a-lawyer.html>

## *In-house Counsel*

Almost every company in the world will have their own lawyers so if there is a particular company you are interested in being a representative for, start looking early for shadowing or work experience opportunities to get your foot in the door. The best way to find in-house counsel positions will be contacting the companies directly and/or checking their careers websites to find available positions. General job-seeking websites like Seek may list them as well.

## Government Careers

Both Federal and State Governments have many departments, and therefore many career opportunities. Both keep an updated list of available positions on their websites, and they also have specific sections for Graduates and students, which you can find at these links:

**Federal Government** <https://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/jobs-and-workplace/australian-government-jobs/graduate-programs>

**Queensland Government** <https://www.qld.gov.au/jobs/finding/graduates/opportunities/recent-graduates>

## Becoming a Barrister

Becoming a barrister in Queensland involves two extra steps than becoming a solicitor. Once you have completed your Law degree, completed PLT, and have been admitted as a solicitor, you will also need to sit the Bar Exams, which consist of three 1.5 hour exams covering ethics, procedure and practice, and evidence. On successful completion, you will also need to take the Bar Practice Course. For more information, visit the Queensland Bar website: <https://www.qldbarr.asn.au/#/barrister-becoming>.

## International Opportunities

### **Edwin Bikundo—Academic (International Law)**

Back in my first year of university, I wish I had known more about the wide flexibility in working as a legal professional, as well as in applying legal skills in careers outside the legal profession.

My current job as a legal academic involves teaching, research, and public service. I specialise in international and comparative law. Opportunities to work in this area include careers in government at the Commonwealth Attorney Generals' Office, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Australian Defence Force. Other opportunities exist with various NGOs, The UN, and International Courts and Tribunals.

The skills and attributes that I learned at university that I have found most valuable in this line of work include intellectual curiosity, an eye for detail and constant improvement of general analytical skills. As in everything else, relationships with people are always key.



## *Firm Profile: McInnes Wilson Lawyers*



### **Who are you and what makes you unique?**

McInnes Wilson Lawyers is an award winning national law firm with a wealth of experience in a broad range of specialised legal services representing local, national and international clients.

Valuing differences is what makes McInnes Wilson Lawyers unique. Our people are an essential part of the firm's continued success and growth and we believe by creating diverse and stimulating teams, every employee is encouraged to take initiative and be proactive in achieving excellence.

### **The Culture of the Firm**

McInnes Wilson Lawyers has been recognised, for the second year in a row, as a winner for Employer of Choice in The Australian Business Awards 2017. This achievement can be attributed to the progressive focus of the firm on developing and supporting its workforce.

The firm is characterised by a culture which encourages every employee to actively be a part of the learning organisation developed over the last decade. We encourage employees to achieve high performance, personal and professional accountability and collaboration both within and outside of the firm. We foster a culture that produces results, promotes innovative thinking, encourages and rewards loyalty and above all else, makes McInnes Wilson Lawyers a great place to work.

### **What do we look for in potential employees?**

Our staff members come from a diverse range of backgrounds and we look for qualities in our junior lawyers that align with the firm's vision, values and culture. We look for ambitious employees who display loyalty, integrity and innovation whilst providing quality solutions for our clients with a commitment to excellence and the highest professional standards.

### **Employee Benefits**

Participants of the Graduate and Clerkship program can expect to experience access to a wide variety of legal work and are provided the opportunity to work directly with clients to develop their skills on real legal matters. You will also have access to personal and professional development activities including participation in the firm's mentoring program which aims to encourage personal and professional growth through career guidance and professional support from Principals and senior lawyers.

### **Graduate and Clerkship Program**

Our Graduate and Clerkship program provides participants with the opportunity to gain experience in the day to day operations of a law firm whilst practically applying skills and knowledge gained through your studies. This experience, coupled with ongoing guidance and mentoring from Principals and senior staff, will provide you with an enviable skills platform to successfully launch your legal career.

Our law clerks work on an ongoing basis through the entirety of their studies, and our law graduates have the opportunity to undertake the firm's 12 month Supervised Workplace Traineeship in the January intake.

### **Application Requirements**

To be eligible for the Graduate and Clerkship program, applicants must have a GPA of 5 and above and a demonstrated record of full and/or part time work experience (legal and/or non-legal). Participation in a team sport and voluntary work is highly desirable.

Graduate and Clerkship applications for the July 2018 intake will open on 1 March 2018 and close on 13 April 2018.

For further information on how to apply for our Graduate and Clerkship program please visit our Careers page at [www.mcw.com.au/page/Careers/](http://www.mcw.com.au/page/Careers/)

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