



Victoria Steele and Rachel Jones

## Hill Hofstetter LLP

In 2014, Birmingham Law School and Alumni Relations partnered with Hill Hofstetter Limited to offer two students a 3 month internship. Rachel Jones and Victoria Steele were selected from a very competitive field.

### The Interns

#### Victoria:

*Undertaking a placement is invaluable because only by gaining relevant practical experience can you truly understand what working in a legal environment is really like. A placement helps you to apply your transferable skills in the workplace and identify any skills that are in need of improvement. I think there is only so much you can learn from a lecture and undertaking a placement helps you to put your learning into perspective.*

*One of the more challenging aspects of my internship was learning to prioritise work effectively. Sometimes I would be given several tasks by different associates and partners and would be expected to balance all of these, completing them by various deadlines.*

*Every now and then the volume of work that I was given was quite overwhelming but this taught me a lot about managing expectations and being able to plan ahead. Having this amount of responsibility has been a character building experience and I feel that it will have a positive impact in the future on my ability to prioritise work and be productive.*

*Being fully immersed into the working environment has allowed me to gain an insight into what life as a trainee solicitor is likely to involve which has included working late on a number of occasions as well as working at the weekend. Although most people would be unhappy at working during the weekend, I liked being deeply involved in particular client matters and I really appreciated that the associates and partners relied on me to help them meet deadlines.*

*My internship has enhanced a multitude of my skills. I have worked both independently and in a team environment meaning that I can competently complete work individually and collectively as a team member.*

*I would definitely say that this internship has reinforced my career choice as I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Hill Hofstetter.*

**Rachel:**

*Working in a law firm for 3 months gives you invaluable exposure to genuine work. This type of placement gives students the opportunity to see matters through the various stages of the litigation process. The different tasks and activities you are required to undertake provide a wide range of examples to draw on in interviews, demonstrating prospective employers that they are experienced and are driven to pursue a career in the law.*

*As a paralegal at Hill Hofstetter, I worked in the Litigation department alongside two others to support the fee earners in the department with any administrative or legal task necessary. I was responsible for compiling court bundles and keeping up to date with the filing on various matters. I also attended meetings with clients and fee earners where I was required to take notes and write up minutes. I was also given my own projects to work on, including researching an intellectual property matter for a client and eventually writing and sending out cease and desist letters on behalf of a partner.*

*I really enjoyed the varied nature of the work that I was involved in. No two matters were the same and this meant that I learnt a great deal during my time at the firm. Litigation was an area of the law that I was not familiar with and so I had a lot to learn about the processes and the way that a contentious department works on a day to day basis.*

*I have developed and improved upon many skills during my time at Hill Hofstetter, including: teamwork; legal writing; research; patience; attention to detail; business development; and time management. I am confident that these skills will help me to gain further experience in the future and eventually secure a training contract.*

*I would like to gain more experience as a paralegal, meanwhile looking for a training contract as a solicitor. I came to this decision because I was able to work closely with solicitors who were something of an inspiration to me. My colleagues were very supportive of me and the work I was doing. I was able to get career advice from those who had been through the qualification process.*

## Hill Hofstetter

### Ann Benzimra, Partner

Ann is a Birmingham University Graduate and has worked with the University for a number of years.

“Hosting internships gives our firm access to law graduates and potential graduates at an early stage, as well as gaining paralegal help. The standard of applications was excellent and we were able to select from a pool of bright candidates.

Work experience placements allow recruiters to assess candidates and understand the quality of candidates out there.

For the student intern, the benefit is learning what it is really like to work in the law and how to interact with people, gaining a range of experience and providing genuine administrative support. It also helps them to decide on their end goals and refine their career path.

We look for candidates who are hard-working, logical, and able to interact with people and we would advise students to demonstrate enthusiasm and approach things with an open mind. As Vicky and Rachel described, the experience was invaluable to them in improving their skills, career focus, sector knowledge and commercial understanding.”

## **Success**

Following the completion of the internships, Hill Hofstetter are pleased to confirm that Rachel has been successful at gaining a position within hH as a paralegal this year. Hill Hofstetter is delighted to be able to provide this position to a law graduate. The internship provided the firm with an opportunity to test Rachel's skills and ability in advance of applying for a paralegal position as well as allowing Rachel to gauge whether becoming a paralegal is something that she would enjoy. Hill Hofstetter look forward to welcoming this year's student interns into the business.