



# Agony Attorney

AGONY ATTORNEY IS HERE TO HELP WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE REGARDING YOUR PRACTICE OF LAW. SO ASK AWAY.

■ **Is there a list of law firms that accept non-permanent resident status applicants for seasonal clerkships or supervised workplace training?**

Unfortunately, no. Historically most firms have taken only PR status applicants or at the very least applicants who have permission to live and work in Australia on some other type of visa. The time and investment firms put into training new lawyers often means they like to ensure that those hired are able to remain in the country during and beyond the training period.

That said there are now many more firms that realise students from overseas bring in talent and experience which could be beneficial to the firm (and if the firm does cross border work this could be useful). It might be worthwhile to research law firms that undertake international work (or are looking to go international) and to email their HR team or office manager and express your interest. Remember to be truthful and up front about your residency status – firms will appreciate and respect you for that.

■ **I have found it difficult to find work as a graduate. I've tried applying for advertised positions in different organisations but have not had much luck. I've heard of using networking or marketing to find the right job but I'm not sure what this involves.**

Networking is a very broad term. It can simply mean being resourceful and proactive in building relationships that may lead to a job opportunity. Try to attend as many events as possible where you will have

the chance to meet other people, especially in the areas of law that you may wish to practise in or the organisations where you may wish to work. Attending functions such as those hosted by the LIV or Young Lawyers Section is also a great way to meet like-minded individuals.

Next time you attend a seminar, speech or lecture, don't just go home once the lecture ends. Stick around and mingle, have a chat to speakers or if that is too intimidating, to your fellow attendees. It can be surprising what great relationships can develop from something as simple as a quick chat after a seminar. Often jobs are not advertised but spread through word of mouth. By building relationships with people who work in the legal profession, you are increasing your chances of learning more about their job and how they came to be successful in their field, as well as finding out about job opportunities that are not widely known.

■ **I've just been admitted as an Australian legal practitioner and have got an interview call from a firm that I would love to work for. I am nervous as I don't want to mess up the opportunity. What should I do?**

Take a deep breath, stay calm and start plan. There are a few things that you can do to stay on top of your interview preparation (see "Tips for interview success", p4).

First, read the job description carefully, research the role, the person who you will be reporting to and the firm (including its size, structure, standing, culture, awards, recognition, statistics and values). Think about how it resonates with your personality

and how you might fit into the role or can contribute to the firm's overall objective.

Second, reflect on your past and pick a few illustrations of your work experience (e.g. university, sports, extracurricular or professional development courses and or activities) that highlight the strengths, abilities and skills that you will bring to the role and how they will add value to the firm. Remember to stay switched on and pick appropriate times to throw in those examples as you may not be asked about them directly.

Third, be aware of your weaknesses. There is no harm in mentioning your weakness in the interview if asked, however, what is crucial is adding what you have done or are doing to overcome it. Say you found it hard to wake up early when you were at university. As a result you often missed important lectures. To overcome this problem you, together with some friends (it shows your resolve, determination and teamwork), joined an early morning yoga or gym session before lectures that not only made you wake up early and never miss important lectures, it also allowed you to stay fit and active the entire day.

Fourth, you should look at your interview as an opportunity to demonstrate your skills. Your ability to articulate your responses will demonstrate your strong organisation, communication and analytical skills. ■

*If you have any questions you want to ask Agony Attorney, send them to [younglaw@liv.asn.au](mailto:younglaw@liv.asn.au). Your identity may remain anonymous on request.*