

We are looking for individuals who can bring imagination, energy and passion to pursuing a career in law with us. Applications are open for our summer internships 2016 and for traineeships 2018. The deadline for applications is fast approaching.

In the first of a short series of insights into life as a trainee solicitor, Lois Craig second year trainee at Ledingham Chalmers shares her thoughts on getting to grips with business, commercial, financial and practice awareness.

‘Commercial awareness’ is a term that seems to appear in every legal internship or traineeship application. But what does it really mean? On the face of it it’s really rather vague. When I first applied for internships I thought it must be something to do with watching or reading the news, probably the business section. To an extent that’s true, but, as I have found out over the past 18 months, there is a lot more to it.

The first thing I learnt was how much the news can impact on our clients who will expect their lawyer to provide advice in the context of the market in which they operate. Knowing and understanding their market and what is happening within it will colour your advice. Advice needs to work in practice, balancing the applicable law with your knowledge of the client’s business and risks faced.

Starting to build a commercial awareness is something which can take time; my advice is start early on! Keep on top of the news, both local and further afield. Law magazines and Scottish Legal News can be a good source for showing how business news interconnects with the legal. Start considering how current affairs could affect a business and decisions taken by it. Seek out work experience to gain an insight into how businesses are run day to day. All work experience, whether it has a legal aspect or not, will contribute to your commercial awareness and this will show through in your applications and interviews.

As a corporate trainee, building a commercial awareness is something which I continue to develop. Every Monday, I research both local and international business news and present this to the corporate team. We all need to be aware of how current affairs, for example the recent low oil price, can impact on our clients’ business. Developing a commercial awareness is crucial to providing good quality advice and is something which you will build on throughout your career.

**To find out more about our training opportunities please contact [nan.mcpherson@ledinghamchalmers.com](mailto:nan.mcpherson@ledinghamchalmers.com)**