



Australian Government  
Department of Employment  
and Workplace Relations

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2024

GRADUATE

Program

## 2024 Legal Graduate Stream FAQ

### What work does a legal graduate undertake and get exposure to?

The Legal Stream provides graduates with the opportunity to rotate through various teams in the Legal and Assurance Division or the Workplace Relations Legal Division. The two Divisions are made up of the following Branches:

#### Legal and Assurance Division

- Program Advice and Corporate Law Branch.
- Commercial and Information Law Branch.

#### Workplace Relations Legal Division

- Bargaining and Coverage Branch.
- Employment Standards Branch.
- Safety, Compensation and Institutions Branch.

Legal graduates are exposed to a wide range of legal work. Areas include government and administrative law, corporate and commercial law, intellectual property, litigation (including some advocacy work), social security law, information law, workplace relations law, workers' compensation and work health and safety law, and legislation development (including drafting of legislative instruments).

### How many placements does a legal graduate undertake?

Graduates in the Legal Stream will complete three rotation in different teams:

#### Legal and Assurance Division

- Legal graduates undertake three rotations in different legal teams within the Division, each approximately five months in duration.
- Legal graduates will have the opportunity to submit preferences for their second and third rotation placements.
- Legal graduates undertake their third rotation after completing the Graduate Program and advancing to the APSS level.
- Where possible, Legal graduates may undertake one rotation in the Workplace Relations Legal Division.

#### Workplace Relations Legal Division

- Legal graduates undertake two rotations, each approximately five months in duration.
- Both rotations are within the Workplace Relations Legal Division.



- However, Legal graduates may request to undertake one of their rotations outside the Division in a policy, program or corporate area, to broaden their experience.

## How are legal graduates supported within their placement?

Legal graduates will be allocated a supervisor in their team for each rotation. Supervisors work with the graduate on meeting all program requirements (including graduate learning and development activities, and mandatory department training). Legal graduates will also have support from their colleagues who will work collaboratively with them.

Selected lawyers at the APS5-EL1 level will also act as graduate coordinators for the Legal Stream. The graduate coordinators are responsible for managing the Legal Stream and supporting graduates as they progress through the Program. This includes organising orientation sessions, training and development opportunities, social events, managing rotations, and generally liaising with graduates. Graduate coordinators regularly check in with legal graduates and are a point of contact for any questions legal graduates may have about the Stream.

Graduates will each be paired with a junior lawyer within the legal practice as a 'buddy'. The buddy relationship is designed to be an informal point of contact for graduates to have assistance and support from someone within the legal practice for the duration of the Program.

## What learning and development do legal graduates undertake?

Legal graduates will be supported by the Department to complete their Practical Legal Training (PLT) during their graduate year. Subject to approval, the department may provide financial support for legal graduates to undertake their Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice and to gain admission as a Legal Practitioner.

Legal graduates will also be provided with foundational government legal training. Through these training sessions, graduates will be introduced to in-house government legal work that will aid the transition from graduate to Government Lawyer. These sessions may be conducted by lawyers from the department's legal practice or by external lawyers. Legal graduates will also have the opportunity to attend continuing legal education (CLE) sessions, organised by the Legal Divisions or by external legal providers.

## What is the career progression after the graduate program?

At the completion of the Graduate Program, Legal graduates advance to the APS5 level. Legal graduates may then enter the Government Lawyer Broadband at the APS 5 classification if they meet the eligibility criteria set out in Attachment C of the [Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Section 24\(1\) Determination 2022/2 \(Non-SES Employees\)](#) (Determination). This includes, among other things, that the graduate is admitted as a legal practitioner. Government Lawyers may subsequently be eligible for salary advancement to the next pay point(s) of the Government Lawyer broadband on 15 July each year if they satisfy the advancement provisions at clauses 45, 46 and 306 of the Determination.

## What does a typical day in the life of a legal graduate look like?

A day in the life of a legal graduate at the department varies depending on the team they are rotating through. Generally, a legal graduate's typical day will include:

- undertaking legal research
- preparing advice and reviewing documents for clients
- working collaboratively with colleagues
- undertaking training
- contributing to corporate activities for the department
- assisting with core Government work, such as briefings to the Senior Executive Service or the relevant Minister
- assisting with work concerning drafting and amending legislation



- assisting with litigation matters.

## What does the department look for in a legal graduate?

We are looking for highly talented and motivated law graduates who have:

- completed a Bachelor of Laws from an Australian university or will have completed a Bachelor of Laws from an Australian university by the commencement of the graduate program
- a Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (GDLP) or who are eligible and committed to completing the qualification and gaining admission as a Legal Practitioner
- a strong academic record.

Additionally, legal graduates should:

- have excellent legal and analytical capabilities
- have outstanding interpersonal and communication skills
- have personal drive and enthusiasm
- show initiative and flexibility
- possess leadership qualities.

