

The transition from law student to lawyer

Graduating from your law degree is a momentous achievement especially after the numerous long nights spent on your laptop frantically trying to finish your assessment due the next day or those dreaded 3 hour end of semester exams where you need to cram everything you know onto an exam paper. But once you receive your testamur and throw your mortar board in the air for the essential Instagram photo you may be thinking what now? If you speak to any law graduate their first answer will probably be to obtain a job in a top tier law firm and be granted a generous salary.



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But before you can unleash everything you learnt at university and embark on your legal career you must first obtain valuable practical skills, which will form the foundation in which you will build your legal career.

Some important practical skills are as follows:

Communication

Communication is key! As a fresh law graduate you need to be able to communicate effectively with your colleagues and clients. Communication is not limited to verbal but also extends to your body language and the way you convey your message to your listeners. Being a good communicator means you also need to be a good listener. It is no good telling a client everything you know about a particular area law if you haven't listened to the facts and how that law can be applied to their case.

Time management

This is essential to ensure you not only complete your work but you complete your work on time. To perfect your time management skills you need to ensure that you can prioritize your workload and delegate if needed. Find something that works for you, by either writing a to-do-list or adding reminders in your phone to help you work out what is urgent and what can wait. In practice strict time limits apply and must be adhered to, to ensure you can aim to achieve the best outcome for your client.

Decision making

Decision making is a skill that will continue to develop throughout all aspects of your life. Our day is full of decision making, the key is to determine what is the right and just decision to make. As lawyers our clients seek our advice on which decision to make, although we cannot make the decision for them, it is our job to provide them with the information they need and guide them to make an informed decision.

Resilience and self-confidence

These are arguably the most important skills a law graduate can develop early in their career. The legal profession is a tough industry especially in your first few years while you are trying to find your feet and develop your professional identity. The key is not to be too hard on yourself, no one expects you to know everything. Be respectful of your peers and listen to your mentors they are there to guide you and help you

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transition from student to lawyer, their feedback is important! Lastly, be confident in yourself and try your best, remember this is only the beginning of an exciting and rewarding career.

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