

MENTOR SPEAKS

Mentor Speaks is a series where we post actual email communications between our mentors and mentees. Going through these communications will give law students an insight and allow everyone to benefit from the guidance of our mentors. The following conversation occurred between a mentee in their 3rd year seeking guidance for general internship tips and some specific tips for exploring TMT practice area.

Mentor: Associate at Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas ('SAM')

Mentee: 3rd year student interested in TMT

NOTE: The following is an excerpt from their email communications. Some details have been removed to ensure confidentiality.

Q & A Session

What are the practical skills that would help a law student perform better in internships and reflect to a recruiter in the future, beyond the basics of research and drafting?

This is likely to depend on the type of internships/jobs you're looking to do. However, some that will be almost universally beneficial are:

1. **Research and case briefs** - Being able to condense cases/Mondaq articles/government reports into something that can be consumed in 5 min is a great skill. A good way to learn at your level is to do them for your coursework. It may/may not be helpful eventually for your exams, but will certainly help you professionally.
2. **MS Word** - in particular formatting and marking up redline documents - there are specialised courses you can take, but experience and a few helpful sessions with someone who knows this themselves works better in my opinion.
3. **Document Review** - to be able to go through documents and review them for factual and legal inaccuracies (content edit), as well as language, consistency and formatting (copy edit) is a staple. Two good ways to pick this up is to either get to the editorial board of one of your university's journals, and/or review papers/projects that your juniors write. It'll help you hone your own skills, and pass on the good karma.

What kinds of co-curricular activities would you suggest I explore, and how important each of those would be (moots, publications, arbitration and mediation competitions etc.).

I think you can bunch co-curricular into two categories –

- (i) targeted towards securing recruitment opportunities, and
- (ii) for growing as a prospective lawyer and fully experiencing your education.

Ones that I'd include in the two above mentioned categories:

- (i) **Recruitment:** academic writing in your targeted field (such as tech law), moot courts, editorial positions, and research fellowships (such as the one run by SpicyIP)
- (ii) **Personal growth:** include basically every other law school activity. Quizzing, debating, ADR Competitions (negotiation and mediation require rather different skill sets), specific competitions that keep coming up, such as judgment writing competitions, treaty negotiations, contract drafting and the like.

It makes sense to have at least one good performance in (i). Beyond that, whatever you can manage. The more the better, obviously. For (ii), though, go for as many as your schedule and resources allow. Even if you aren't able to do tremendously well, the experience will be well worth it, and it may help you discover skills and interests that you did not know you have.

MENTEE: 1st Batch/ Interested in TMT

I belong to the first batch in my university, and the Placement Cell is quite inactive. We have no clue what to expect if and when we have placement drives. When should I start worrying about getting a job or PPO, and how do I work towards that?

[The recruitment process has been discussed separately]

If you are indeed the first batch, a lot depends on how you take it forward, even for future batches. For timelines - if you have figured out for sure where you would want to end up (say firm, lawyer's chamber, think tank, in-house etc.) you can strategize your internships and start looking for opportunities from 4th year onwards. If you would still prefer to explore, it would be ideal to have the choice locked in by the end of your fourth year. Since your placement cell is nascent, you will likely need to rely on off-campus opportunities if you hope to leave college with a job.

Note that most organisations/lawyers will prefer to know you well before they start handing out PPOs, so a second internship is highly recommended if you believe the place is some place you can see yourself working. This is also easier to obtain than a straight up job offer, which is something you can work towards in your second internship. However, I'd recommend you putting some thought into this.

As we discussed last time around, I want to explore technology law while making sure I do not shut out opportunities in other areas of law. How would you suggest I should be planning my remaining internships for the next couple of years?

Your strategy seemed fine at your level. I would say you keep the next two months or so to consume content, i.e. keep abreast with new developments in the field, understand the fundamentals of electronic contracts, intermediary liability, personal and non-personal data, consent models, online offences and the like. Once you have some background, you can work towards *creating* content. This could be blog posts, research papers etc.