

Guidance for City & Guilds Legal Studies and Legal Secretaries work placement students

Introduction

This information is designed to supplement a centre's general guidance on how students can prepare for and successfully complete a work placement across a range of subject areas.

A centre's general guidance will ensure that a work placement is of high quality and value to the student and may include the following areas:

- Aims and objectives
- Planning
- Preparation and briefing
- Induction
- Evaluation

The information aims to provide specific guidance to City & Guilds Legal Studies and Legal Secretaries students to enable them to plan, prepare for and successfully complete a work placement within the legal services sector. The legal services sector is varied and work placements are likely to be completed in local legal firms, corporate/in house legal departments, not for profit organisations for example charities, the Court service, local government and government offices for example a District Land Registry office.

The aim of a work experience placement in the legal services sector is to offer City & Guilds Legal Studies and Legal Secretaries students the opportunity to gain and develop their knowledge of the legal sector and to understand the skills and behaviours required.

The City & Guilds Legal Studies and Legal Secretaries qualifications complement each other. Students completing the Legal Studies qualifications develop a basic knowledge of law and would like to work in legal administration but not necessarily as a legal secretary.

The Legal Secretaries qualifications which include legal text processing, legal audio processing and proof reading are for students who want to work as or progress as administrators or junior legal secretaries and develop more specific legal skills or experience.

The work carried out within the legal services sector is very varied and may include providing legal advice for example on how to sue the driver of a car who caused injury to a passenger or how to set up a new business, providing advice following the breakdown of a relationship, advising a client following their arrest, advice following a breach of contract, acting for a client when purchasing a property or following a death in a family.

Before a student starts work experience in the legal services sector it is essential that they understand how to conduct themselves and behave appropriately in a legal environment. A student will need to understand that they will be working with a wide range of stakeholders not only clients but other team members.

Students will be required to dress appropriately which means smart business wear because they are representing the organisation both internally within the office and may meet clients and may also visit external venues.

Additional information

Students will be required to understand that they are required to act professionally in the legal workplace and this will include appropriate language when speaking to a client and a colleague.

This includes using appropriate greeting for example not using the client's first name unless specifically directed by the client, avoiding over familiarity and listening to any instructions. Students will be required to understanding that clients can sometimes become emotional and angry.

Students will be required to understand that there are professional rules that govern a firm's relationship with their client. It is important that a student understands the importance of client confidentiality and disclosure and maintaining client confidentiality at all times.

This includes a duty to ensure that any information received from or in connection with a client or their case or a former client or their case will not be disclosed to anyone outside the firm/organisation. An example of a breach of client confidentiality is where two trainee legal secretaries were travelling home together on a bus and were discussing a named client they had seen that morning in the office. A colleague overheard the conversation and reported it to the Senior Partner and the two trainees were dismissed.

Suggested contacts for a work placement

Solicitors

http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/?gclid=CjwKEAju1KGqBRC55bru-sa7zCcSJAAsBf5F046lft0198xAj-a2qp6jLuy2qWYJDWv5-ih6ToqhoCNxvw_wcB

Barrister Chambers

<http://www.barcouncil.org.uk/about-the-bar/find-a-barrister/bar-directory/>

Courts and Tribunal Service

<https://courtribunalfinder.service.gov.uk/>