

Guidelines for preparing your “Aims and Means” statement.

This is to help get you focused, but is by no means meant to be proscriptive.

Aims

Focus on legal skills development. Content knowledge is important for the purposes of your job, but less important for our purposes. Consider where you are now on a skills development continuum. Where are your strengths? Where do you want/need to improve? What skills development does this rotation lend itself to? Keep track of your skills development, jotting notes in your diary will help you do this and also help you complete your final report.

Some core legal skills you may be using in your rotation are:

1. Communication skills: both oral and written, particularly the different styles and approaches depending on the audience, for example, to the Minister, to a legal colleague, to a layperson or non-legal Department;
2. Legal drafting and writing skills: we teach a plain English approach and this accords with your workplace standards as well. Brevity and succinctness need to be balanced with covering the necessary issues.
3. Advocacy skills: think of this as the skill of being persuasive-it doesn't necessarily just take place in a courtroom or have to be done orally!
4. Negotiations skills: observe or practice strategy and approach, the use of language and body language;
5. Problem solving skills: analysing the issue and possible solutions;
6. Legal research and analysis skills: we expect you to have quite well developed legal research skills, so focus on the analysis and the output of your research;
7. Professional skills: understanding the professional and ethical requirements of being a lawyer in government;
8. Interpersonal skills: working as part of a team that comprises lawyers and non lawyers, managing your clients;
9. Work management skills: prioritising, keeping track of deadlines, assessing and reviewing your workload, accountability –filenotes and billing records.

You may not be able to practice all of these skills in one rotation. You may also choose to focus on certain skills that you want/need to develop in this rotation.

Means

Again, this is not meant to be proscriptive. Consider how you learn best. What opportunities to learn are available to you in this rotation?

“Tell me and I'll forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I'll understand.” We have found this to be true. Research also suggests that informal learning in the workplace is very important, ie, what you learn by “osmosis.”

1. Shadowing. For example, sitting in on teleconferences or actual conferences with client departments or other stakeholders, on negotiations and meetings. This applies not just to your nominated supervisor, but to other members of your team even if they are only slightly more experienced than you.
2. Curiosity and pro-activity. Ask questions about why things are done in the way they are, why certain choices are made, what informs a particular

approach, why a document or letter is drafted in a particular way, why a clause is inserted or deleted from a contract.

3. Doing. Make the phone call, draft the document or letter, speak in the meeting. Ensure you get timely feedback on what you have done and encourage constructive comment on what you could have improved.
4. Reflection. Be self critical. For example read your first draft critically. Does it contain legalese? Have you been as concise as possible? Can you improve it before it goes to your supervisor? How?
5. Diversity. Sometimes projects are long running and you might only be involved in a part of it. Try to get an overview of a file or project by looking at similar past files or projects so you can see a beginning, middle and end.
6. Practice. Drafting is a good example here, but it applies to all skills. Your first attempt will likely come back with significant changes, your next attempt with less changes, especially if you are understanding the rationale for the changes because of the explanation and feedback you are given. Aim for the draft that doesn't get changed!

Guidelines for your “Outcomes” Report.

This is to be a reflective report, starting with you reading back over your goals for the rotation. It also needs to be forward thinking, skills development never stops, so what is your plan and focus from here? A narrative of what you have done is not sufficient, but an account of what you have learned and what you still need to learn is.

What skills development outcomes have you achieved? Did you achieve the aims and goals you set for yourself? By all means provide concrete examples to demonstrate your achievement, for example, a Bill passing through Parliament, a treaty successfully negotiated, a procurement contract drafted and signed off.

If you didn't achieve the aims and goals you set, why was this and what are you going to do about it?

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