

GLOBAL LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR

OFFSHORE JD STUDENTS



Author's note

My name is Elle, and I am a first year JD student currently located in the US. Like you, I'm struggling with Zoom fatigue and social isolation, and I feel professionally disadvantaged due to being offshore.

In hopes of changing this, I've spent the past few months speaking with student organizations and MLS staff about the offshore student experience.

On behalf of the Global Law Students Association, I am proud to share a career development pamphlet that is made exclusively with YOU in mind, aiming to make virtual and time-zone flexible opportunities accessible to offshore students.

Take a peek inside to learn more!

Warm regards,

Elle Henriksen

SCAN ME



to add your city to the
JD Students Abroad Map

1. Press 'Add' to add your city to the map,
2. Put your name in the notes of the city,
3. Look at the global map of JD students

HOW TO GET EXPERIENCE IF YOU HAVE NONE

Wherever you are in the world, the Graduate Services and Careers Team offers virtual services to help you with offshore career development, including

- 1:1 career consultations for advice on your CV, applying to internships/clerkships, and more!
- Mentorship opportunities including the year-long MLS Mentorship Program
- Connections with alumni based overseas and in your region



Click above or email law-careers@unimelb.edu.au to learn more about these virtual services and to make a career consultation.

Connecting with mentors and alumni allows you to expand your professional network – an integral aspect of career building!

FINDING LEGAL EXPERIENCE IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY

with Kate Sasser

I was so excited to start my first semester at MLS in February 2020. In person-classes made it through a few weeks into the semester after LMR, so I heard all about the opportunities we could sign up for and the eventual clerkship process. When I returned home to California in April 2020 due to COVID-19, I did not know Australian borders would be shut for as long as they have been, so I was saddened and worried it would disrupt my networking and career advancement goals.

My main concern was that it was going to be hard to get a US based clerkship over someone who is pursuing a JD at a US university. Most of these clerkships are also offered during the US summer months, which would conflict with our academic calendar. However, most jobs were online at the time due to COVID, which ended up being somewhat of an advantageous factor. Instead of just applying to places locally in California, I sent out as many applications as I could across the country which opened up a lot more options in finding places that were more flexible. This helped account for the reality of not receiving as many responses due to having both a foreign degree and wanting to work during a different time frame.

After a period of disappointment, I received an amazing opportunity to clerk for a judge on the Texas Third Court of Appeals for a few months. In my interview with her, she made a comment about how she appreciated the diversity and the path I had chosen in deciding to get a JD in a different common law country. She also looked at my transcripts and I gave her a writing sample from one of our assessments at MLS. Ultimately, I may have had to conduct more research and read more Texas case law than other clerks, but I was able to apply what I learned from MLS and effectively assess each case and write memos to help the judge before she went to court. It ended up being a great learning experience!

NETWORKING FROM YOUR HOME COUNTRY



Click here to join the University of Melbourne Law School Network

Click here to Join the Melbourne Law School Ask Alumni Program



Making personal connections with industry professionals in your field can help you land your ideal job. Even though you are offshore, the majority of networking is done online.

Look for people who work in the type of law that you are interested in. You can find someone in Australia with whom you can build a professional relationship, or someone in your home country.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Most professionals are happy to reflect on their experiences and share their industry knowledge. Reach out to MLS alumni or other industry professionals by asking for an informational interview to ask them about their role, career path, etc.

An informational interview is a brief, informal conversation with a professional who works in an industry or company of interest to you.

Benefits for offshore JD students

- You won't be disadvantaged from being offshore. Informational interviews are done virtually!
- You can learn first-hand knowledge about a company or industry that interests you, and you can ask for advice on how to be a better candidate
- You can expand your professional network while in your home country, and you might discover unconventional career paths you didn't know existed

REJECTION, RESILIENCE, & ONLINE NETWORKING

with Sabine Johnson

Sabine is a recent Juris Doctor graduate of Melbourne Law School from Melbourne, Victoria. She was the Marketing and Communications Director in the 2020 GLSA committee and is passionate about mentoring law students to help them achieve their early career goals. Sabine completed three clerkships as a domestic student and is commencing as a graduate at Baker McKenzie in 2022.

We interviewed Sabine about her experience with rejection, resilience, and online networking when applying to clerkships during Melbourne lockdowns. In the age of COVID-19, domestic students and international students alike have had to adjust to a virtual landscape for professional development.

What was your experience when first applying for clerkships?

When I first applied for clerkships in my second year, I applied to 13 firms and received one interview which didn't amount to an offer. I believed I had the potential to be a good candidate - so naturally I was disappointed by the rejections. However, my resilience was key: I was determined to try again so I decided to extend my degree, spend time gaining legal experience, and apply again the following year.

How did you adjust your strategy for the second time you applied to clerkships?

My first mistake in this process was not doing my own research into the firms I was applying for. I attended several networking events at university, but I didn't have a real grasp on what the firms were about. To counter this, I spent nearly the entire year working on my application to make myself a better candidate. There were three things that I think were integral to my success with clerkship applications, and I would recommend the following to JD students looking to apply to clerkships or gain more experience.

1. **Invest time in finding legal experience to bolster your CV.** *I applied to around 50 paralegal jobs and only one got back to me -- but that's all you need! I worked at Maurice Blackburn as a researcher, which enabled me to get my foot in the door and gain some valuable experience working as a firm to develop skills that you need as a clerk or lawyer.*
2. **Join a student association to build relationships and gain leadership experience.** *Before my second round of clerkship applications, I got involved in the Global Law Students Association where I was surrounded by like-minded peers who were also interested in global opportunities. I learned about various firms and decided which firms I wanted to apply to the next time around.*
3. **Network in an active and thoughtful way.** *I took advantage of the pandemic by initiating conversations and video calls with 40+ legal professionals on LinkedIn. Not everyone gets back to you, which is fine! But by having genuine conversations with a couple people from each firm, I began to learn which firms would be the best fit for me. As a bonus, my pro tip is that I emailed LinkedIn support and explained my situation as a student in the pandemic and was given three months of free premium LinkedIn. This allowed me to message people who I wasn't connected with- very important for relationship building.*

Through this process, you can learn more about the practice area that you are interested in. For example, I didn't think that I would be interested in employment or insurance law, but I ended up clerking in these teams at Bakers and Hall & Wilcox. Finally, another pro tip: when you make a connection with someone at a firm you are interested at applying to, you can ask them to look over your cover letter and application - most people are more than happy to help.

What tips do you have for online networking?

- *Make a flexible script to copy and paste into networking emails including a brief introduction and why you are reaching out*
- *Start networking with companies/firms as soon as possible! I began reaching out in March, while most people start in June, so this gave me a great advantage*
- *Always have 5-6 questions on deck to ask during an informational interview. Some examples include:*
 - *Did you clerk anywhere?*
 - *What was your experience like?*
 - *Why did you choose this particular firm?*
 - *Why did you choose this particular practice group?*
 - *What is your experience as a grad rotating through these practice areas?*
 - *Was it like being a woman in the workplace? Have you faced any setbacks?*
 - *What's the worst part about your job?*

What would you say to students who face setbacks when applying for jobs?

Regardless of your career path, you are going to face setbacks and rejection. Honestly, failing in the first round of clerkship applications was the best thing to happen to me: I was pushed to reflect on my application, reconsider which firms to apply to, and change my process. This made me a better candidate overall as my confidence grew.

Just remember that one conversation can change everything - you never know where it might lead you. Be someone who is curious and keen to learn because people will remember that. If you're feeling stuck or lost, networking is something that you can actively work on. It makes you feel like you're building your career even if you're not actively working in the field yet - and for law students, this can be extremely helpful.

NETWORKING & INITIATING INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- Build off your already existing network by staying in contact with past employers and enriching your relationships with them
- Keep your LinkedIn up to date with your current roles and responsibilities, and reach out to new contacts to build new relationships. Draw on any connections you may have e.g. if you studied at the same university
- Maintain a running list of professionals to reach out to once you arrive in Australia

Hi X,

I hope this message finds you well.

My name is X, and I'm a Juris Doctor student at Melbourne Law School interested in pursuing a career in X law (or working in X field). I hope you don't mind me reaching out!

I'm interested in

- *Working at X and hearing more about your career path, or*
- *X field and learning about your experience in this field*

and if you can spare the time, I would love to set up a zoom call to ask you more about your experience.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

CONSIDER A VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP AT AN AUSTRALIAN FIRM

Forage partners with leading companies in diverse industries to deliver free, virtual training courses to students like you.



Forage

You can complete a virtual 5-6 hour internship at law firms like Clifford Chance, White & Case, Herbert Smith Freehills, King and Wood Mallesons, and more.

Benefits for offshore JD students

- Each internship is 100% virtual and can be completed on your own pace and schedule, thus no time zone issue!
- Earn a certificate at a law firm in Australia while you are in your home country, and display it on your CV!
- If you have a dream firm, completing their virtual internship demonstrates serious interest and commitment

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

with Jessie Murchie

Being an international student at MLS has been no easy feat. When I left Australia in July 2020, halfway through my first year, due to COVID-19, I thought I would be back in a matter of months and would never have anticipated that I would still be here a year later studying from home in Montreal.

At the start of my penultimate year, I was super keen to apply to clerkships and optimistic about my candidacy. To ensure my success, I researched the firms that accept international students and attended as many events as possible, often sacrificing a night's sleep to attend networking and panel events at 5 AM EST. However, by mid-July of this year, as my peers worked to finalize their applications, I realized that the probability of Australia's border restrictions easing was low. Therefore, I spoke with a few HR representatives who recommended I consider applying in my third year instead. After weighing my options, I decided to postpone clerkship applications and focus on finding legal experience to enhance my CV in the meantime.

Finding legal experience from home has proven challenging while living in Quebec, a civil law jurisdiction with minimal opportunities for foreign trained students. I have had to make a complete transition to online networking and attempt to make the most of any virtual opportunities. In the next few months, I will be completing a Forage internship to make my application more marketable to commercial firms and will be doing a virtual Legal Internship through the University in November. I have also started to strongly consider alternative paths for my future, including, potentially applying for a JD/MLM degree partnership.

I joined the GLSA in March 2021, which has allowed me to meet new people, connect with the greater student body, develop essential skills and expand upon my network within Australia from afar. While learning from home has not been easy, adjusting my approach to career development and making more efforts to stay engaged has kept me positive and focused throughout this unorthodox experience.

WORK IT

While domestic and international students alike can appreciate the difficulties of online learning, offshore students are faced with additional barriers to networking and career building.

The Global Law Students Association wants to help!

We're here to inform you about the professional development opportunities that are accessible, effective, and worth your time. We hope that these interviews and resources assist you in your offshore career development.

Please fill out the form on the following page to let us know where you're currently located, and share any feedback you may have!

