

The University of Akron School of Law

Career Planning & Placement Office

Tips for Summer Associates and Summer Law Clerks

As summer begins, students are reminded that working as a summer associate or summer law clerk will likely be unlike anything previously experienced. Keep the following in mind and talk to Ms. Benedict O'Brien if you have any questions:

1. Understand and Manage Assignments: Most issues arise due to *misunderstood* and *mismanaged* assignments, and they have the potential to derail a great summer. Here are a few rules.
 - Time is *MONEY*.
 - Ask questions when being given an assignment. Do not waste time and then ask clarifying questions.
 - Understand the firm's Lexis/Westlaw subscription and do not exceed!
 - This isn't law school. Clients want, and partners demand, specific answers to specific questions. It is your job to give them that. Thus, do not write a treatise evaluating all arguments from all sides. Keep your memos concise and to the point. Answer the question asked.
 - Do not spend *too much time*, do not conduct inadequate or excessive research, and do not provide work product that was not asked for (incorrect or extra).
 - There is no such thing as a "first draft." The work product you hand to the attorney needs to be your best and most complete work. Figure that reality into your deadlines and planning.

Never start a project without asking questions about the above, including: (1) How much time can you bill; (2) Is a formal memo required or not; and (3) What is the deadline.

2. Work Hard: Go above and beyond. It will be expected. Arrive early. Stay late.
3. Juggle Assignments: Multi-task and prioritize. Never turn down assignments or make excuses. Seek out work and do not wait for the attorneys to come to you. Be proactive. Be a self-starter. If you are truly overwhelmed, ask the partners to assist you in prioritizing your assignments.
4. Be a Professional: Maintain lawyerly hours. Most lawyers are at work by 8am or earlier. Tailor your personal life to match your professional life. This is not college. You will be expected to be to work early and to be prepared physically and intellectually to perform at a high level. *KEEP* appointments and arrive early.
5. Dress for Success: Professional attire *ONLY* unless directed otherwise. "Business casual" is not an excuse to dress like a slob. Purchase an iron. Use it.
6. Learn to Handle Criticism: You will be criticized. Possibly a lot. Take the criticism, improve, and move on.
7. Maintain Confidentiality: This is a standard in the profession and if you cannot do it now, you will not do it as an attorney, which is what the firm is looking for. Avoid Twitter and Facebook altogether if possible, but posting about work or cases is completely off limits. Even hinting or generalizations.
8. Understand and Follow Computer Policies: Want a sure fire way to be fired? Surf the Internet as a summer associate or summer law clerk.
9. Maintain Social Graces: Act appropriately at all times. This is not a fraternity; it is a business with a professional reputation to uphold and clients to impress. Needless to say, no hijinks, no profanity, and no drunkenness.
10. Be Friendly: To everybody, including docket clerks and receptionists. According to one local law firm recruiter, the firm's #1 priority when hiring is if "the person is a good fit." You need to be that person that is highly thought of.