



Tips for Finding a Law Volunteering/Pro bono Opportunity

Why volunteer?

People volunteer for a whole range of reasons. Within the legal and other professions using your professional skills as a volunteer is often called pro bono work. Many students volunteer during the academic stage (LLB, PGLLB, CPE) of their legal training both for the good of others and as part of their continuing professional development. The legal profession is very competitive and it is important that you can demonstrate to employers that you are an appropriately motivated candidate. Volunteering can help you to do this.

What you need to consider before you apply:

- Skills that you wish to develop as part of your career planning;
- Skills that you already possess and how others could benefit from your commitment;
- Any areas of the law that you are particularly interested in and any gaps in knowledge that you possess;
- How much time you can commit to volunteering without it impacting on your studies,
- The different pathways into the law for barristers and solicitors and any differences in the required skills sets for each occupation.

Tip 1: register with City Volunteering

Register with City Volunteering and receive e-mail notices about law volunteering events at City or occasional law related volunteering opportunities.

<http://volunteering.city.ac.uk> there is also a searchable database that will help you find placements with local organisations in all sorts of different fields.

Tip 2: use search engines such as Google.

Take a little time and think about any particular areas of law that you are interested in. You may wish to discuss this with your personal tutor. Then simply go online and identify not for profit/charitable organisations operating in your chosen area of the law. For example type into www.google.co.uk search criteria such as *volunteering law London family* remembering to select the pages from the UK only option. Many organisations will have a get involved or volunteer web page.

(NOTE: If your interests are limited to commercial or company law then work placements or mini pupillages with law firms or chambers may be more appropriate. You can speak to a careers adviser in the CCSD about this.)

Tip 3: www.do-it.org.uk

This website is an online volunteering search engine offering 1000s of volunteering opportunities in an extensive range of organisations and remains one of the best regularly updated web resources for volunteering opportunities.

Quick guide to using www.do-it.org.uk

1. Click on the advance search facility on the left hand side of the front page of the website.
2. Enter your postcode or use the University's which is EC1V 0HB
3. Use the drop down menu on the right hand side of the page and select legal aid and justice in the interests section and legal work in the activities section.
4. Run the search.
5. Browse the results until you find an opportunity that interests you, click on the "apply for this opportunity" button and the site will then prompt you to register with them.
6. Register with the site and it will automatically send your details to the organisation hosting the voluntary opportunity.
7. We recommend you play around with the search criteria and visit the site regularly.

Tip 4: dealing with organisations

Sometimes organisations using the www.Do-It.org site do not respond promptly to applicants. We recommend that once you have found an opportunity that you want to get involved in using the **do-it** website, **be proactive** - contact the organisation offering the position directly! If the **do-it** website does not have a link or contact details for them, simply **Google search** the organisation to see if you can find their website and get their volunteer co-ordinators contact details or to find out if they have their own alternative volunteer application procedures.

Tip 5: alternative ways to search for opportunities

Don't just search online use other methods such as papers, magazines, industry specific magazines career centres. Also, search the jobs page in the online version of well known media publications such as the Guardian who have a section on volunteering. Its web site address is www.jobs.guardian.co.uk

Tip 6: non-advertised volunteering organisations

If you are interested in volunteering for an organisation which is not advertising for volunteers you could try sending a speculative CV and cover letter followed up with a phone call. If you do this you must ensure you have done your research and know what kind of skills the organisation needs. Remember some large or famous organisations such as Amnesty International will get 100s of applications so your chances of success may be limited. However if you have a specialist skill such as a second language they may prioritise you as a candidate.

Tip 7: use your local volunteer bureau

Contact your local volunteer bureau. You can find a volunteer bureau finder on the volunteer England website www.volunteering.org.uk/

Tip 8: be creative

Remember the people who have the most interesting and rewarding volunteering experiences are the ones that put the most effort into locating them in the first place. Be creative, persistent and most of all do your research.

Career development online resources for law students

Quality sector related information

Law Bore - City University award winning law student portal

The Bar Council

The Law Society

The Institute of Legal Executives

The Bar Council legal education site

Careers based information for students (inc law)

Legal careers magazine

CPE/LPC Central Applications Board

Law Careers Advice Network

(including training contract vacancies)

Paralegal vacancies

Paralegal vacancies

Paralegal vacancies

Outdoor Clerk vacancies

Court vacancies

Lists pupillages and application site for some

Lists all pupil age vacancies in England and Wales

Government Legal Service - mini pupillages/work placements and recruiters

Traineeships in the European Commission

Traineeships in the European Court of Justice

www.lawbore.net

www.barcouncil.org.uk

www.lawsociety.org.uk

www.ilex.org.uk

www.legaeducation.org.uk

www.prospects.ac.uk

www.lawcareers.net

www.lawcabs.ac.uk

www.lcan.org.uk

www.paralegalnet.co.uk

www.totallylegal.com

www.chambersandpartners.com

www.premierlegal.co.uk

www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/vacancies.htm

www.olpas.co.uk

www.pupillages.com

www.gls.gov.uk

http://ec.europa.eu/stages/index_en.htm

www.curia.eu.int

Small sample of organisations that recruit volunteers

Age Concern Camden

Amnesty International

Centre for Corporate Accountability

Charter 88

Citizens Advice Bureau

Free Representation Unit

Howard League for Penal Reform

Interights

Law Centres Federation

Liberty

Mary Ward Legal Centre

Prisoners Advice Service

Prisoners Families and Friends

Terrence Higgins Trust

The Environmental Law Foundation

Victim Support

Youth Justice Board

www.ageconcerncamden.org.uk

www.amnesty.org.uk

www.corporateaccountability.org

www.charter88.org.uk

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

www.freerepresentationunit.org.uk

www.howardleague.org

www.interights.org

www.lawcentres.org.uk

www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

www.marywardlegal.org.uk

www.prisonersadvice.org.uk

www.prisonersfamiliesandfriends.org.uk

www.tht.org.uk

www.elflaw.org/join/volunteer.php

www.victimsupport.org.uk

www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

To discuss volunteering opportunities with an adviser please e-mail Ben Butler the Community Volunteering Adviser at ben.butler.1@city.ac.uk for an appointment or visit the centre CCSD offices. You can also use the CCSD to book an appointment with a careers adviser or to view a range of law related careers information resources.

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