

2026 Graduate and Clerkship Recruitment Program Guidelines



THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Guiding Principles

1. Objective

a. Objective of these Guidelines

To provide a structured process for legal graduate and clerkship employment recruitment to allow students to simultaneously consider offers received and select a Firm or Organisation most appropriate to their needs.

b. Not Legally Binding

These Guidelines do not constitute or reflect a legally binding agreement between parties.

2. Participation

- a. Firms and organisations ('Firms and Organisations') have the option to choose to participate in respect of the Graduate and/or Clerkship Recruitment Program by registering via the [online booking form](#). This includes participation in the comprehensive summer clerkship and/or graduate recruitment program, and advertising on the Law Society of New South Wales ('Law Society') [online student portal](#).
- b. Firms and Organisations who choose to participate in the Graduate and/or Clerkship Recruitment Program should read and agree to the Guidelines and will abide by the principles set out in the Guidelines including the Key Recruitment Dates (Schedule A).
- c. Firms and Organisations can withdraw their participation at any stage by providing written notice to the Law Society to the contact details appearing at the end of these Guidelines.
- d. There are no penalties for not following the Guidelines.
- e. The Guidelines are not compulsory.
- f. Each participating Firm and Organisation retains full responsibility for setting its own application processes and this aspect is outside of the scope of these Guidelines and the involvement of the Law Society.
- g. The Law Society may, at its discretion, seek feedback from participating Firms and Organisations and legal education providers ('Legal Education Providers') concerning the content and operation of the Guidelines, including:
 - i. to review annually the Guidelines and provide comment as to their terms, for consideration by the Law Society; and
 - ii. to provide information to the Law Society to inform it concerning the framing of the key recruitment dates set out in Schedule A to the Guidelines.
- h. Consultation with Firms and Organisations and Legal Education Providers will be advisory only and the Law Society retains sole discretion concerning the terms of the Guidelines and their operation.

Key Recruitment Principles

3. Key Recruitment Dates

Schedule A sets out the dates for the opening and closing of applications for graduate and clerkship positions and the making and accepting of graduate and clerkship employment offers.

4. Participating Firms and Organisations

- a. Firms and Organisations will follow the Guidelines when making graduate or clerkship offers (as the case may be) to:
 - i. Current staff (including staff employed on a casual basis);
 - ii. Applicants who have completed a summer clerkship with the firm (for graduate offers); and
 - iii. Applicants who have no relationship with the Firm or Organisation.
- b. Firms and Organisations should refer the Guidelines (including the acceptance dates) to candidates both during the recruitment process and when offers of employment are made.
- c. Participating Firms and Organisations cannot require a student to accept or decline an offer, nor require a student to give an indication about whether or not an offer may be accepted or declined, before the date by which offers must be accepted or declined.

5. Candidates

- a. There is an expectation that candidates will be straightforward, honest, and sincere in their dealings with Firms and Organisations with regard to their intentions including any change in circumstances e.g. further study or applying for a Judge's Associateship position.
- b. Candidates must notify any Firm or Organisation of any change in circumstances that would prevent them from accepting an offer as early as possible in the process. A change in circumstances includes offers accepted for clerkship or graduate positions or a decision to defer or complete further study.

6. Review

These Guidelines will be reviewed (including Key Recruitment Dates) annually by the Law Society in consultation with Firms and Organisations and Legal Education Providers.

7. Contact Details

Student Services

The Law Society of New South Wales 170 Phillip Street, Sydney NSW 2000

E: Student.Services@lawsociety.com.au

T: 02 9926 0333

Clerkship Guidelines for Recruitment Activities in 2026

8. Eligibility

- a. To be eligible to apply for a clerkship position with a participating Firm or Organisation, applicants must be in their final or penultimate year of study. Applications outside of this are to be considered at the discretion of each participating Firm or Organisation.

9. Applications

- a. Schedule A sets out the dates for the opening and closing of applications for clerkship positions and the making and accepting of clerkship offers.
- b. Each participating Firm or Organisation retains full responsibility for setting its own application processes and this aspect is outside of the scope of these Guidelines and the involvement of the Law Society.
- c. Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these Guidelines and the clerkship application process of any Firm or Organisation to which they are applying.

10. Offers

- a. A participating Firm or Organisation may make an offer of a clerkship to a candidate at any time during the offer period identified in Schedule A.
- b. An offer of a clerkship made within the offer period will remain open for acceptance until 1:00 PM on the date identified in Schedule A as the day on which offers of clerkships must be accepted.
- c. A candidate must not retain more than two (2) open offers at any time during the period commencing at 12 noon on the penultimate day of the offer period and concluding at 1:00 PM on the day identified in Schedule A as the day on which offers of clerkships must be accepted or declined and must decline on a rolling basis excess offers as necessary to comply with this clause.

Graduate Guidelines for Recruitment Activities in 2026

11. Eligibility

- a. Any offer made under these Guidelines relates to a graduate position commencing in 2027.

12. Applications

- a. Schedule A sets out the dates for the opening and closing of applications for graduate positions and the making and accepting of graduate offers.
- b. Each participating Firm or Organisation retains full responsibility for setting its own application processes and this aspect is outside of the scope of these Guidelines and the involvement of the Law Society.
- c. Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these Guidelines and the graduate application process of any Firm or Organisation to which they are applying.

13. Offers and acceptance

- a. A participating Firm or Organisation may make an offer of a graduate position to a candidate at any time during the offer period identified in Schedule A.
- b. On the day identified in Schedule A as the day on which offers for graduate employment positions can be made, Firms and Organisations may make offers at any time throughout the day from 9:00 AM.
- c. Candidates must accept or decline an offer of graduate employment by 1.00 PM on the day identified in Schedule A as the day on which offers for graduate positions must be accepted or declined.
- d. Candidates can accept or decline an offer of graduate employment at any time prior to 1.00 PM on the day identified in Schedule A as the day on which offers for graduate positions must be accepted or declined.
- e. A graduate position can be deferred in circumstances agreed between the student and the firm for a further period.

Schedule A – Summer Clerkship and Graduate Recruitment Program Dates 2026

Graduate Recruitment Program

Date	Activity
Monday 23 February	Applications for graduate positions open at 9:00 AM AEST.
Sunday 5 April	Applications for graduate positions close at 11:59 PM AEST.
Monday 27 April	Interviews for graduate positions commence.
Wednesday 3 June	Offers for graduate positions can be made from 9:00 AM AEST.
Thursday 4 June	Offers for graduate positions must be accepted or declined by 1.00 PM AEST.

Summer Clerkship Recruitment Program

Date	Activity
Wednesday 10 June	Applications for summer clerkships open at 9:00 AM AEST.
Sunday 5 and Sunday 12 July	Applications for summer clerkships close at 11:59 PM AEST.
Wednesday 9 September	Offers for summer clerkships can be made from 9:00 AM AEST.
Thursday 10 September	Offers for summer clerkships must be accepted or declined by 1.00 PM AEST.