



UNLSA

# GRADUATE GUIDE

# 2021



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# UNLSA GRADUATE GUIDE 2021

## WORD OF WELCOME FROM THE 2021 UNLSA CAREERS TEAM

Welcome to the 2021 Graduate Guide.

The UNLSA are proud to present our members with the 2021 Graduate Guide, which is designed to help Newcastle Law School students sharpen their graduate applications and professional legal skills for any employment opportunity.

We realise that the process of applying for graduate positions can be very daunting and we hope that something in this guide will help you to navigate you through your penultimate law school experience. We understand that the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 have made the times ahead very uncertain for new graduates, however, these challenging times can also provide you with some unexpected and serendipitous opportunities for you to grasp.

The UNLSA Careers Team have worked tirelessly to reduce the long and sometimes complicated road to securing graduate positions into a few simple steps that we have outlined in this guide to streamline your transition into what lays beyond Newcastle Law School.

The UNLSA would like to give special recognition to our contributing sponsor to the 2021 Graduate Guide, the College of Law, for their ongoing support to Newcastle Law Students.

On behalf of the UNLSA, we wish our graduates the best of luck with their applications and always remember to have faith in the skills that you have mastered during your time at Law School and be open to taking on the challenges that await you in the future. Stay positive and don't undervalue the relationships you've made so far – you never know where your next opportunity may come from!



Jackson Price  
Vice President  
(Sponsorship)



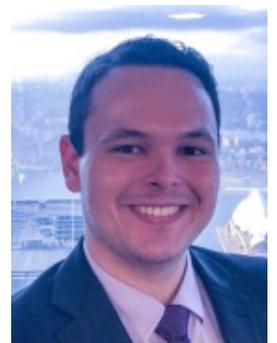
Isabella Meade  
Director of Careers



Hollie Hughes  
Director of Careers



Harry Thomas  
Director of  
Local Sponsorship



Jesse Franks  
President



## The Application Process

The application process differs from firm to firm and between government departments. In most circumstances, you will be required to have included a CV, cover letter and your academic transcript. Depending on what positions you are applying for, you may also have to answer additional questions. This usually depends on the specific requirements of the position.

### Getting Started

You may have decided to apply for a graduate position, what should you be doing next? It is important that you are calculated in your approach to applications. Below, we have got you covered on some tips to maximise your application efficiency.

- 1. Get started early:** Make sure you check when applications open for the position you are interested in and their closing date. Ensure you are checking the information and requirements of each position, have a look at the questions they are asking. Remember, don't rush, you can always come back and finish an application!
- 2. Research the positions:** It is a good idea to have a comprehensive understanding of the position. Check out the position's website, the Australian Financial Review and the legal industry guides to find out about the culture of the position, recent case involvements and the future ambitions of where you are applying for.
- 3. Talk to people who understand:** You can benefit from seeking out those who have been through the process, ask them for their experience and any tips. It is also helpful to mention a meaningful experience in your cover letter.
- 4. Cast your net wide:** Many graduate positions that could be for you do not strictly have to be in the legal industry. A variety of industries can be just as valuable in utilising your current skills and gaining new ones! Look across as many industries as you can, this increases your chances of success and will open yourself up to interesting opportunities.



## Where to find Graduate Job Options

So, you're ready and willing to look for your first graduate job. But where do you look? By visiting all of the below websites, you are maximising your chances of finding the perfect job for you - leave no stone unturned!

For law students, the best online portals for job listings are:

**LegalVitae:** <https://legalvitae.com.au/careers>

LegalVitae is the Law Society of NSW job application portal, in partnership with GradConnection. Their dedicated legal careers hub will highlight a variety of graduate listings from over 70 different employers (including all the major law firms in Australia), and has a wide variety of legal and non-legal firm roles that welcome skills you have learnt over your degree.

**GradConnection:** <https://au.gradconnection.com/>

GradConnection is another dedicated graduate position portal. While they aren't strictly legal, they have a user-friendly search engine that identify law degree inclusive jobs. Their partners include some of the biggest companies globally, so they are a perfect springboard for those looking to move into different industries or in-house.

**GradAustralia:** <https://gradaustralia.com.au/>

GradAustralia is famous for their 'Top 100 Graduate Employers' guide, but also has a variety of legal and non-legal listings located on their website. They are a great resource for looking at firm profiles and application advice, so are excellent for deciding where to apply.

**Seek:** <https://www.seek.com.au/>

Seek might be more generalist, but it still has a huge role to play in your graduate application process. A lot of smaller employers will often post on Seek, so if you are



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looking for more local graduate roles, this is often where you will find them.

## LinkedIn

Increasingly, more job opportunities have been found, and job interviews secured, through LinkedIn. Often employers and recruiters use LinkedIn to have a better understanding of their prospective employees, so having a LinkedIn profile is important. See the next page for our tips on creating the best LinkedIn profile!

## Use your imagination!

Although the above sites feature the prominent online hubs for finding jobs, don't forget that there is still some weight in the old fashioned interpersonal methods. If there's a firm that really interests you, don't be afraid to go and submit your resume in person or give them your expression of interest for any future opportunities. This will put you at the top of their list and have you stand out from other applicants.



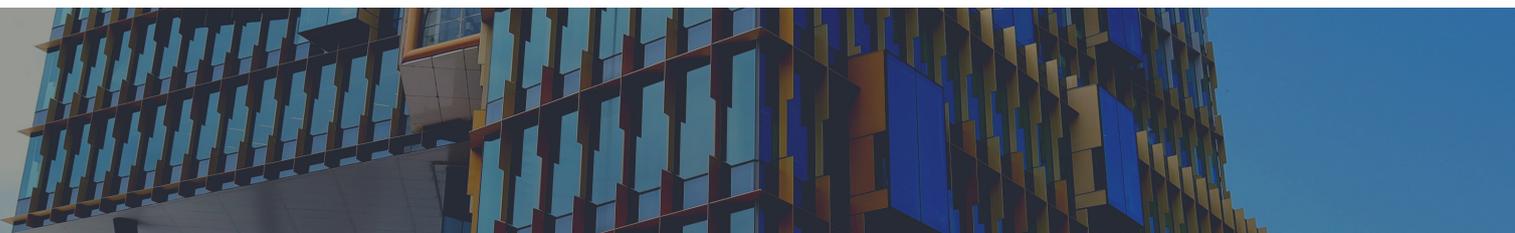
# GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS

For students who identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, there are many graduate programs and positions that may be of interest to you. As a Law graduate who may identify as an Indigenous Australian, there are both private and public graduate programs opportunities, we have listed a few of these programs below which you may wish to apply for.

**1. The Public Interest and Advocacy Centre:** The PIAC has the Aboriginal Social Justice Graduate Program and in this position you will be at the Shopfront Youth and Legal Centre, providing free legal advice to disadvantaged and homeless youths (Under 25). This is a 2 year position for those who have a keen interest in social justice, follow this link for more information: <https://piac.asn.au/about-us/careers/>

**2. Legal Aid:** Legal Aid NSW also offers a graduate program specifically for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals. This is called the Career Development Program for Aboriginal Law Graduates and gives graduates an opportunity to give real, hands-on work, with the support of numerous supervisors. This program is also state wide, for more information on applications see the Legal Aid website: <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/about-us/working-at-legal-aid/judge-bob-bellar-legal-career-pathways-program/career-development-program-for-aboriginal-law-graduates>

**3. Australian Public Service Commission:** The APS has an Indigenous graduate pathway, which partners with a multitude of participating Commonwealth Government agencies. This position allows graduates to experience various working environments and provides access to valuable opportunities in the legal profession. See the website for more information: <https://www.indigenoucareers.gov.au/recruitment-pathways/indigenous-graduate-pathway>



**4. Gilbert and Tobin:** Indigenous employment opportunities also arise at this firm. Gilbert and Tobin have a specific Indigenous Cadetship for students, this is combined with seasonal Clerkships and also graduate positions which take into account Indigenous employment in the legal profession. See the firm's website for more information: <https://www.gtlaw.com.au/careers/students/indigenous-employment>

**5. Attorney-General's Department:** This Government department has a program for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates called the The Affirmative Measures Indigenous program. This is open for 5-10 graduates who may wish to work on policy and programs in many areas of the law. See the link below for more information and to express your interest in the opportunity:

<https://gradaustralia.com.au/graduate-employers/attorney-generals-department-agd/jobs-internships/2021-graduate-program-affirmative-measures-disability-recruitment-policy-and-program-stream>



# LINKEDIN FOR THE PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEE

LinkedIn is fast becoming the modern employment and workplace hub for the prospective employee. Now, more and more prospective employers and recruiters are scouring the platform for the up-and-coming talent. Therefore, it is important to have a tailored LinkedIn profile for professional success and to build a professional network.

## Basic requirements:

- Ensure your photograph is a current professional photo.
- Make sure you have the current (and correct) title of your current job, whatever it may be.
- Ensure you only have one profile. If not, there is an option to merge your profiles that retains all your connections on each.

## Summary:

- Use the summary to position yourself in your specific field.
- Highlight your areas of speciality and expertise. Ask yourself: “How do you stand out?”
- Outline your professional and any relevant accomplishments you may have.

## Background:

- Include your current and all previous positions you have had.
- When you are adding a position, ensure you link it to that employer’s profile – this should then display that logo for that employer.
- Include details about your specific role and what it entailed.
- If needed, you may want to give a short summary of that specific employer.
- Add details of your education.
- Include any volunteer/relevant co-curricular experience.

## Skills

- Add any knowledge, interpersonal skills, tools and technologies that you think are appropriate.

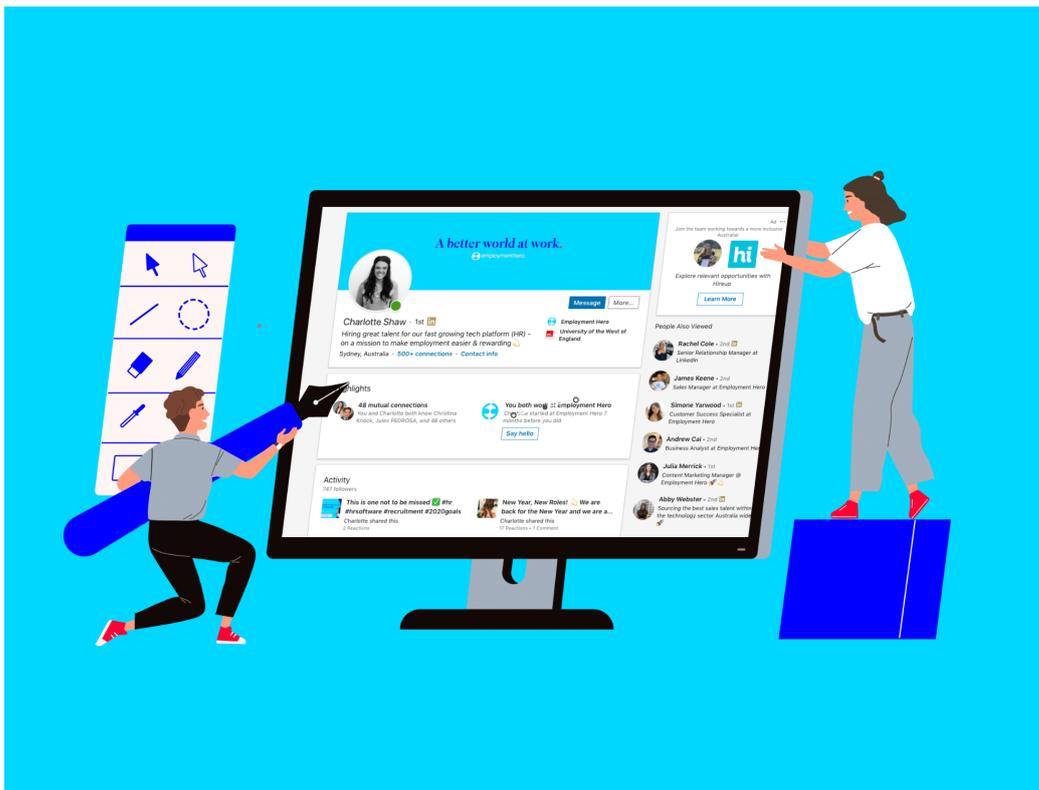


## Accomplishments

- Make sure you include any organisations you belong to, awards you have received, coursework you have undertaken and links to any projects/academia that you were involved with.

## Updates and content:

- Finally, follow pages of interest and share updates. This is not just about creating content for your profile, but it increases credibility and awareness.
- Join relevant LinkedIn groups to stay in the loop.
- Now, get out there and grow your connections!



# COVER LETTER

A Cover Letter is your chance to make a great first impression and is your first chance to show a potential employer why you should be hired. As recruitment teams spend a limited amount of time looking through each application, it is crucial that you stand out from the very beginning. In order for your cover letter to catch the eye of recruiters it must address the following three overarching questions:

- Why are you interested in the position?
- Why are you interested in that particular position and,
- Why are you a suitable candidate?

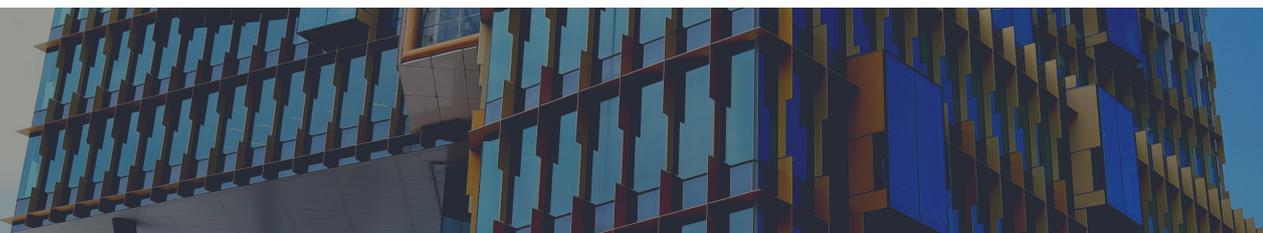


## SELECTION CRITERIA

Employers may advertise positions listing the specific set of skills, experience, or abilities required to perform the role. These are known as selection criteria and can range from broad skills to specific qualifications. Common examples include good communication skills, good organisational skills, the ability to work as a team and a relevant university degree. Make a list of keywords from the selection criteria and address each of these specific skills in your CV. It is important that you do this in your cover letter to capture the employer's attention.

### **Do:**

- Use a formal business letter format, keep it to one page.
- Address the letter to the contact person specified in the job advertisement. If you are unsure who to address your application to, call the employer and ask. Worst case scenario put "Recruitment team".
- Tailor your Cover Letter to the employer. To do this effectively, research the areas specialising in and (if they are a law firm) any high-profile cases or aspects of law they have been involved with.
- If you have met representatives of the employer at an event, mention that in your cover letter.



- Sell yourself! Emphasise your strengths and be enthusiastic about the challenges that lie ahead. Show a sincere interest in the position being sought.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread! When you are writing multiple cover letters, it is easy for an error to slip by undetected, so get someone else to proofread your cover letter. A fresh set of eyes can pick up a lot!
- Send a PDF, not a Word version. It is more professional and ensures formatting remains consistent.

### Don't:

- Do not address the letter to 'Whom it may concern' or 'Dear Sir/Madam'.
- Avoid generic cover letters that can be found online.
- Do not mention any cases or aspects of law if you have no idea what it is about – you are likely to get asked about it in an interview.

### EXAMPLE COVER LETTER:

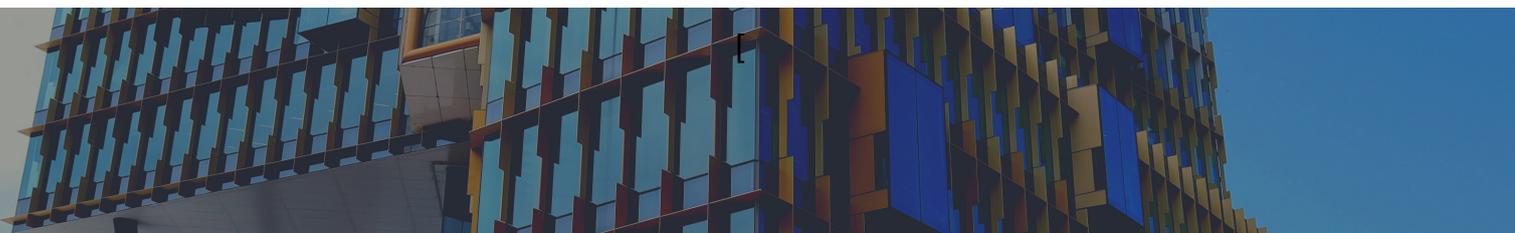
Your Name  
Address First Line  
Address Second Line  
Email Address  
Mobile  
Date

Contact Person Name  
Job Title  
Firm Name  
Firm Address First Line  
Firm Address Second Line

Dear Mr/Mrs <insert name>

RE: Application for <insert firm name> Summer Clerkship 2019/2020.

[Paragraph 1] Introduce yourself to the firm by making a clear statement about who you are and that you wish to express your interest in the 2019/2020 Summer Clerkship program at their Sydney office. Mention what year you are in, what you are studying or have studied (include any majors) and your GPA.



[Paragraph 2] Use this paragraph to explain why you are interested in commercial law. You do not have to have a business/commerce degree, but explain why you think that this area is for you.

[Paragraph 3] Convey why you want to work at that specific firm. Highlight why you are applying for the clerkship and what attracts you to that firm. Include any opportunities and challenges that the position presents and how they apply to you. Refer to specific examples from the firm (past clients, recent cases, areas of law you are interested in) and show examples of how you are passionate about those areas. Also mention if you have had any meaningful encounters with firm representatives and what you took away from this.

[Paragraph 4] Explain why you should get the job. Demonstrate how you satisfy each individual selection criteria (if applicable) by drawing upon personal, legal and other experience. Supplement your CV by highlighting why you will add value to the firm.

[Paragraph 5] Express your willingness and availability to meet and discuss the role further. Also refer to other documents attached as required (CV, references etc).

Yours sincerely,

<Include a scanned / real signature here for a personal touch>

Your name



## CURRICULUM VITAE:

Your CV is an important tool which enables you to market yourself to a potential employer. A well-written CV will outline your career aspirations and showcase your most relevant skills and experience. It must create an immediate impression and convince a potential employer to contact you for an interview.

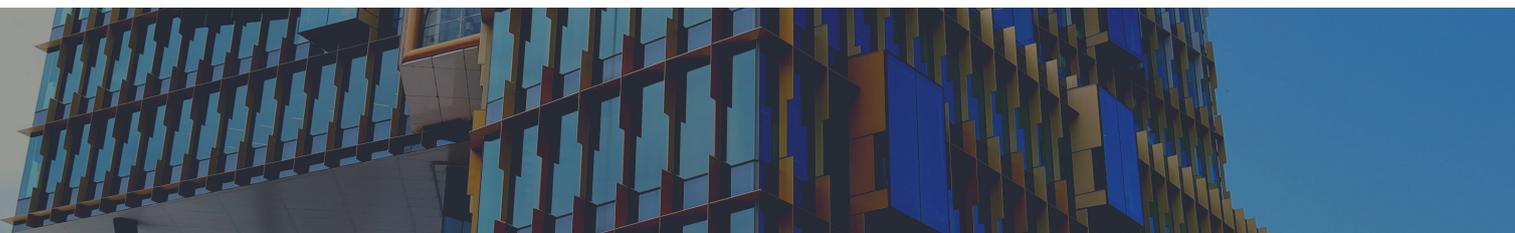


### What to include:

- Personal details – Full name, address, phone number and email address.
- Education – briefly list your education history, including your GPA, any additionally courses that you have undertaken (such as overseas courses) and any academic awards that you have received.
- Work experience – Include all experience. Many of the skills you gained in hospitality or retail are transferable and can be an asset in a legal environment.
- Extra-curricular activities – Include University clubs and societies, mentoring programs, musical instruments and academic competitions.
- Other interests – Include team sports, languages, volunteer work, and overseas travel.
- Referees – Ideally at least two professional referees who can comment on your work ethic and skill base.

### Tips and Tricks:

- Make sure you list in reverse chronology and place the most recent information at the beginning.
- Short and snappy is what firms like to see and your entire CV should be no more than two pages in length.
- Presentation is almost as important as the content of your CV. To present yourself professionally, ensure you get the format right, and be consistent with your fonts picking something easy to read.
- Set up a professional email account with your full name and do not use your Hotmail account from high school, this will be viewed as unprofessional.



- Use headings, subheadings and bullet points instead of unattractive large slabs of text. This is more professional and easier to read.
- Tailor your CV depending on the role you are applying for. If you know you have certain strengths and values appropriate to the position you are applying for, make that known!
- Use key terms and phrases that CV databases may look for, such as “negotiation”, “teamwork”, and “communication”.
- Proofread, and if you can get a second person to proofread it also to ensure there are no punctuation or spelling errors as these may negatively impact on your chance of being hired.

## EXAMPLE CV:

Your name

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

LinkedIn link

### Education

<Insert date(s)>

Bachelor of Laws (Honours)/Diploma of Legal Practice  
University of Newcastle (4th year) – GPA: XX

<Insert date(s)>

<Other education>  
<Institution – GPA: XX>

### Awards

<Insert date(s)>

<Scholarship Title>  
<Organisation / Company>

<Insert date(s)>

<Award Title>  
<Organisation Company>

### Legal Experience

<Insert date(s)>

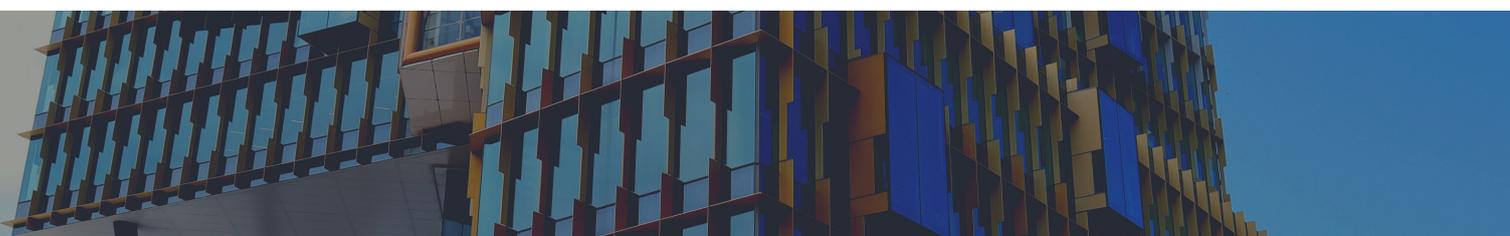
<Title e.g. Paralegal>  
<Company>

- <Short explanation of the role, including relevant skills>

<Insert date(s)>

<Title e.g. Research Assistant>  
<Company>

- <Short explanation of the role, including relevant skills>



<Insert date(s)>

<Title e.g. Research Assistant>  
<Company>

- <Short explanation of the role, including relevant skills>

### Employment History

<Insert date(s)>

<Title, e.g. Bartender>  
<Company>

- <Short explanation of the role, including relevant skills>

<Insert date(s)>

<Title, e.g. Concierge>  
<Company>

- <Short explanation of the role, including relevant skills>

### Extra-curricular Activity

<Insert date(s)>

<Position e.g. Director of Publications>  
<Organisation / Company e.g. UNLSA>

<Insert date(s)>

<Position e.g. Student Mentor>  
<Organisation e.g. University of Newcastle>

### Other Interests

<Insert date(s)>

<Competitor>  
<Event e.g. City 2 Surf>

<Insert date(s)>

<Volunteer Surf Lifesaving>  
<Organisation / Company e.g. Merewether Surf Club>

### Referees:

Name

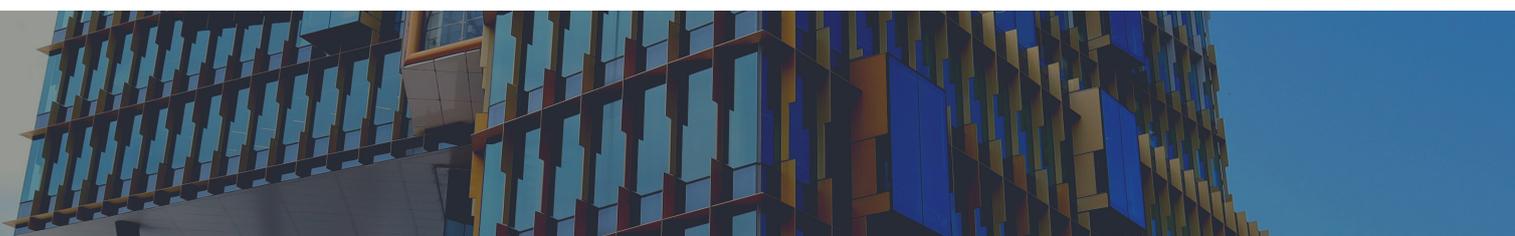
Title/Position

Organisation/Company

Phone Number

Email Address

TIP: Don't forget to contact your referees before putting them down, so that they are prepared to say great things about you if given a call.



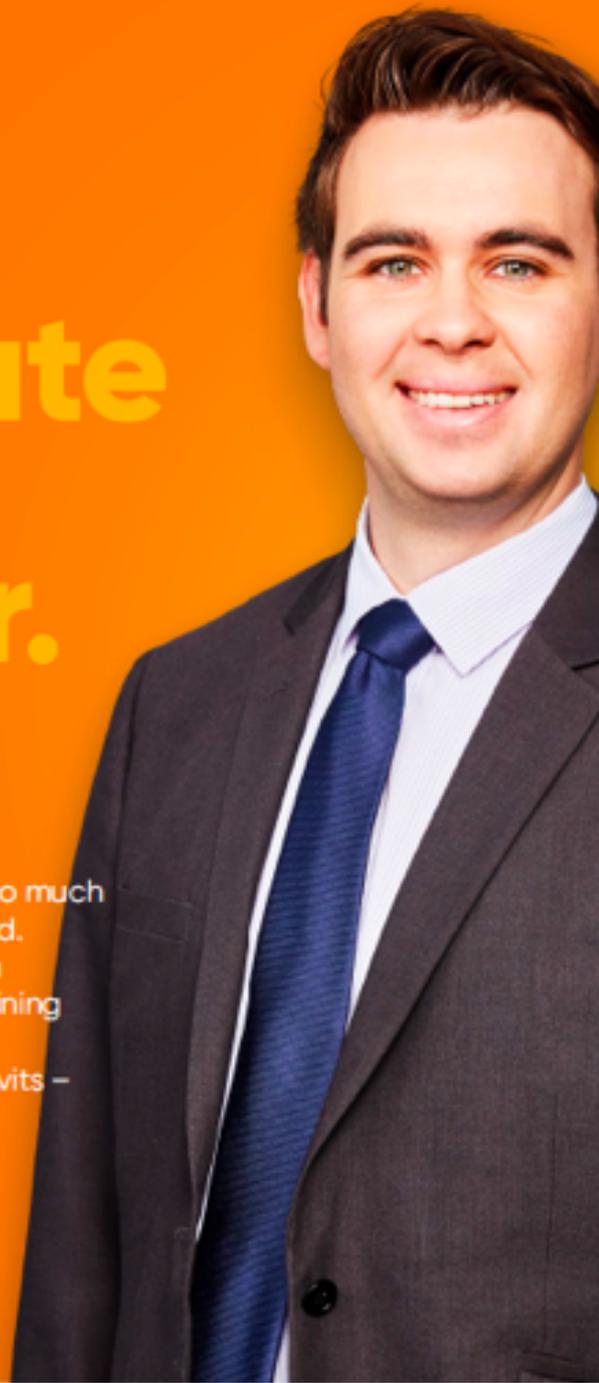
 **Admission  
to Practice**  
The College of Law

# Activate your career.

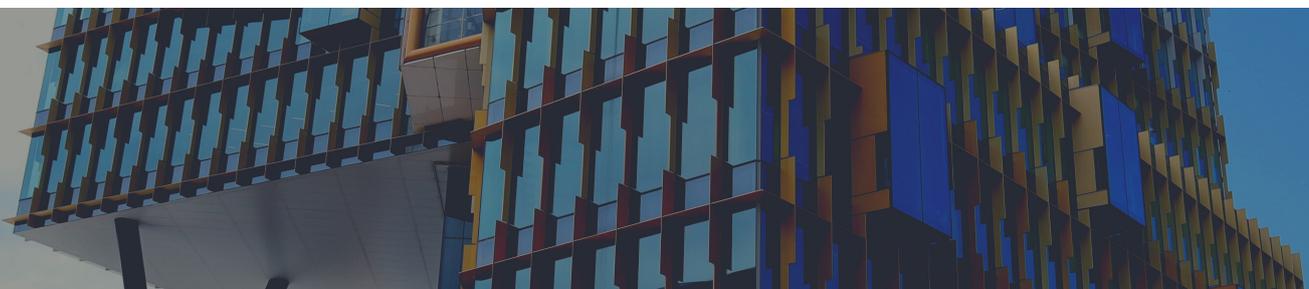
”

‘PLT at The College of Law is so much more practical than I expected. I got experience speaking in a court setting and cross-examining a witness. I also drafted legal documents, letters and affidavits – which I never did at uni.’

**Cormac Foley**  
Solicitor, Danny King Legal  
Graduate of the University of  
Wollongong



Learn more at [collaw.edu.au/PLT](http://collaw.edu.au/PLT)



## Practical Legal Training



No face-to-face attendance



More than 40 programs a year in New South Wales



15 weeks full-time or 30 weeks part-time study options



15 days or 75 days work experience options - or online alternative



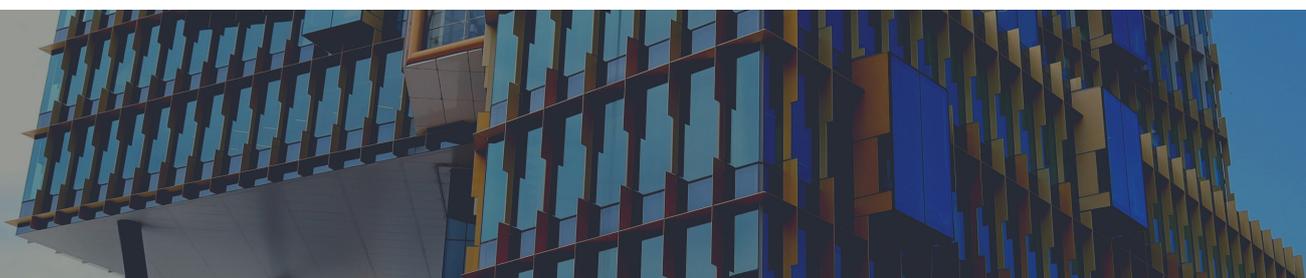
Access to one-on-one appointments with a careers adviser



Learn New South Wales-specific content from local qualified lawyers



Preferred provider to 5 of Australia's biggest law firms



## PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING TIPS AND TRICKS

Psychometric testing is becoming fairly standard practice within many summer clerkship and graduate application pathways, and especially in public service job applications. It aims to measure an application's suitability by assessing two main areas: intellectual capabilities and personality traits. Psychometric testing can be a tricky and unfamiliar process for people doing it for the first time, but with a bit of preparation it is a very manageable process.

Generally, psychometric testing involves 20-to-30-minute online tests in the areas of literacy, numeracy, logical reasoning and emotional intelligence. Some companies may also throw in a section which aims to test more "out of the box" thinking, such as visual pattern recognition or abstract reasoning questions.

Below are a few tips you can use to improve your chances of scoring well on any psychometric testing you come across:

**1. Research your provider:** If you know that a prospective employer will require all applicants to undertake psychometric testing, it may be worth attempting to identify which testing company they will use and also the types of testing that will be conducted. This will allow you to research the testing company and find as many practice questions as you can in the areas you will be tested on. NB: Some firms share the same test provider. This means your results for one test can be transferred between firms, often for up to 12 months. Make sure when you sit down to do a psychometric test, you give it your best shot. Revelian is a testing company used widely across Australia. More information on psychometric testing as well as practice questions can be found on their website: <https://www.revelian.com/jobseeker/>

**2. Practice makes perfect (or at least it can give you the best chance possible!):** Practice questions (with answers) can often be found via a simple Google search. When working through examples, take the time to work through them, ensuring that you completely follow the logic of finding the right answer in each question. It may also be helpful to watch a few YouTube video tutorials on the best strategy for each style of question.



**3. Plan your test environment:** Doing well in psychometric testing is not just about how smart or well-practiced you are, it is also about how detailed your exam preparation is. When sitting down for an online test you should:

- Have a timer visible which counts down or up towards the amount of time allowed for the test.
- Figure out how much time you have per question, on average (total time divided by total number of questions). If you find yourself spending more than that amount of time on any single question, immediately take your most informed guess and MOVE ON. It is not worth nailing one particular question if that means you miss the last five questions due to running out of time.
- Ensure you have a piece of paper, pencil and calculator with you when you do any numeracy testing. These are to be used to work through any questions which may require multiple steps of working out. There are no points for doing equations in your head!
- Find a quiet location with strong internet connection and make sure you won't have any distractions during the test.
- Check that you have a browser that is compatible with the test. Sometimes an app is required.

**4. Read the question and do the test alone:** Paying close attention to any instructions that indicate what the test is assessing is important, and could be assessing one (or a combination) of the following:

- Accuracy
- Speed
- Completion of question

Additionally, make sure you do the test alone. Having some help may be enticing, particularly if a test is on an area that you're not comfortable with, but it will only make things harder, more confusing, take more time, and likely result in poorer results.

**5. Stay calm:** Finally, don't overthink or second guess your answers. Trust your instincts and work through the tasks calmly. You can do this!



## INTERVIEW TIPS AND TRICKS

The interview, whether that be a first or second round, can be both an exciting and daunting time. This is a chance to draw together all that you have learnt through your application process and reinforce yourself as a solid candidate for the role. Interviews can be one on one, with two interviewers, or with a panel. Either way, this is your opportunity to sell yourself – but this is also your chance to see if the firm, company or department can sell their job to you! Keep in mind, following COVID-19, there is a likely chance that your interview will be over video.

**1. Practice makes perfect:** Think of some common interview questions that you may be asked and plan responses to these. Don't recite pre-prepared answers, rather use dot points or flow charts to predict questions and respond to them using the **STAR** framework:

- **Situation** – what was the context
- **Task** – what needed to be done
- **Action** – what you did
- **Response** – what considerable response occurred as a result of the action that you made

**2. Brush up on your technology:** ensure you **TEST** your technological equipment you are using, to ensure it works smoothly for your interview. This shows you are forward-thinking and will prevent any technology slipups as you start your interview!

**3. Have an elevator pitch ready:** the inevitable (and perhaps dreaded) first question “tell us about yourself”. Make sure you have about a minute-long response to this, it should summarise your academic interests, work experience, extracurriculars and volunteer activities at a high level to get yourself off on the right foot.

**4. Plan questions to ask at the end of the interview:** graduates should also remember that this is an opportunity to gauge whether this position is right for you as well! Have approx. 5 questions prepared to ask your interviewers based on your research of the position, this shows you're interested and forward-thinking.



**5. Utilise online resources:** don't forget that there are so many great online resources that can help you prepare for your interview. You can find these on a variety of websites, including the UON's very own careers website. This also includes an online tool called InterviewStream, which is a fantastic resource as it helps you develop interview response skills. This is especially important with the increase of video interviews.

**6. Remember to smile:** smiling helps both you and the interviewer feel relaxed, it also shows you are a confident candidate in your abilities. Plus, you got through to the interview stage, that is definitely something to smile about!



## ASSESSMENT CENTRE TIPS

One thing that you might come across as you progress through the graduate recruitment process is an assessment centre. Many government departments and a number of firms use these as a way to evaluate the skills of potential graduates when placed in different workplace environments. Generally, there will be around three activities that the candidates have to complete, either individually or in a group.

There are three main types of tasks tested at an assessment centre:

- 1. Individual written task:** this can be a case study, a report, a memo writing activity or a short research task, among other things. It will be timed and you will generally be given all the information you need to complete the task. It is a way for them to assess your writing skills and how well you work under pressure.
- 2. Group activity:** this can range from a presentation, solving a puzzle or even answering a problem question. It will ordinarily be timed and they will try to place you in randomised groups with people you don't know. This is a means of testing your ability to work in a group setting and seeing how you interact with others under pressure.
- 3. Interviews:** this can involve you being interviewed by lawyers and/or human resources individually, or it can be in a group setting with other candidates. This is your chance to show your interest and knowledge of the firm, whilst also setting yourself apart by explaining your skills and experience. While this may sound daunting at first, it can be a great opportunity to show the firm that you have a broad range of skills and it does not often require much preparation. We recommend that you try to stay positive during the experience and be respectful and polite to the other candidates but also don't hesitate to speak up if you have ideas or comments.



## UNLSA PREVIOUS GRADUATES

### Christy Mullen, Graduate Analyst at Commonwealth Treasury



#### About me:

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My name is Christy Mullen and I am a Graduate Analyst at the Commonwealth Treasury. I grew up in Tuncurry and Newcastle and studied a Bachelor of business (Human Resources/ Bachelor of Laws (Hons)/ Diploma of Legal Practice at the University of Newcastle. During my time at university, I participated in endless extra-curriculars, including being the President of NUSA (now UNSA) whilst working in hospitality. My 'legal' experience was limited to the diploma's practical hours and a handful of internships in high school and through the Empower mentor program. If you tried to tell me at the start of 4th year I would be working at Treasury as a graduate I wouldn't believe you, because I am afraid of maths. I am so grateful for my experience at PMC that taught me more about different departments and encouraged me to apply broadly.



## Tips for applying for graduate positions:

You don't need a distinction average or a clerkship to be a government graduate! Most graduate programs ask for a credit average and are genuinely interested in the diversity of experiences and perspectives you can provide. A large number of APS graduates have done honours, so try and emphasise that you are working towards an embedded honours and choose the more interesting essay topics for the research tasks that could be used as interview fodder.

Be prepared, it is a marathon not a sprint. Make a decision about whether you want to check whirlpool for tips and updates on if offers are rolling out, or to avoid it completely to reduce anxiety. Unlike clerkship and law graduate programs, most departments have their own timelines set. I was still applying for some departments whilst I was already interviewing for others. It's easy to miss a deadline when juggling university, work, and 100 applications. Each state will have applications for their respective governments, along with commonwealth departments mostly based in Canberra.

Prepare your relevant examples, including any course project-based work, extracurriculars or work experience. Before you even start preparing, think of what attributes that example leads to and mock-up a STAR example for it. Having a handful of examples that you can use for multiple attributes will make the application process easier and enable you to keep within the word count. You can work on these with the Careers Service or even just with your friends. It is so important to have a supportive network where you can proofread and brainstorm off each other's approaches. Keep track of what you are writing in your selection criteria statements and refer to it with each new application to improve it.

## Tips for interviews:

You should treat a video, in-person, and phone interview in the same manner. Dress up in your interview clothes and test run your set-up to ensure there are no distractions, the lighting is good, and that you know where you want to look. For phone interviews and video interviews that weren't live I would write down the questions and a few quick dot points to prepare my answer. Most video interviews will give you enough time to prepare your answer. After an interview review your notes and your answers and think



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how you could make it better for next time as you will find the questions are very similar across departments.

If you are told who is interviewing you beforehand, research them. Be prepared to answer what type of team you might want to be in by looking up the organisational chart beforehand. Having a single focus may make you seem like an expert or that you aren't flexible to meet business needs. Having too many interests may make it seem like you don't understand what the teams do.

Practice will make perfect. Book in with the career services for a practice interview and practice with your friends and family. Having a few applications and treating them like practice for the departments you care more about can also be beneficial.



## Marissa Alexiou, Law Clerk & Research Assistant at Joplin Lawyers



### About me:

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I am currently working for a great firm in Singleton NSW, Joplin Lawyers. They have offices in Maitland, Singleton and Muswellbrook and are passionate about providing a safe space and strong voice for clients. I was drawn to Joplin Lawyers due to their practice areas and the culture I observed when I went for my initial interview. Whilst at university, I worked as a youth worker in the out of home care (OOHC) sector and it is a role I have thoroughly loved and enjoyed. Whilst getting the opportunity to provide support and learn from some incredible children and young people, working in OOHC allowed me to see how the legal system impacts children and young people in Australia and time to consider how we can improve our care and protection, family and criminal justice system and promote a safe society where all children can grow and thrive.



### **Getting a clerkship is not everything:**

Whilst a lot of my friends applied for clerkships and had great experiences completing them - it wasn't the area of law I was interested in. I was very grateful to gain placement hours working in criminal law at the Aboriginal Legal Service and family law at Legal Aid under an Independent Children's Lawyer. Acting as an ICL is what has always drawn me to the legal profession. I was open to several options for 2021 as long as the job opportunities aligned with the aspects of the law I was passionate about and I had the opportunity to challenge myself, applying my studies and practical experience. Both legal practice and government roles and policy interested me.

### **My top tips for success:**

For any graduates looking for advice or guidance, from my experience I would recommend being flexible and adaptable to job opportunities but remain vigorous in following your areas of passion and interest (if you are lucky to know what they are!). What jobs can look like can change, but your interests will provide a great anchor to your practice. Do not feel pressured to apply for clerkships if you know it's not what area you are interested in. There are plenty of fields that need hardworking, analytical thinkers and if you're passionate or driven to work in a certain area of law, this will shine through in your work and fuel you at times that might be stressful or tiring. Keep a look out for a variety of opportunities and know that it can take numerous applications to find what works for you.

