**Survival tips for your first year as a law student**

**Attend your lectures and prepare for tutorials:** It is very easy to slip into the easy contentment of 'coasting' through your first year, especially if your results don't count towards the final classification of your degree. But heed this early warning: graduate recruiters will want to see your grade breakdown on application forms. Key modules often fall into the first year of your course - eg, contract, tort and equity & trusts. Don't let the allure of house parties and box-set marathons prevent you from securing excellent grades.

**Join your student law society:** This can be a really useful group to be a part of, but do make sure you attend the careers talks as well as the free drinks and nibbles evenings.

**Get to know the law library**: This is all too often a mystical building until the panic of your dissertation. Many universities offer induction tours for the library and, specifically, the law library. Also, take up any opportunities to train in legal tools and online databases, such as LexisNexis and Westlaw.

**Take part in pro bono projects and law advice centres**: The sooner you can become involved in these types of voluntary project, the better. A last-minute attempt to become an adviser in your law centre during your third year will be immediately noticeable as a CV exercise and won't impress the pro bono staff or recruiters.

**Start to research firms**: Go to the university law fair, firm presentations and any other law specific on-campus events that are on offer. Look at firms' websites - in fact, look at LawCareers.Net! Start to think about where you might like to apply for a vac scheme/mini-pupillage in your second year. It is never too early to start this vital research.

**Book an appointment at the careers centre:** This is a good way to get ahead of the game and find out what events might be useful to attend. Also, a strong relationship with your careers adviser while at university might prove fruitful if you need to approach someone for a reference.

**Keep up with the business news:** Lawyers need to know more than law - commercial nous and good business sense are key for almost all practice areas. Start to get into the habit of reading the business section in at least one broadsheet and familiarise yourself with the legal press, such as *The Lawyer*, *Legal Week* and *Legal Futures*.

**Start networking**: As scary a concept as this may be, networking can be as simple as chatting to friends, parents or anyone you know who has a connection to the legal profession. Doing so will give you a better sense of the different options out there and may even result in some much needed work experience, which takes us to….

**Get some work experience:** Some firms offer first-year specific workshops and open days (see who [was offering these last year](https://mail.inthehive.net/owa/redir.aspx?C=iBPWDNlYYkODsFp-p8kzDQmpaiX4X9EIPXGwMluLuKzvh-SPyuXPiwIcBU1Vdon-j7g5k5RfJtE.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.lawcareers.net%2fInformation%2fNews%2fCalling-all-first-year-law-students-Closing-dates-approach-for-law-firm-open-da)). Other firms/chamber may be able to offer *ad hoc* days, shadowing a solicitor or barrister. All work experience helps you to understand the profession better and adds valuable flesh to the bones of your applications.

Good luck!

The LawCareers.Net Team