

# **WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Guide for Students**





Work experience often raises a number of questions for students: “When should I pursue it? What will I need to do? How long will it take, and what if I can’t meet the time requirements?”

Our guide will answer these questions and help you choose the right option for you.

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

**01**

Options

**04**

Help with finding work experience

**02**

Additional coursework

**05**

FAQs

**03**

Choosing the right option for you

# WORK EXPERIENCE OPTIONS

## Whatever your situation, the College has you covered

You need to undertake a set number of days of work experience to complete your Practical Legal Training (PLT).

We know that some law graduates find it difficult to get work experience.

That's why we offer two work experience options for our Practical Legal Training, so whatever your situation, the College has you covered.

15 days	25 days	75 days
ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, VIC & SA	WA	All States
Additional 6-week online program	Additional 5-week online program	No additional online program
Additional \$1,610 FEE-HELP is available	Additional \$1,540 FEE-HELP is available	No additional fee
Recommended for students who plan to accrue work experience after beginning their Practical Legal Training	Recommended for students who plan to accrue work experience after beginning their Practical Legal Training	Recommended for students who plan to accrue a substantial amount of work experience

# WORK EXPERIENCE

## What counts as work experience

You have a huge range of opportunities that may count towards your Practical Legal Training. Examples include:

- Summer clerkships;
- Paralegal work;
- Volunteering at community legal centres;
- A placement with Legal Aid;
- Working with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions;
- Legal or tax division of chartered accountants;
- Government policy and planning work of a legal nature;
- Judge's associate or tipstaff;
- Assisting barristers in chambers;
- Working in government or semi-government legal departments;
- Assisting Tribunal members (who are legal practitioners); and
- Company in-house legal departments

One key factor in considering whether your workplace experience can count towards your Practical Legal Training is that the placement involves the delivery of legal services. Some examples of the type of activities you should experience, both hands-on and by observation include:

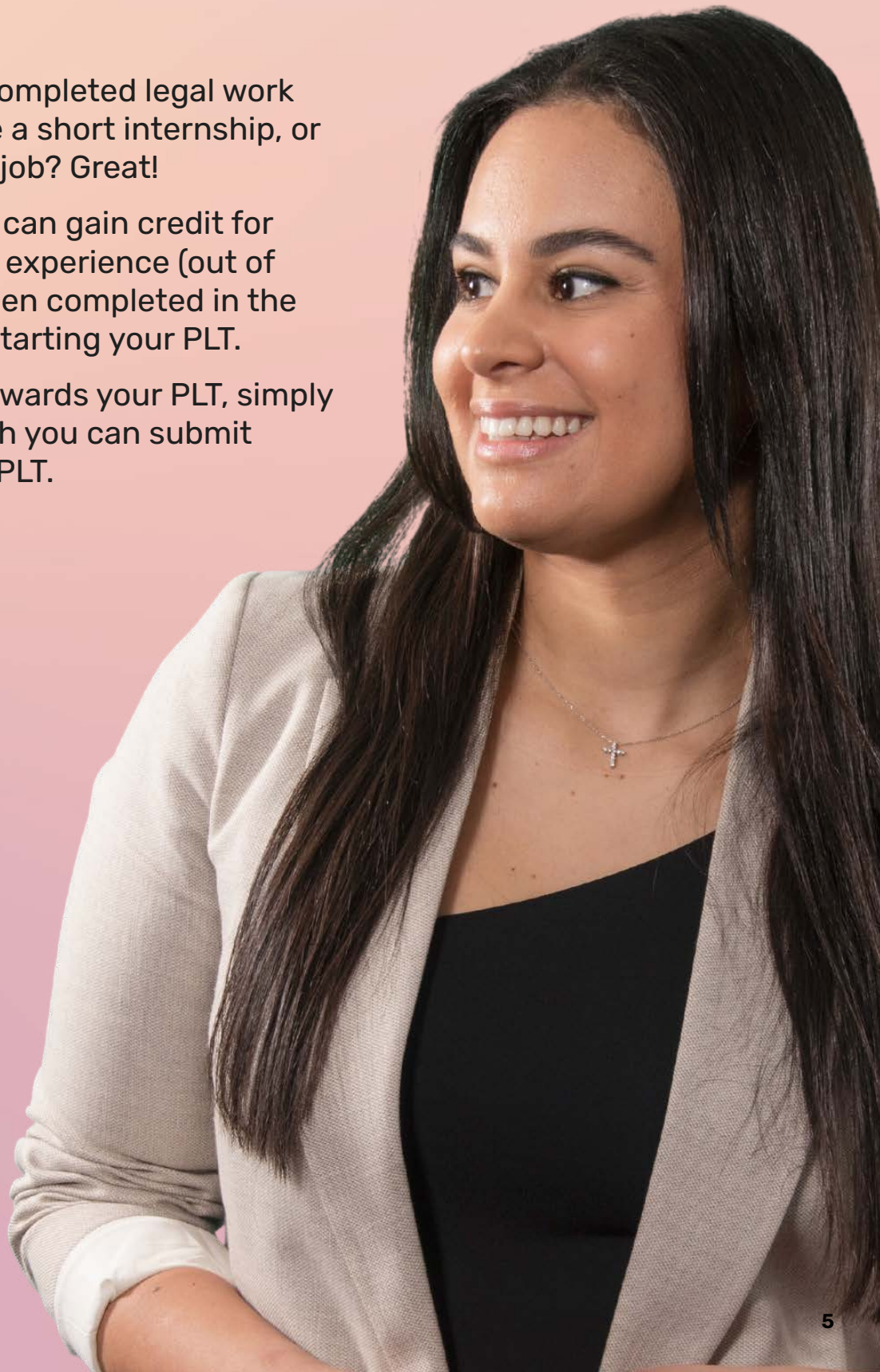
- Meeting, communicating and interacting with clients;
- File management – managing critical dates and deadlines, timetabling and schedules;
- Interacting with other legal service providers such as solicitors in other organisations, barristers, expert witnesses, courts and other justice section administration;
- Management processes for client work and risk management – e.g. conflict checks and costs disclosure;
- Legal research and legal factual analysis;
- Considering professional responsibility issues;
- Drafting correspondence and legal documents;
- Financial and accounting systems, budgets; and
- Administrative activities which support the delivery of legal services.

# **START YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE 2 YEARS PRIOR TO BEGINNING YOUR PLT!**

Have you already completed legal work experience? Maybe a short internship, or a regular paralegal job? Great!

At the College, you can gain credit for up to 60 days work experience (out of 75 days) if it has been completed in the two years prior to starting your PLT.

To make it count towards your PLT, simply fill out a form, which you can submit before enrolling in PLT.

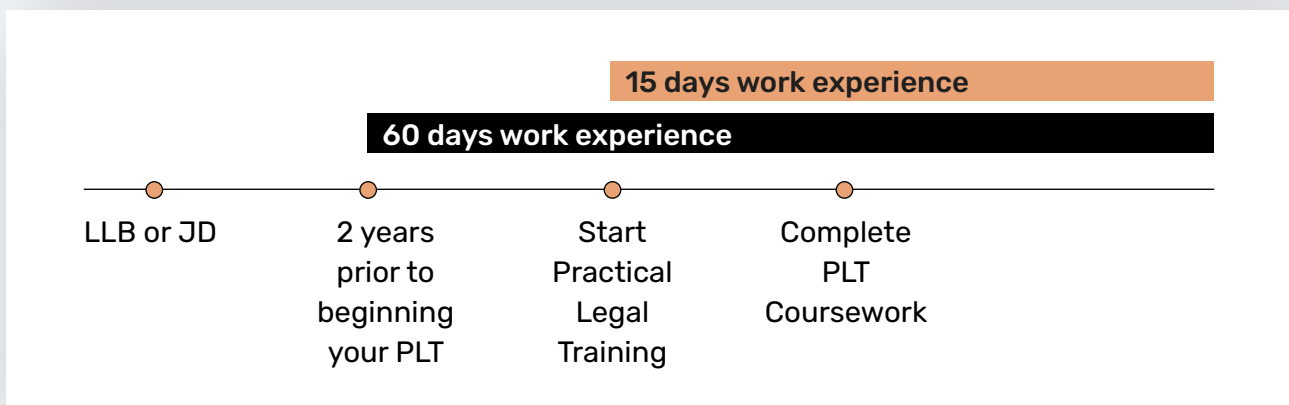


# Timing of Work Experience

At least 15 days work experience must be completed during or after your Practical Legal Training coursework.

The remaining work experience can be completed before, during\* or after your Practical Legal Training coursework.

Work Experience Option	Timing	Jurisdiction	Minimum work experience period
<b>15 days</b>	15 days during* or after PLT coursework	Undertaken in Australia	Minimum 2 days per week
<b>25 days</b>	15 days during* or after PLT coursework	Undertaken in Australia	Minimum 2 days per week
	10 days before, during* or after PLT coursework	Undertaken in Australia or overseas (rules apply)	Minimum 1 day per week
<b>75 days</b>	15 days during* or after PLT coursework	Undertaken in Australia	Minimum 2 days per week
	60 days before, during* or after PLT coursework	Undertaken in Australia or overseas (rules apply)	Minimum 1 day per week



\*Students undertaking the Practical Legal Training full-time may only accrue a maximum of two day's work experience per week while completing their coursework.

A day is 7 working hours and a half day is four working hours.

## Who can provide work experience

Your work experience can be gained in a wide range of places, including:

- a solicitor or barrister in private practice;
- a government, semi-government or corporate legal office or department, employer or employee association;
- a judge to carry out legal research and provide legal services;
- a tribunal member (who is a legal practitioner) to carry out legal research and provide legal services; and
- a Community Legal Centre.

Work experience can be undertaken in any Australian jurisdiction. Overseas placements may be approved in some circumstances. Please see the Work Experience rules.

## Supervisors

A person may be a supervisor if they are an Australian legal practitioner and are currently practising and:

- hold a full practising certificate as a legal practitioner;
- hold a restricted practising certificate as a legal practitioner which they have held for 2 years;
- are a judge;
- are a tribunal member who is a legal practitioner; or
- are a person who does not hold a practising certificate but is eligible to do so and who provides acceptable written submission to satisfy the Committee they can provide appropriate practical experience.

A supervisor must be of good standing in the legal profession or make full disclosure which establishes why they should not be excluded as a supervisor.





## How work experience is recorded

Simply follow these six steps:

**01**

Read the [Work Experience Rules](#) thoroughly.

**02**

Provide your supervisor with a copy of the [Work Experience Guide for Supervisors](#) to read.

**03**

Submit your [Work Experience Approval Form](#) (signed by your supervisor) before, or as soon as possible after you start your placement via email.

**04**

We will then advise you of the outcome of your application.

**05**

After completing your placement, submit the [Work Experience Declaration Form](#) (signed by your supervisor) to the College via email.

Your work experience can be approved retrospectively. In fact, this is quite common – especially in cases where students have completed some work experience as undergraduates.

Your work experience must still comply with the Work Experience Rules – and you still need to follow Steps 2-6 above.



# ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK

## Can't find work experience?

Not a problem. With the College of Law's Practical Legal Training, you can complete significantly fewer days of work experience if you also undertake additional online coursework.

15 days	25 days
ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, VIC & SA	WA
<b>Additional 6-week online program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An advanced interviewing and negotiation session</li><li>• Five written reflections</li></ul>	<b>Additional 5-week online program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An advanced interviewing and negotiation sessions</li><li>• Four written reflections</li></ul>
The recommended study load is up to 20 hours per week.	The recommended study load is up to 20 hours per week.
Additional \$1,610 FEE-HELP is available	Additional \$1,540 FEE-HELP is available
Recommended for students who plan to accrue work experience after beginning their Practical Legal Training.	Recommended for students who plan to accrue work experience after beginning their Practical Legal Training

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT OPTION FOR YOU

## Are you considering your work experience options, but not sure which is the one for you?

We're here to make it a little easier for you. We've put together some key features for you to consider and help you make the right decision.

And remember – if your circumstances change, you can change your work experience option at any stage free of charge.

	15 days	25 days	75 days
Undertake legal work experience	✓	✓	✓
Accrue work experience while you're at university	✗	✓	✓
Complete additional online coursework	✓	✓	✗
Additional fee (FEE-HELP available)	✓	✓	✗
Remote supervision allowed	✓	✓	✓
12+ months assistance from a Careers Advisor	✓	✓	✓

# HELP FINDING WORK EXPERIENCE

**With all the formalities and drawn-out processes, the journey can be overwhelming.**

From writing a professional resume, to tailoring your cover letter, to nailing your interview. There are many stages to get right.

We get it. And we've got your back.



## Career Coach

Study with the College of Law, and you'll have free access to a career advisor during your Practical Legal Training and 12 months after graduation.



## Jobs Board

Find and apply vacancies for work experience, paralegals, graduate lawyers and other roles.

**[jobs.collaw.com](https://jobs.collaw.com)**



## Free Resources

Take advantage of our free online resources.

You'll get invaluable tips on how to craft the perfect resume, write a killer cover, nail the job interview and more.

**[collaw.edu.au/resources](https://collaw.edu.au/resources)**



## Monthly Webinar

Join free monthly webinars to learn helpful tips and expert advice on finding a legal role and planning your career.

**[collaw.edu.au/events](https://collaw.edu.au/events)**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **I completed legal work experience while at university. Can it be counted towards my PLT?**

Work experience undertaken before you begin your PLT program can count towards some, but not all, of your PLT work experience component.

All students need to complete 15 days' work experience after beginning their PLT program.

If you're completing the 75-days work experience option, the remaining 60 days work experience can be undertaken in the 2 years prior to starting your PLT program.

## **Does work experience have to be paid?**

Not necessarily. To quote the Fair Work Ombudsman:

"Unpaid work can include work trials, volunteer work, work experience and internships. It also includes a vocational placement as defined under the *Fair Work Act 2009*. Unpaid work is lawful if it is a genuine work experience, vocational placement or volunteering arrangement."

Work experience undertaken as part of College PLT is a vocational placement and as such can be unpaid.

The College does not recommend or endorse any positions, nor does it check the position for compliance with the Fair Work Act or any state award legislation or the Work Experience Rules. It is up to the student and the prospective supervisor to satisfy themselves in this regard.

## **Can work experience be completed remotely?**

Yes! If you are completing legal work remotely, you will need to complete a Work Experience Remote Supervision Diary.

A template for the Work Experience Remote Supervision Diary is available to download at [collaw.edu.au/workexperience](http://collaw.edu.au/workexperience)

## **Am I covered by insurance while completing work experience?**

College students on unpaid approved work experience placements are insured for personal injury and civil liability.

You can request a copy of our Certificates from [support@collaw.edu.au](mailto:support@collaw.edu.au)

## **Can work experience be completed overseas?**

15 days work experience must be completed in Australia after beginning your Practical Legal Training.

The remaining 60 days work experience can be undertaken overseas in a common law jurisdiction or practicing common law and the supervisor holds a practicing certificate issues by a common law jurisdiction.