



**LAW
INSTITUTE
VICTORIA**

2026 LIV Clerkship and Graduate Recruitment Guidelines

Providing consistency and fairness throughout the recruitment process

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Guiding Principles

1 Objective

The LIV Clerkship and Graduate Recruitment Guidelines (**the Guidelines**) are to provide the agreed framework for the dates and communication protocols for the making of offers for clerkships and graduate positions by signatory law firms and organisations and the acceptance of offers by law students to ensure consistency and fairness in the recruitment process.

The Law Institute of Victoria (the **LIV**) values the commitment that all signatories make towards ensuring compliance with the Guidelines.

2 Participation

- (a) Firms and organisations who choose to participate in the Guidelines (**Signatory**) will abide by the principles set out in the Guidelines including the Key Recruitment Dates (Schedule 1) for clerkship and graduate employment recruitment.
- (b) Each Signatory agrees to comply with all legislative requirements including those imposed by or otherwise required under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) and the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic).
- (c) A Signatory who has entered into sponsorship arrangements with students under equity, access or inclusion programs is, at the discretion of the Signatory, exempt from complying with the Guidelines in relation those students.
- (d) A Signatory may withdraw from the Guidelines by providing thirty (30) days written notice of its intention to the LIV, the law faculties and law student societies at all Victorian law schools.
- (e) These Guidelines are in place to ensure fairness throughout the clerkship and graduate recruitment process. However, each Signatory is responsible for setting its own application processes and this aspect is outside the scope of these Guidelines and the LIV's involvement.
- (f) The LIV will maintain an up-to-date list of all signatories (as set out in Schedule 2) which will be available on the LIV website.
- (g) These Guidelines will be reviewed (including Key Recruitment Dates) annually by the LIV and representatives of each Signatory, Victorian law school and Victorian law school student society.

Key Recruitment Principles

3 Signatories

- (a) Each Signatory will follow the Guidelines when making clerkship and graduate offers (as the case may be).
- (b) A Signatory cannot require a candidate to accept or decline an offer, nor require a candidate to give an indication about whether an offer may be accepted or declined before the day by which offers must be accepted or declined.

4 Candidates

- (a) There is an expectation that candidates will be straightforward, honest, and sincere in their dealings with a Signatory.
- (b) There is an expectation that candidates will be clear and transparent with each Signatory in regard to their intentions including any change in circumstance that would prevent them from accepting an offer (for example, to apply for a Judge's Associateship position or further study).
- (c) Candidates must notify any relevant Signatory to which they have applied for a clerkship or graduate position of any change of circumstance, that would prevent them from accepting an offer, as early as possible in the recruitment process and no later than two (2) weeks before offers are due to be made. For example, a change in circumstance includes offers accepted for clerkship or graduate positions (including interstate positions) or a decision to defer study or complete further study.

Recruitment Process for Clerkships

5 Eligibility to apply for Clerkships

- (a) Any offer made under these Guidelines relates to clerkship positions commencing in 2026 and 2027.
- (b) To be eligible to apply for clerkships, a student must be in their final or penultimate year of study in 2026.
- (c) Students who have already completed their law degree are eligible to apply, however, applications will be accepted at the discretion of each Signatory.

6 Applications

- (a) Applications for clerkships will open and close on the dates set out in Schedule 1.
- (b) Each Signatory is responsible for setting its own application process and this aspect of the recruitment process is outside the scope of these Guidelines and the LIV's involvement.
- (c) Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the clerkship application process and policies of any Signatory to which they are applying and allow sufficient time for lodgement of their application.
- (d) All interviews for clerkship positions are permitted to be conducted by electronic means.
- (e) An applicant who, due to "genuine necessity" will be unable to attend an interview during the interview period should apply to the LIV for permission to be interviewed at a date outside the application dates. "Genuine Necessity" will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the LIV. Applications should be made to the LIV Emerging Lawyers Section Lead in writing and include appropriate supporting documentation. Written permission is to be granted at the sole discretion of the LIV.
- (f) Where an error occurs in the lodgement of an application made pursuant to these Guidelines, the student may make a case for consideration to the relevant Signatory, but it is at the discretion of the Signatory concerned as to whether the application is accepted.

7 Offers

- (a) **Business Day** is defined as Monday to Friday.
Business Hours is defined as the period between 9am and 5pm.
- (b) A Signatory may make an offer of a clerkship to a student at any time during the offer period set out in Schedule 1.
- (c) Subject to paragraph 7(d), any offer of clerkship must remain open for a minimum period of four (4) Business Hours from the time the offer was made or until 10am the following Business Day for offers made after 1pm.
- (d) Students must not hold more than four (4) clerkship offers for a period of more than two (2) Business Hours.

- (e) All offers made pursuant to paragraph 7(b) of these Guidelines will be made by email. All email offers must detail:

- (i) the terms of the offer; and
 - (ii) that the offer is made pursuant to these Guidelines.

Each Signatory is permitted to make calls to offerees simultaneously to the offers being made by email.

- (f) A clerkship position offered under these Guidelines may be deferred for one (1) year at the student's request, subject to agreement by the Signatory.
- (g) A Signatory is not obligated to offer clerkships each year but if they do, they must follow the Guidelines.
- (h) If a Signatory has a vacancy in its clerkship program after the clerkship offer date set out in Schedule 1, the Signatory may recruit to fill that vacancy.

The Signatory can only make an offer to fill that vacancy to students who are eligible to apply for clerkships under paragraph 5.

Recruitment Process for Graduate Positions

8 Eligibility to apply for Graduate Position

- (a) Subject to paragraph 8(c), any offer made under these Guidelines relates to a graduate position commencing in 2027.
- (b) To be eligible to apply for a graduate position, a student must have already completed their law degree or be due to commence their final semester in 2026.
- (c) Successful applicants who have already completed their law degree are eligible to commence their graduate position prior to 2027 by agreement between the Signatory and the applicant.

9 Applications

- (a) Applications for graduate positions will open and close on the dates set out in Schedule 1.
- (b) Each Signatory is responsible for setting its own application process and this aspect of the recruitment process is outside the scope of these Guidelines and the LIV's involvement.
- (c) Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the graduate application process and policies of any Signatory to which they are applying and allow sufficient time for lodgement of their application.
- (d) All interviews for graduate positions are permitted to be conducted by electronic means.
- (e) An applicant who, due to "genuine necessity" will be unable to attend an interview during the interview period should apply to the LIV for permission to be interviewed at a date outside the application dates. "Genuine Necessity" will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the LIV. Applications should be made to the LIV Emerging Lawyers Section Lead in writing and include appropriate supporting documentation. Written permission is to be granted at the sole discretion of the LIV.
- (f) Where an error occurs in the lodgement of an application made pursuant to these Guidelines, the student may make a case for consideration to the relevant Signatory, but it is at the discretion of the Signatory concerned as to whether the application is accepted.

10 Priority Offers

- (a) **Business Day** is defined as Monday to Friday.
Business Hours is defined as the period between 9am and 5pm.
Priority Offer is defined as an offer made pursuant to paragraph 10(b).
- (b) In accordance with paragraph 10, a Signatory may make Priority Offers relating to graduate positions to the following students:

- (i) Students who within the previous two (2) years preceding the date of making the offer referred to in this paragraph, have substantially completed a clerkship of at least two (2) weeks duration with the offering firm, either in Victoria or at one of the firm's interstate or international offices or virtually; or
 - (ii) Students who during the previous two (2) years and for a minimum period of ten (10) working days, have performed paralegal work for the offering firm, either in Victoria or at one of the firm's interstate or international offices or virtually.
- (c) Offers made pursuant to paragraph 10(b)(i) and 10(b)(ii) are at the discretion of the Signatory.
- (d) It is accepted that a Signatory may invite students to express their interest in being considered for a Priority Offer at the conclusion of their clerkship.
- (e) Subject to paragraph 10(f), a Signatory intending to make Priority Offers is not permitted to interview market graduate applicants or to make offers or arrangements concerning market graduate applicants prior to making a Priority Offer.
- (f) A Signatory is permitted to interview paragraph 10(b)(ii) Priority Offer candidates before making a Priority Offer.
- (g) The Priority Offers made pursuant to this paragraph can be made either in writing and/or by telephone on the dates and times set out in Schedule 1.
- (h) A Priority Offer must remain open until the earlier of acceptance/rejection in accordance with paragraphs 10(i) and 10(j) or 4pm on Wednesday 5 August 2026.
- (i) An applicant will not hold more than two (2) Priority Offers for longer than a two (2) hour-period.
- (j) An applicant must accept/reject any Priority Offer received within four (4) Business Hours of it being made.

For avoidance of doubt, Priority Offers made **at 1pm** must be accepted or rejected by 5pm on the same Business Day. Priority Offers made **after 1pm** must be accepted or rejected by 10am the following Business Day.

- (k) A graduate position offered under these Guidelines may be deferred for one (1) year at the student's request, subject to agreement by the Signatory.

11 Market offers

- (a) Except as provided in paragraph 10, a Signatory may make offers of graduate positions to eligible students on the date and time set out in Schedule 1.

- (b) All offers made pursuant to this paragraph will be made by email. All email offers must detail:
 - i the terms of the offer; and
 - ii that the offer is made pursuant to these Guidelines.
- (c) Each Signatory is permitted to make calls to offerees simultaneously to the offers being made by email.
- (d) Except as provided in paragraph 10, an offer of a graduate position will remain open for a period of not less than twenty-four (24) hours from the time the offer was made or until 11am the following Business Day for offers made prior to 11am.

A Signatory should make this known to students at the time of making offers in accordance with this paragraph.

- (e) A graduate position offered under these Guidelines may be deferred for one (1) year at the student's request, subject to agreement by the Signatory.
- (f) A Signatory is not obligated to offer graduate positions each year but if they do, they must follow the Guidelines.
- (g) If a Signatory has a vacancy in its graduate program after making Priority Offers under paragraph 10, the Signatory may recruit to fill that vacancy in accordance with paragraph 11 (Market Offers).
- (h) If a Signatory has a vacancy in its graduate program after the graduate market offer date set out in Schedule 1, the Signatory may recruit to fill that vacancy.

The Signatory can only make an offer to fill that vacancy to students who are eligible to apply for a graduate position under paragraph 8.

Schedule 1- Clerkship and Graduate Key Recruitment Dates

Definitions

Business Day is defined as Monday to Friday.

Business Hours is defined as the period between 9am and 5pm.

Clerkship Program

Activity	Date
Applications for clerkships open	No earlier than 9am on Monday 6 July 2026
Applications for clerkships close	No later than 11.59pm on Sunday 9 August 2026
Offers of clerkships can be made	No earlier than 10am on Thursday 15 October 2026

Graduate Program

Priority Offers

Activity	Date
Priority offers can be made	No earlier than 10am on Tuesday 4 August 2026
Priority offers close	No later than 12pm on Wednesday 5 August 2026

Market Offers

Activity	Date
Applications for graduate positions open	No earlier than 10am on Friday 7 August 2026
Applications for graduate positions close	No later than 11.59pm on Sunday 23 August 2026
Offers for graduate positions can be made	No earlier than 10am on Wednesday 30 September 2026

Schedule 2

Signatories to the 2026 LIV Clerkship and Graduate Recruitment Guidelines

Signatory Firm	Clerkship Program	Graduate Program
Align Law	Yes	No
Allens	Yes	Yes*
Arnold Bloch Leibler	Yes	Yes
Ashurst	Yes	Yes*
Baker Mackenzie	Yes	Yes
Barry Nilsson	Yes	Yes*
Becketts Lawyers	No	Yes
Clayton Utz	Yes	Yes
Colin, Biggers & Paisley	No	Yes
Cornwalls	Yes	Yes
Corrs Chambers Westgarth	Yes	Yes
Coulter Legal	Yes	Yes*
Dentons Australia Limited	Yes	Yes
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	No	Yes
DLA Piper	Yes	Yes
Duffy & Simon	Yes	No
DWF Law Australia	No	Yes

Gadens	Yes	Yes*
Gilbert + Tobin	Yes	Yes
Gilchrist Connell	Yes	Yes
Hall & Wilcox	Yes	Yes*
Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer	Yes	Yes
HWLE Lawyers	Yes	Yes*
Jones Day	No	Yes*
K&L Gates	Yes	Yes**
Kennedys	No	Yes
Lander & Rogers	Yes	Yes
Macpherson Kelley	No	Yes
Maddocks	Yes	Yes
Mallesons	Yes	Yes
Meridian Lawyers	Yes	Yes*
Mills Oakley	Yes	Yes*
Norton Rose Fulbright	Yes	Yes
Rigby Cooke Lawyers	No	Yes
Russell Kennedy	Yes	Yes*
Sparke Helmore Lawyers	No	Yes
Steinepreis Paganin	Yes	No
Transport Accident Commission	Yes	Yes*
Thomson Geer	Yes	Yes*

Victorian Government Solicitor's Office Yes

Yes*

* Market offers for graduate positions may be made if priority offers are not filled or if recruitment needs change.

** No market offers. Graduate positions are only offered to participants of clerkship program.