



# Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice Program

**WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE SUPERVISORS' GUIDE**

2026

# A Message from the Program Lead

Thank you for agreeing to act as a Supervisor for a student in our Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (GDLP) program.

We view this opportunity to collaborate with the profession as essential, valuable and the best sort of partnership, one focused on supporting the development of future generations of outstanding lawyers. We cannot do what we do without you and, we are sincerely grateful for and appreciative of your contribution.

As a Workplace Experience Supervisor, you will play a formative role in the professional legal career of the student.

The following document explains your role and responsibilities as a Supervisor.

Thank you for your support of our GDLP Program and our students. We hope you enjoy your time in your supervisory and mentoring role.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [GDLP@bond.edu.au](mailto:GDLP@bond.edu.au) if you have any questions or feedback.

Yours sincerely,

Tom O'Sullivan  
**GDLP Program Lead**  
Faculty of Law  
Bond University



# OVERVIEW OF THE GDLP PROGRAM

Bond University's, Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (GDLP) is a practical legal training program offered at a postgraduate level.

The GDLP meets the Law Admissions Consultative Committee's, *Practical Legal Training Competency Standard for Entry-Level Lawyers*, and has been accredited by the Legal Profession Admission Board of Queensland.

On successfully completing the GDLP, students are eligible to apply for admission to legal practice in the Supreme Court of Queensland (and other states and Territories on compliance with mutual recognition legislation).

The GDLP consists of two components:

1. Coursework, and
2. Workplace Experience (also called "placement").

## COURSEWORK

Students complete the coursework component of the GDLP online.

The program commences with a compulsory five-day *Introduction to Skills for Practice Workshop*, which includes self-directed learning tasks.

Students then complete coursework subjects that address the required competencies relating to:

- Practical Legal Skills
- Compulsory Practice Areas
- Elective Practice Areas
- Values consisting of Ethics and Professional Responsibility, and
- Resilience and Wellbeing.

All students complete the same assessments and achieve the same learning outcomes for the subjects they enrol in.

For more information about the GDLP, see: <https://bond.edu.au/program/graduate-diploma-legal-practice-online>.

## WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

Students are also required to complete 60 days of Workplace Experience during the GDLP. This involves a supervised paid or unpaid placement in a legal office, or a law-related work environment, that may include legal work for:

- a law firm or a solicitor in private practice;
- a barrister;
- a judge as a judge's associate;
- a Tribunal;
- a government department or semi-government organisation;
- a corporate or in-house legal department;
- a Community Legal Centre; or
- any other approved legal office.

The student has nominated their placement at your organisation as meeting this requirement.



The purpose of the workplace experience is to provide students with:

- experience in the practice of law in a workplace;
- an opportunity to apply/gain/enhance lawyers' skills required for legal practice; and
- an opportunity to reflect on the GDLP coursework in a practical setting.

## SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS

To be approved as a supervisor, you must:

- either:
  - have held a practicing certificate as a legal practitioner for at least the last 2 years, or
  - hold comparable relevant qualifications or experience (eg Judges or Tribunal members, lawyers employed in government legal departments, and barristers), and
- be fit to practice, and not be the subject of any adverse finding under the law governing the legal profession in any Australian or overseas jurisdiction (or, if so, you make full disclosure to the Faculty of Law for further consideration), and
- not concurrently supervise more than two students undertaking workplace experience, unless approved.

## WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE DURATION

Students must complete 60 days of Workplace Experience to satisfy the requirements of the GDLP program. Many students may have one placement lasting more than 60 days (which we encourage) or they may have multiple placements.

A minimum of 15 placement days must be completed within Australia following the student's commencement of the GDLP.

If approved by the Faculty of Law, a student may be able to reduce the length of their placement, but not below the minimum requirement of 15 days in Australia, for relevant workplace experience completed by the student before they started their GDLP. A student will inform you if they have obtained such approval.

In calculating the duration of the placement, the following applies:

- Public holidays, weekends, personal or other leave days, or meal breaks, cannot be included in the calculation of days or working hours.
- One (1) day comprises a maximum of 7 working hours. If more than 7 hours are worked by a student on a particular day, the student must not count the excess hours towards the duration of their placement.
- Workplace experience may be undertaken on a part-time basis if it is undertaken not less than 2 full days per week or 4 x 4-hour sessions per week.

Work-from-home arrangements are only permitted if your organisation is offering the student a paid placement and where you implement adequate supervision arrangements for the student. Remote work is not permitted for unpaid placements as it is not covered by insurance.

## WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE APPROVALS

Students are required to obtain approval from the Faculty of Law before commencing their placement with your organisation.

For unpaid placements, we require students to apply for approval from the Faculty at least 5 days before commencing to allow for appropriate insurance to be arranged.

Students are also required to obtain approval from the Faculty before any substantial changes are made to their placement, such as:

- a change of supervisor within your organisation,
- a significant change of duties or tasks during the student's placement, or
- if the placement is unpaid - any changes are made to the placement start or end dates, or to the placement location, as this requires a change to the insurance arrangements.

## WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE – YOUR ROLE AS A SUPERVISOR

Students should be exposed to a range of legal skills and transactions while they are working with you. As a guide, this could include:

- Observation of experienced practitioners in several different practice areas.
- Interacting with practicing lawyers, other staff, government officers and clients.
- Observation of the practices and procedures of a law or law-related environment.
- An opportunity to apply and/or observe the following practical legal skills:
  - Generating legal solutions and strategies
  - Communication, including cross-cultural awareness
  - Interviewing clients
  - Analysing law and providing legal advice
  - Analysing facts and identifying issues
  - Representing a client
  - Drafting documents
  - Letter writing
  - Keeping clients informed
  - Managing risk and managing files
  - Managing personal time, self-management and working cooperatively
  - Negotiating settlements and agreements and facilitating the early resolution of disputes

## THE STUDENT'S ROLE

We expect GDLP program students to demonstrate professional behaviour at all times while following your instructions, precedents, policies and procedures. Please contact the Faculty of Law (at [GDLP@bond.edu.au](mailto:GDLP@bond.edu.au)) as soon as possible if you have any concerns about the student's performance, conduct, engagement, or suitability to continue their placement with your organisation. The University will assess concerns raised and provide guidance, support, or intervention as required.

Students are advised to use their workplace experience with your organisation as a learning opportunity, to ask questions, and to 'have a go' (that is, not be afraid to make mistakes and to receive and learn from any constructive feedback provided).

Every effort has been made by Bond University to support, guide and instruct the students not only in substantive law but also in practice and procedure. There may, however, be aspects of the work environment and your practice about which the student is unfamiliar and which will need your instruction and support.

## SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR YOU AS A SUPERVISOR

**First Day** - provide an overview of your practices, procedures (including office policies and manuals), types of work undertaken and clients, and outline clearly your expectations.

**Facilities** - provide the student with a workspace and equipment that supports them in working effectively and efficiently to complete the work assigned.

**Consult** - with and help the student plan their activities from the beginning of each task/ transaction.

**Shadow** - where appropriate take students with you to client meetings, court, interviews, negotiations, etc, and discuss the outcomes with them following the event.

**Monitor** - the progress of the work undertaken by the student. We recommend that you arrange a fixed daily or weekly meeting time.

**Encourage** - the student to consult with you (or an appropriate person where you are not available) as they may be reluctant to interrupt your busy day. Also encourage them to ask relevant questions and seek assistance when needed.

**Feedback** - provide regular feedback to the student on their performance (preferably face-to-face) on what they have done well and what they need to improve on.

**Contact** - the GDLP Program Lead at Bond University (at [GDLP@bond.edu.au](mailto:GDLP@bond.edu.au)) if you have any questions or feedback about the student or the GDLP program.

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For further guidance about supervision arrangements, please refer to the Faculty of Law's, [\*\*GDLP Workplace Experience Protocol\*\*](#).

We also encourage you to contact the Faculty (at [GDLP@bond.edu.au](mailto:GDLP@bond.edu.au)) if you have any questions while the student is on placement with your organisation or your role as a supervisor.

Thank you again for agreeing to supervise a Bond GDLP student.

We appreciate the time and effort involved.

We hope that you and/or your organisation benefit from this experience with the student.

**Bond University**

Gold Coast Queensland 4226

Australia

+61 7 5595 000

[bond.edu.au](mailto:bond.edu.au)

The information published in this document is correct at the time of publishing. However, all programs are subject to review by the Academic Senate of the University and the University reserves the right to change its program offerings and subjects without notice. The information published in this document is intended as a guide and persons considering an offer of enrolment should contact the relevant Faculty or Institute to see if any changes have been made before deciding to accept their offer.

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