



# Workplace Experience Rules

## Curtin PLT Course

Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice

2019 (updated 3 July 2019)



## Overview

### Aim

The aim of the Curtin PLT Course is to provide a quality practical legal training course delivered in a vibrant learning environment, producing graduates equipped with the necessary skills and experience to make a sound contribution to the legal profession and its clients as entry-level lawyers. Legal workplace experience is an integral part of achieving this aim. This document sets out the legal workplace experience rules for the Curtin PLT Course.

### Structure

The Curtin PLT Course will be structured as a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice, involving programmed training equivalent to a Level 8 qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

The Curtin PLT Course may be completed part-time or full-time.

The LWE Unit and the CWE Unit are alternative work experience units within the Curtin PLT Course. Completion of one of these alternatives is compulsory in order for students to satisfy the work experience requirements of the Curtin PLT Course.

### Purpose

The purpose of the LWE Unit and the CWE Unit is to provide students with the opportunity to:

- a) apply, test and reflect on what has been learned in the Curtin PLT Course, while interacting with practising lawyers, other staff, government officers and clients;
- b) develop an understanding of the nature of legal practice and of the student's aptitude for engaging in legal practice;
- c) experience supervision by a qualified member of the legal profession in the execution of legal or law-related work; and
- d) critically reflect upon significant experiences obtained by the student in the course of workplace experience and consider how those experiences will influence the student's future actions.

### Learning Outcomes

On completion of the work experience component of the Curtin PLT Course, a student will have:

- (a) applied elements of the student's programmed training in the context of legal practice;
- (b) experienced supervision by a qualified member of the legal profession in the execution of legal or law-related work;
- (c) acquired a basic understanding of what a legal practitioner does in the course of legal practice; and



- (d) critically reflected upon significant experiences obtained by the student in the course of workplace experience; and considered how those experiences will influence the student's future actions.

## Definitions

The following terms are used in this document:

**CLS:** The Curtin Law School.

**CWE Unit:** The clinical legal workplace experience unit undertaken through the John Curtin Law Clinic (LAWS5014).

**Curtin PLT Course:** The Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice.

**LWE Unit:** The Legal Workplace Experience Unit (LAWS5007).

**Supervisor:** A legal practitioner who:

- a. holds an unrestricted Western Australian practising certificate; or
  - b. is a member of the State Administrative Tribunal or the Administrative Appeals Tribunal;  
or
  - c. is employed by the state or federal government and who has practised as a lawyer for more than 2 years;
- and who:
- d. has not been the subject of an adverse finding by any relevant court, licensing authority or disciplinary body under the law governing the legal profession in any relevant jurisdiction; or
  - e. if having been the subject of an adverse finding he/she makes full disclosure to the CLS and the CLS is satisfied that the adverse finding should not preclude the person from being a supervisor.

**Supervisor Conditions and Guidelines:** The conditions and guidelines determined by the CLS from time to time, including and not limited to the LWE Unit work experience requirements set out in Rule 2 of this document.

**Workplace Experience Committee:** Is comprised of the PLT Course Coordinator, the Business Operations Coordinator and may include other members of the CLS staff including the Dean and Head of School.



## Rules

### 1. Application and approval

1.1 For students electing to complete their work experience through the LWE Unit, the following application and approval process applies:

- (a) Students must submit an online Workplace Experience Application Form in order to have a work experience placement approved.
- (b) Students must ensure all forms are submitted at least five business days prior to commencing the work experience placement.
- (c) Approval of a work experience placement must be obtained before the student commences the placement.
- (d) Once the student has submitted the Workplace Experience Application Form and the workplace experience has been approved, the Supervisor will receive an email requesting confirmation of the placement arrangements and requiring acceptance of the Supervisor Conditions and Guidelines. The Supervisor's acceptance of the Supervisor Conditions and Guidelines must be received by the Business Operations Coordinator ([curtin.plt@curtin.edu.au](mailto:curtin.plt@curtin.edu.au)) at least two business days before the workplace experience commences.
- (e) Following receipt of the Supervisor's acceptance of the Supervisor Conditions and Guidelines, the Business Operations Coordinator will email the student to confirm that work experience through the LWE Unit has been approved.
- (f) The CLS does not guarantee work experience placement through the LWE Unit and will only provide assistance to students. It is the responsibility of the student to find a work experience placement that satisfies each of the requirements set out in this document.

1.2 For students applying to complete the work experience requirement through the CWE Unit, the following application and approval process applies:

- (a) Students must submit an online CWE Unit Application Form in order to have a place in the CWE Unit considered.
- (b) Numbers are limited in the CWE Unit. The CLS does not guarantee a placement in the CWE Unit to all applicants. Placement will be provided on a 'first come, first served' basis and may be further subject to the discretion of the Workplace Experience Committee.
- (c) In the event that a student's application for the CWE Unit is unsuccessful, the student must apply to complete the work experience requirement through the LWE Unit in accordance with Rule 1.1.



## 2. LWE Unit work experience requirements

2.1 The LWE Unit requires compliance with each of the following:

- (a) The duration of the workplace experience component must equate to 75 days of full-time employment.<sup>1</sup>
- (b) The workplace experience must be undertaken in Western Australia.
- (c) The workplace experience may only be undertaken on a part-time basis if that employment is for a minimum of either:
  - (i) 2 days per week; or
  - (ii) 4 x 4 hour sessions per week.
- (d) Workplace experience may be undertaken concurrently with the coursework component of the Curtin PLT Course:
  - (i) On a full-time basis where the coursework is completed on a part-time basis.
  - (ii) Two days per week where the coursework component of the Curtin PLT Course is completed on a full-time basis.
- (e) The workplace experience must be completed in a legal or law-related work environment in accordance with Rule 2.1(j).
- (f) The duties undertaken by the student during workplace experience must equate to duties normally undertaken by a law clerk or paralegal and must include the following law-related tasks:
  - (i) significant interaction with external or in-house clients;
  - (ii) drafting documents;
  - (iii) legal research; and
  - (iv) using a file management system.

More specific examples of law-related tasks include, but are not limited to:

- (v) attending interviews with clients and conducting interviews for minor matters;
- (vi) reviewing contracts, court documents, agreements and wills etc.;
- (vii) liaising with internal and/or external clients;
- (viii) arranging, preparing for attending settlements;
- (ix) attending court hearings, conferences, mediations, conciliations or other dispute resolution forums;

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<sup>1</sup> Calculation of 75 days is based on the following:

- a. One day must be a business day and include the equivalent of 7 working hours; and
- b. The maximum number of working hours that will be counted in any 24 hour period is 7 hours.



- (x) drafting simple documents e.g. transfers, affidavits, wills, probate applications;
  - (xi) drafting correspondence and letters;
  - (xii) conducting legal research and drafting memorandums of advice; and
  - (xiii) discussing issues with the Supervisor (for example, after reading a client file).
- (g) During the workplace experience the student must have some client contact.
- (h) Students must be required to maintain a record of the hours worked and duties undertaken during their workplace experience.
- (i) The workplace experience must be undertaken under the direct supervision of the Supervisor.
- (j) The workplace experience must be undertaken with:
- (i) a legal practitioner in private practice; or
  - (ii) law firms; or
  - (iii) any government, semi-government or corporate legal office; or
  - (iv) courts and tribunals; or
  - (v) community legal centres; or
  - (vi) any other organisation offering legal workplace experience recognised by CLS, that satisfies the requirements for Curtin PLT Course.

### **3. Timing of Workplace Experience**

3.1 The workplace experience must have commenced within 2 years of the start date of the Curtin PLT Course and/or concluded within 2 years of the end date of the Curtin PLT Course.

3.2 If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from completing the work experience component through the LWE Unit within the timeframe provided in Rule 3.1, the student must submit an Application for Workplace Experience Placement Extension form.

### **4. Recognition of prior work experience: LWE Unit**

4.1 Students completing work experience through the LWE Unit may apply for recognition of prior work experience for a maximum period of 60 days.

4.2 Students must submit an Application for Recognition of Prior Workplace Experience form.

### **5. Recognition of prior work experience: CWE Unit**

5.1 Students completing work experience through the CWE Unit will be required to complete the CWE Unit in full and will not receive any recognition of prior work experience in lieu of completing any part of the CWE Unit.



5.2 Students who have completed part of the CWE Unit, and who subsequently seek to complete work experience through the LWE Unit, may apply for recognition of the number of hours completed in the CWE Unit in addition to recognition of prior work experience under Rule 4 above.

5.3 Students must submit an Application for Recognition of Prior Workplace Experience form.

## 6. Conduct while on work experience

6.1 Students completing the LWE Unit or the CWE Unit are expected to demonstrate appropriate professional behaviour during workplace experience. This includes:

- (a) dressing professionally; and
- (b) being punctual; and
- (c) behaving with courtesy and respect; and
- (d) maintaining confidentiality; and
- (e) following instructions and diligently carrying out assigned tasks; and
- (f) abstaining from taking private calls during office hours and using mobile phones; and
- (g) taking responsibility for your own workplace experience and proactively seeking out tasks and feedback; and
- (h) complying with policies, procedures and expectations of the work experience organisation.

## 7. Assessments

7.1 The LWE Unit, requires successful completion of the following assessments:

- (a) a reflective journal recording professional reflections on workplace experiences; and
- (b) a Supervisor appraisal confirming satisfaction of the 'Standards for PLT Workplace Experience' as applied by the Legal Practice Board of Western Australia.

Detailed information relating to these assessments are set out in the LWE Unit outline.

7.2 The CWE Unit requires successful completion of the following assessments:

- (a) a portfolio of client work;
- (b) a research project; and
- (c) 5 reflection exercises.

Detailed information relating to these assessments are set out in the CWE Unit, unit outline.

## 8. Completion of your workplace experience

8.1 On completion of an approved workplace experience through the LWE Unit, the student and the Supervisor must submit a Workplace Experience Placement Declaration which includes the following:

- (a) dates and details of the workplace experience placement;



- (b) confirmation that the student has been supervised by the Supervisor in accordance with the Supervisor Conditions and Guidelines; and
- (c) the Workplace Experience Placement Declaration must be signed by the Supervisor.

## Support and general enquiries

For all general enquiries and/or support for placements, please email the **Business Operations Coordinator, Elana Christou** ([curtin.plt@curtin.edu.au](mailto:curtin.plt@curtin.edu.au)) or telephone **(08) 9266 1677**.

The Business Operations Coordinator is the first point of contact for any queries regarding the following:

1. Sourcing and organising work experience placements.
2. Rights and responsibilities for Supervisors and students.
3. Concerns with enrolments, placements, students or other staff.
4. Ethical dilemmas.

### Curtin University related issues

<b>Curtin Law School Student Services Officer</b>	Location: Building 407, Room 312A Telephone: 9266 5305 (8:30am – 4:30pm) Email: <a href="mailto:cbs.law.students@curtin.edu.au">cbs.law.students@curtin.edu.au</a>
<b>Curtin Security</b>	Telephone: (08) 9266 4444
<b>Counselling Services</b>	Telephone: (08) 9266 7850

