

GETTING EXPERIENCE

issue 8



DATES TO REMEMBER

AULSS Information Night

- Wednesday, 08 September (Week 7), 6pm
- Moot Court
- *If you are interested in being part of the AULSS next year, be sure to come along to this info night to find out what being part of the AULSS entails!*

First Year Moot Grand Final

- Wednesday, 15 September (Week 8), 6pm
- Moot Court

First Year Movie Night

- Thursday, 16 September (Week 8), 6pm
- The Braggs Lecture Theatre and Lawns

As we start to approach the end of the academic year, we thought it might be meaningful to write about the methods and merits in obtaining work experience. To help us illustrate this more effectively, we spoke to the awesome Alexandra Kenny. A graduate from the University of Adelaide with a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting), Alexandra has just been admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor in the Supreme Court of South Australia. She is currently working as a Commercial Lawyer at WRP Legal & Advisory, specialising in tax law.

Where did you gain work experience during your degree, and how did it help you in the long term?

Alexandra: Doing work experience throughout my degree was vital not only to obtaining a graduate job, but also in figuring out what path I wanted to take at the end of university. Because let's face it, no one has a clue where they are going to end up at the end of their degree!!

In my second year of university I reached out to a small boutique firm who had done work for my Dad's business and did a week's work experience there to get an idea of what being a lawyer is like. In my third year, I completed a vacationer program at KPMG. I felt that it was really important to explore the possibilities of my commerce degree, especially because the Big 4 offer law roles interstate. Doing this KPMG vacationer program was vital to building industry connections and exposing me to the world of tax (which I am now working in). In my fourth year, I completed a clerkship at HWL Ebsworth and participated in the university's CLE elective. In July 2020, I started working as a permanent part-time clerk at WRP Legal & Advisory, which eventually led to a graduate role. In addition to work experience, leadership roles had a huge impact on my self-development throughout university. As I come from Mt Gambier, I stayed at St Mark's College for most of my university degree and was involved in various leadership roles there. As a naturally introverted person, this helped to build my confidence and my ability to communicate to groups of people and demonstrate leadership, which are now some of my most employable skills.

What tips and tricks do you recommend for those looking to gain legal work experience for the first time?

Alexandra: One piece of advice I would like to give is to look at small and mid-size firms around Adelaide when applying for clerkships. I had never heard of WRP Legal & Advisory before being told about it by a family friend.

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WRP is a mid-size boutique commercial law firm and also has a sports and media management company called W Sports and Media. Applying at WRP has opened up so many opportunities for me, and allows me to be closely mentored by my supervising Senior Associate, and to work directly alongside our Managing Partner frequently. I wholeheartedly believe that I will grow as a practitioner faster being at WRP than I would at a larger firm.

Lastly, my biggest piece of advice is to start looking for work experience early in your degree. Utilise any contacts that you have and take up any experience that comes your way. Any experience is good experience and not only benefits you in your career, but also in your own self-development.

What is the value of working experience during my studies?

There are many reasons as to why work experience opportunities can be so meaningful for law students. Not only will it offer you a crucial head-start on choosing which career pathways you want to pursue (whether it is succession, medical law, humanitarian law and so on), but it will also give you the chance to see for yourself the daily life of a lawyer before you graduate, allowing you to prepare yourself for an eventual entrance into working full-time. Getting practical work experience in law school will help you develop professional skills you will likely need all throughout your career, including critical thinking, collaborative and legal research skills.

What types of experience can I obtain while at Adelaide Law School?

- Student club and committees
 - Student clubs and committees are a great way to build connections within the university, be a part of a team, and contribute to meaningful projects. You can find a list of all the clubs on campus on the Adelaide University Union [website](#).
- Volunteer experience
 - Volunteer experience is a terrific opportunity to exchange some of your time each week for some hands on experience in an industry you are interested in working eventually. Organisations are always keen to take on students in their 2nd or 3rd year in the form of an internship for a few weeks or even 1 day a week over a semester.

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- Work experience

- Whether it be working a part-time job in retail or undertaking an internship for a big 4 firm, both will fundamentally help you develop necessary skills for your future career and play a role in helping discover what you are interested in. Part-time work can generally assist with refining communication skills, time management and problem solving; an internship will equally elevate these pre-existing skills and give you an opportunity to sink your teeth into some industry work.

What are the best approaches to securing working experience?

- The AULSS website's Job Opportunities and Volunteering Boards'
 - Through our website, the AULSS provides constantly updated listings for both job and volunteering opportunities. The former, managed by the Careers Portfolio, includes both graduate and undergraduate roles. The latter on the other hand, updated by the Social Justice and Equity Portfolio, features more than 50 local community volunteer programs. For convenient access, the AULSS will also often cross-post new listings on our Facebook page.
 - For more general (non-law related) working experiences, you may also want to consider taking a look at the employment listings on Adelaide University's virtual CareersHub or the Adelaide University Union's online jobs board.
- University of Adelaide Law Chats Facebook Group
 - As the main online forum for Adelaide University Law Students, many job and networking opportunities will often be shared by firms and recruiters on the University of Adelaide Law Chats Facebook group.

We hope this has provided clarity on getting experience in law school, but please reach out if we can help more!

All the best,
Kane and Ikhwan