

WHAT IS AN ASSOCIATESHIP?

An associateship is usually a year-long position where you work full-time assisting a sitting Judge.

Associateships are highly competitive and are considered invaluable experience for those wanting to pursue a career in litigation or as a barrister.

Depending on the court and the Judge, associates may:

- Undertake legal research;
- Manage cases and hearings;
- Maintain record books;
- Support their judge during hearings;
- Help write judgments; and
- Assist their judge in a variety of other ways.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide has been prepared by the 2020 Careers & Sponsorship Portfolio, with the aid of other publicly available materials. The information should not be relied upon without independent verification, as it is solely advisory.

WHERE CAN I APPLY?

Most courts offer associateship positions, including:

- The High Court;
- The Federal Courts;
- The Supreme Courts;
- State Courts of Appeal;
- The District Courts;
- The Magistrates Courts;
- The Administrative Appeals Tribunals (AAT);
- Australian Government Solicitor;
- Office of Parliamentary Counsel;
- Director of Public Prosecutions; and
- Other Tribunals, the Ombudsmen or Commissioners.

The application dates for each court differ, so look on their individual websites for more information.

WHO CAN BE AN ASSOCIATE?

Associateships are open to recent graduates, and admitted lawyers. **However, some applications close 1-2 years before the position begins.** Therefore, recent graduates along with pen-ultimate and final year students are strongly encouraged to start considering applying for associateships now.

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APPLICATION TIPS

Students should make the most of every opportunity presented, as even general experience is extremely valuable for prospective applications! **In particular, mooting, research and clerk experience is considered favourably.**

Ensure that your cover letter is specifically tailored to the Judge you are applying for. Conduct research beforehand on the individual Judge and Court. This will aid in discovering if the role suits you and aligns with your interests and experiences.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Most applications for associateships will generally require a cover letter, resume (including qualifications) and academic record. Upon admittance, a copy of your Law Degree Certificate will need to be provided.

The length of an associateship varies from court to court, however, most are usually one-year contracts.



HOW TO APPLY

Supreme Court vacancies vary from chambers to chambers, however it is recommended that you email or phone the chambers of the Judge(s) that you are interested in and inquire as to when the next position will likely become available (this also applies for Federal Court applications).

The District and Magistrates Courts have a 'pooled application' process as opposed to accepting individual applications for Judges. Finally, if wanting to apply interstate or to the High Court, applications usually open more than a year or two in advance, so ensure you are thinking ahead!

THE INTERVIEW

An interview will decide if you are a good personality fit for the Judge. Good preparation usually includes:

- Considering what you want from a career, and why;
- Being able to explain your experiences from your resume in detail and how they are applicable to the Associateship; and
- Having a strong understanding and interest in the area of law that the Judge works in.

Aim to get to the interview around 5-10 minutes beforehand and ensure that you are in formal business attire.