

If you have had your traineeship deferred or have completed your DPLP but not found a traineeship yet, then the Careers and Employability Service sought the following tips from law firm recruiters to give you some ideas on maximising your chances and making the most of your time in-between.

What types of job/activity can students/graduates undertake to help them market themselves for a traineeship in the future?

- Anything that demonstrates that they have a grasp of the basics of business, that they can communicate well with every level and can work as part of a team.
- Work experience in a professional environment i.e. bank, building society, general office.
- Jobs which give students experience of a professional services organisation/environment. Students could also take the time to develop their own individual 'competences' such as responsibility, decision making, organisational skills, commercial awareness.
- Work experience in legal/business fields. Pro-bono work, international experience, travel, charity work, developing soft skills.
- Summer placements with Law Firms or other businesses. Language classes.
- Commercial experience and ideally legal.
- Any work experience will provide transferable skills for example communication skills, time management and prioritisation.
- Anything that will develop their commercial awareness/legal experience.
- CV preparation, interview preparation. Networking, how to approach employers and tips in what questions to ask.
- Placements with firms are helpful.

Careers and Employability Service Comment:

You can talk through the types of jobs which might help build your experience with a Careers Adviser by [making an appointment](#), or submit your queries online via the Virtual Adviser Service on [CareerConnect](#).

Think about revising your CV if you're targeting jobs in a different sector, it will be your job to communicate the value of your law degree to employers in other business sectors.

What tips would you give to graduates with a year (or more) to fill due to a deferred traineeship?

- To try and develop the skills as above.
- Further education in an area of interest to support application for traineeship; employment in a professional environment;
- Make the most of the time you have, think of the time as an opportunity to develop yourself further rather than a negative turn in your career path.
- Do something constructive that will help them to develop as a person, be it travel, charity work, work experience - a break like that is not likely to arise again in their professional career so it should be used wisely and the time should be appreciated.
- Studying an LLM can be a good selling point but employers are likely to rate a period of work in a relevant business as highly as a taught LLM.
- Make sure they do some work experience in this time. Build their CV in some of this time out.
- Try to get some relevant work experience
- Possibly enquire as to whether any of the firm's clients have any job opportunities available. Pro/bono or CR opportunities. Anything that will develop your CV or taking time out to achieve personal goals.
- Gain further customer experience where possible and great skills to have in any environment. Also keep in touch with law firm where their traineeship is due to take place ask for unpaid work experience. Go along to seminars if possible.
- Use your time wisely and constructively, obviously your financial situation will guide what options you can consider. Voluntary work either at home or abroad is both rewarding and character building. Continuing your studies by undertaking a Master's Degree or perhaps securing a research post.

Careers and Employability Service Comment:

To find out about volunteering in the UK and abroad, use the Careers and Employability Service online resources: www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/resources/topics/12/

If you're considering further study, make sure you're doing it for the right reasons. If the first question you've asked yourself is 'what postgraduate course can I do?', then think about [career planning](#) first, the types of course which would be helpful and then search for more specific courses.

In this competitive market, what makes applicants to your firm/organisation stand out from the crowd?

- Applicants who have researched the firm and appreciate what we can offer both clients and employees.
- Academic results; good demonstration of team working, problem solving, communication, innovation, time management.
- We look for students who are ticking the boxes in terms of academic results and extra-curricular activities but it is going the extra mile on something which makes applicants stand out, especially if it is something they have initiated themselves and are now following through to a satisfactory completion
- Business incentive and commercial awareness
- A solid 2:1 or 1st class honours degree, work experience and personality.
- Tailoring the application to our firm. Researching our firm.
- Strong personalities that possess the required skills and experience that other graduates may lack.
- Commercial awareness as well as being adaptable and flexible in line with business needs. Excellent networking skills and ability to raise their profile.
- Business awareness and an understanding of what is required from lawyers in this climate. A willingness to undertake business development and a proactive approach to networking.

Careers and Employability Service Comment:

It is important to be able to demonstrate your skills and qualities in a way that will stand out to the employer. In communicating examples of what you have to offer use the STARR structure.

S – Situation, outline this briefly

T – Task, what were the tasks of the situation

A – Action, what were YOUR actions specifically, what did YOU do

R – Results, what were the outcomes of your actions and the overall situation

R – Reflection, what did you learn from the situation, what could you have done differently

For more information on making your applications stand out and preparing for interviews, start with the making applications section of our website at www.abdn.ac.uk/careers. Don't forget that you can book a practice interview (over the phone if you're not in Aberdeen), do a practice psychometric test via our website, get your applications checked and come and chat about making the most of your experiences in your applications.

Written by Tracey Innes, University of Aberdeen Careers Service, November 2009, updated August 2020.

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