

# So, you think you can practice Law?

## Seasonal clerkships

Seasonal clerkships provide valuable practical law firm experience during your summer and winter vacation breaks prior to undertaking your final year studies. You can apply if you are about to undertake your 'pre-final year' (penultimate year) of your law degree or your combined law degree. **Some employers will consider taking students in earlier years of their degree.**

Through these programs you can:

- test out what it is like to work in a law firm.
- clarify your ideas on which areas of law you may like to practice, or find out if a law firm is really where you really want to work.
- gain an advantage when applying for traineeships during your final year. A law firm may regard your seasonal clerkship as an 'interview' for a traineeship offer.

### Key dates for seasonal clerkships

Seasonal clerkship positions are generally offered during the winter break (June/July), pre-Christmas break (Nov/Dec) and post Christmas break (Jan/Feb). Programs run for approximately 3 – 4 weeks in Victoria, however some interstate positions may last up to 10 weeks.

#### Applications open

Firms can open applications at any time, however most open between **March to June**. Check each individual firm's website regularly.

#### Applications close

Firms can close applications at any time however usually most close around **mid-July**. Always check the individual firm's website carefully.

#### Seasonal Clerkship offers      **Mid September**

Applications for seasonal clerkships with most major legal firms are made through CVMail at: <[www.cvmail.com.au](http://www.cvmail.com.au)>

## Other work experience options

If you were unsuccessful in your application for a seasonal clerkship you may still be able to gain important experience through other programs.

- Summer internships are offered by many large companies to students with a legal background. These companies include banks, accounting firms and companies in the industrial sector. Check on their websites or <[www.graduateopportunities.com](http://www.graduateopportunities.com)> for further information.
- Barrister's clerks or judges' associates may also be looking for students to assist them in either a voluntary or paid role. Identify contacts at these companies and send your resume and a cover letter to express your interest such positions.
- Government departments and local council also offer voluntary or paid positions to law students. Use the internet or your network to investigate what options are available and who to contact within their legal departments.

## Gaining admission to practice

In order to gain admission to practice as a lawyer, you need to undertake either:

- 12 months Supervised Workplace Training (a Traineeship) with a legal firm
- A Practical Legal Training course.

## Traineeships or Supervised Workplace Training (SWT)

A traineeship is a program of structured training with a legal firm or office for 12 months supervised by a practitioner. During this period you will gain practical experience working in a legal environment and complete training in the “Competency Standards for Entry Level Lawyers”.

### Key dates for traineeships

You should start to apply for traineeships before you start your final year of study (Dec/Jan), for placement into traineeship programs the year after you graduate.

For full information regarding the rules and requirements of finding and completing a traineeship: [www.liv.asn.au/Practicing-in-Victoria/Careers-Centre/Traineeships](http://www.liv.asn.au/Practicing-in-Victoria/Careers-Centre/Traineeships)

### Applying for traineeships interstate

Law graduates are able to apply for traineeship places in other Australian states. Check with the relevant law institute in that state to find out what is required for your application.

## Practical Legal Training (PLT)

You can also gain admission to practice by undertaking a Practical Legal Training course, which is currently offered by two providers in Victoria – the Leo Cussen Institute and the College of Law. These courses combine online, face to face and work experience components.

For further information on these training courses visit:

- Law Institute of Victoria [www.liv.asn.au](http://www.liv.asn.au)
- Leo Cussen Institute [www.leocussen.vic.edu.au](http://www.leocussen.vic.edu.au)
- College of Law [www.collaw.edu.au](http://www.collaw.edu.au)

## Important resources

- The Deakin Law Students’ Society’s (DLSS) *Careers Guide* and *Seasonal Clerkship Guide* contain detailed information on organisations that offer traineeships and seasonal clerkships, application processes, areas of legal practice and profiles of city and regional law firms. Both guides are updated annually and can be downloaded from [www.deakinlss.org](http://www.deakinlss.org)
- Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) provides information concerning recruitment dates, education events, practicing law in Victoria and membership. [www.liv.asn.au](http://www.liv.asn.au)
- Australian Law Students’ Association (ALSA) provides information on international careers, scholarship opportunities, student events and student law competitions. [www.alsa.asn.au](http://www.alsa.asn.au)

## What other assistance is available?

Careers and Employment offers resume checking, career counselling and resources on applications and interviews. [www.deakin.edu.au/careers](http://www.deakin.edu.au/careers)

**Do you regularly use Jobshop?** You’ll find vacancies for all types of employment, including details of volunteer, vacation work and graduate programs. [www.deakin.edu.au/jobshop](http://www.deakin.edu.au/jobshop)