

Applying for a GLSS Traineeship – An Overview

Introduction

We want you to have the best possible chance to show your potential for the GLSS Traineeship. Below you'll find an overview of the application and interview process and suggestions on how to prepare.

Reading the pack carefully and considering the advice will help calm any nerves and improve your chances of success.

The Application

We receive many applications for the GLSS Traineeship. The application is used to sift candidates for interview. The first sift is carried out on our behalf by Capita and a further sift is carried out by the 3 people (the panel) that will be interviewing you. The 3 interviewers are all lawyers in the GLSS. To progress to interview, it is important that you put your best case forward in the application form.

The first consideration is whether you meet the basic nationality and qualification requirements. Thereafter, the key focus is whether you meet the essential criteria. You will be asked to provide specific evidence based examples to demonstrate how you meet the criteria. Note the reference to specific and evidence.

The STARR model is one model that is commonly used to answer these questions as it ensures you present your evidence in way that is structured.

- **Situation** – describe the scenario and your role?
- **Task** – describe the specific task you faced?
- **Action** – what did you do?
- **Result** – what did you achieve?
- **Reflection** – what did you learn? What would you do differently next time?

Here are some hints and tips to help you:

- Write down examples of task that you have done over the past few years. This could be at university, work, volunteering or other interests. For each of the examples, note down what you did and what skills and behaviours you used. Then consider which tasks match which essential criteria.
- Use your strongest example for each criteria. It is always better to use one example per criteria rather than multiple examples.
- Prepare. Don't leave drafting your examples to the last minute. You have a strictly limited word count and being concise takes practice.

- The description of the situation and task should be brief. The focus should be on the action and result: what you did, how you did it and the challenges you had to overcome. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your skills and strengths.
- You should mainly be using “I” not “We”. We want to know about your involvement.
- Avoid the use of jargon.
- Use active verbs e.g. achieved; initiated; organised; resolved.
- We can't draw inferences. If you don't say it expressly, we can't consider it in our assessment.
- Check the spelling and typos. And then check again!
- Ask a friend, family member, mentor or tutor to check over the application.

You must meet every essential criteria. If you fail on one, you will not progress to interview irrespective of how well you do on all the other criteria.

The Assessment

If you are invited to the assessment, you will be tested against several competencies. If you fail to demonstrate any competency, you will not be considered for a traineeship.

The competencies will be set out in the application together with the key indicators required to demonstrate each competency. To be clear, you will only be tested on the competencies at interview and will not be tested on the essential criteria.

The assessment will usually consist of at least two elements, a competency based interview and other forms of assessment such as a presentation, written exercise or group exercise. You can expect to be tested on your legal knowledge at the competency based interview as well as on the competencies required for the role. You will be given further details about the competency based interview and other assessment elements with your letter of invitation.

The Interview

You will be interviewed by a panel of 3 lawyers. The aim of the process is to see if you can demonstrate the competencies required and your legal knowledge will also be tested. There are no trick questions. We want to give you every opportunity to evidence your potential.

The presentation

At the start of the interview you will normally be asked to deliver a 5 minute pre-prepared presentation. You will be advised in advance of the topic of the presentation.

You can use prompt cards – this is not a test of memory. But do not use PowerPoint or provide handouts to the interviewers.

In preparing for the presentation, think carefully about the topic you've been set, what you will say and how to structure the presentation. Candidates can find it difficult to keep to 5 minutes, so we strongly recommend practising. You don't want your strong and positive finish to be cut short because you have run out of time.

You might also want to ask for feedback from someone whose opinion you trust. You will be asked follow-up questions to test how well you have understood the topic.

The competency based questions

After the presentation, you will be asked questions to test the competencies and your legal knowledge. The questions have been designed to tell us more about specific relevant abilities and we will be looking to you to give examples of your past experience. You may take in some brief notes with you as a memory aide. Whilst brief prompts/memory aides/bullet points may be used, you should not be attempting to read fully scripted answers.

Preparation

see the hints and tips section above remembering of course that at interview, we are only testing the competencies. Come along having thought about experiences and achievements in your personal life, university or work meet the competencies – what aspects will allow you to show the panel how well you fit the competencies? We want to discuss these with you and will ask you some questions to elicit lots of detail about them, so the ones you choose to share should be quite detailed. Be familiar with the competencies and the key indicators.

Here are some further points which might be helpful to know in advance of the interview:

- The interviewers will be writing as you are speaking to note down as much of the evidence you are providing. It can be distracting as you may not always make eye contact with the interviewers.
- Listen to the question and ask if you are unclear what is being asked.
- You will normally be asked follow up questions. This may be because the interviewer is trying to clarify a particular point or gain more information to help them assess your answer against the competencies. They are trying to help you meet the criteria. Again, listen carefully to any follow up questions.
- You can use an example you used in your application form.
- Be structured and focused. You have more scope to provide detail than you did in the application form but you don't have unlimited time. **STARR** is one commonly used model that can help you present your answer.
- There are many resources online on competency based questions including example questions that can be useful.
- If possible, try and arrange a mock interview through your university careers service or a mentor.
- Very few people enjoy interview! The panel know this and will try and put you at ease. Please try and relax and be yourself.

What else can you do to prepare?

- You may find it helpful to spend some time finding out about the Civil Service, Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and UK Government.
- Take time to reflect on why you have applied for the GLSS Traineeship.