



Summer Clerk Testimonials

by Sarah Rizk

When beginning the task of applying for clerkship positions, a few important considerations came to mind, namely a firm which values integrity, respect, honesty and team collaboration. In particular, it was personally important that clients receive not only the best legal result possible, but are treated with care and respect throughout the legal process – an assurance on which Harmers consistently delivers.

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From the moment I arrived at Harmers, I knew that it would be a great place to work. On first impressions, Harmers came across as a fresh, committed and dynamic firm. During the interview process, it was clear that they were not looking for the resume, but the person behind it. Harmers, as employment law specialists, do not provide rotations like other law firms. Initially, I was unsure about the depth of legal experience I will be exposed to. As it turned out, however, employment law encompasses a wide spectrum of disciplines and an interesting mix of contract, corporate, tort, administrative and deceptive trade law. It is this kind of diversity which kept the work innovative and fascinating.

My fellow clerks came from a wide variety of universities across the state, each with distinct talent and abilities, but all with a mutual enthusiasm. Each clerk was assigned to a buddy, who provided constructive criticism of their work and facilitated the learning process. As a group, we were taken through an intensive induction course which equipped us with ongoing training and necessary practical skills. This covered a range of training schemes, from basic library systems to extensive inductions on practice management and career progression. The culture at Harmers was incredibly down-to-earth, positive and utterly supportive. I was very pleased with the large amount of interaction I was able to have with solicitors, senior associates and partners. More importantly, Harmers offered tremendous work flexibility when dealing with family commitments. It clearly stands out as a firm who not only puts its clients first, but also its staff. In my opinion, the amount of assistance and genuine consideration offered from all levels of the firm was both encouraging and refreshing. Everyone I met appeared to be honestly concerned in ensuring I reached my maximum potential, whether that involved briefing me on matters or inviting me to sit in on a teleconference.

Throughout my time at Harmers I was frequently challenged, regularly worked individually, and became a functional team player. Essentially, each day of the clerkship offered an assorted mix of activities. I undertook tasks which directly contributed to important matters, such as creating research memorandums ranging from random alcohol testing in the workforce to age discrimination, drafting documents, writing a piece to be used for a firm publication, attending a Supreme Court hearing and reviewing employment contracts. We also visited the client’s warehouse to appreciate the intricacy and multidimensional nature of a large logistics depot and the need to implement coherent safety policies. Also, I attended weekly “Full Firm” meetings which provided an opportunity for all staff members to actively participate in decision making. It was also a forum to discuss the current hot topics and learn what my fellow colleagues were working on.

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The social occasions were endless and included the firm Christmas party, Friday night drinks, morning teas, the inter-firm basketball competition, trivia night and it was wrapped up with a wonderful final lunch.

Overall, my experience at Harmers was invaluable and a fantastic way to gain insight into the legal world. In a practical sense, I picked up an array of skills which are critically important for the future. A supportive atmosphere coupled with high quality work provided a wonderfully rounded working environment. It is this work ethic gained from Harmers that will help me make the transition from a law student to a successful client-focused solicitor.