Application Tips

Company research

Research the company that you are applying to in detail. Learn what interests you about this company when compared to other companies? What stands out? Start by exploring the company's website, but then explore other sources – such as social media (e.g. Twitter or LinkedIn).

Company research is critical to making a successful application. If you take the legal industry for example, there are a wide variety of law firms in the UK – some global, some national, some local, and these all offer a very different experience. There is something for nearly everyone out there so it's worth getting your head around what's available and decide whether a firm might be the right fit for you before you spend your time applying.

So how do you narrow down the type of lawyer you want to be?

To help you decide, take some time to consider the following when you're researching firms:

— What motivates or energises you? For example, is it helping people, prestige, working on matters that are high stakes, working under pressure, a diverse and varied workload, working alone or as part of a large team?

— What kind of culture appeals to you? Culture is unique to any workplace and any firm, so don't make assumptions that all large corporate firms are the same.

— What type of law would suit your personality and skill set? Different areas of practice suit different skill sets. For example, a lawyer at a large commercial firm will typically have to adapt different skills to a private client lawyer. Try and think about where your strengths lie and the type of environment that is most suited to you.

Once you've got your answers, it's time to do specific research into a firm. These are some resources to help you with this:

— Use independent resources – publications such as *The LawCareers.Net Handbook* or *Chambers UK Student Guide*, are sources that will provide you with in-depth insight into firms. There are also online resources such as *Legal Cheek*, *LawCareers.Net*, *Chambers Student* and *Times 100* to name a few.

— Look at a firm's website, Early Talent and careers pages. This can help with finding out about the different practice areas, geographical spread and culture.

— Finally, legal press such as The Lawyer, the Law Gazette, Legal Week, the Times and the Guardian are great ways of seeing how firms are perceived in the legal profession.

Motivation for job/opportunity

Familiarise yourself with the job or work experience description. This will help you to be more specific about why you want to apply for this particular job or opportunity. Some advice:

— Clearly express your motivation and interest in the role, explaining what you are hoping to gain from the opportunity.

— What are your key skills and strengths that you'd bring to the role – e.g. organisational skills, teamwork, attention to detail, reliability etc.

— Evidence those skills with past experiences or activities. These can be demonstrated through, for example, a part time job or a hobby.

— When giving examples of your extra-curricular activities give some context – e.g. rather than saying "I enjoy football", you could say "I enjoy football and play twice a week as part of a team".

Spelling, grammar and format

— Most online application forms don't include "built in" spelling and grammar checks – this is intentional! You may wish to draft your answers in a programme that has a spell check option and then copy and paste into your application form. Always completing a final check before you submit it.

— Take note of word limits and don't exceed them.

— Avoid long sentences and use paragraphs to break up your answer. This will help you to structure your answer and make clear multiple separate points.