

CV and Interview preparation

Guide on technical skills needed in the Legal Career



What are technical skills?

Technical skills are the specialized knowledge and expertise required to perform specific tasks and use specific tools and programs in real world situations. Diverse technical skills are required in just about every field and industry, from IT and business administration to health care and education.

In fact, many entry-level positions across industries require basic technical skills, such as cloud computing in Google Drive and navigating social media platforms. Examples of more advanced technical skills that a job might require include programming languages, technical writing, or data analysis.

Technical skills, sometimes referred to as hard skills, that your resume/cv should always show the practical knowledge you use in order to complete tasks.

This guide will help you with the technical skills companies are expecting to see listed on your resume/cv based on the career field you are applying for.



What is the Legal field?

A career in law offers the opportunity to explore our society and one's place in it. It can provide a valuable perspective that is both challenging and fulfilling. The study of law can be rewarding, intellectually stimulating and immensely satisfying.

Law graduates have a variety of career options open to them, though not all are in the legal profession. Jobs exist for those with skills in business, diplomacy, human rights law, environmental law, health law and intellectual property law.

One can also become an academic or work as a tradesperson or in public administration for example.

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Possible Careers

Company secretary/Legal secretary

You'll be responsible for ensuring that an organisation complies with standard financial and legal practice and maintains high standards of corporate governance.

It's your job to ensure the office runs smoothly by providing administrative support to solicitors and legal executives. You'll produce wills and contracts, accompany solicitors to court or police stations or deal with clients.

Lecturer of law

You can use your law degree and experience in the field to teach law at further or higher education level. This will involve additional study to qualify as a teacher or lecturer where you'll plan lessons, research new topics, take classes explaining the complexities of the legal system, monitor and assess students work and set and mark exams among other duties.

Mediator

It's your job to establish and maintain civil relationships between conflicting parties, solving any disputes with efficiency, tact and patience.

Mediation specialists are impartial third parties who work with a range of people, such as divorcing couples, separated parents and landlords and tenants. Tasks include meeting clients, finding ways to work through their conflicts and involving legal authorities in cases where mediation isn't working.

Paralegal

You can offer legal services but aren't qualified as a solicitor, barrister or chartered legal executive.

Paralegals don't just work for solicitors, but if they do then larger firms expect solid work experience, especially if you haven't completed a law degree. You'll also need an understanding of the client and sector, good people and networking skills, to be a methodical problem solver and the ability to analyse information and look at possible implications.

Attorney

Attorneys handle a large variety of affairs for individuals, companies and associations. There are attorneys who specialise in either commercial or criminal cases, or who focus on litigation, estate planning or tax-related matters. By taking further examinations, an attorney may qualify as a conveyancer and/or public notary.

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General skills needed

General hard skills you may need

Hard skills are those that can be easily defined, taught, and measured. They are necessary to be able to perform your job

- writing and drafting
- negotiation and early dispute resolution
- representing clients in court
- problem solving
- managing risks for clients
- Information analysis and research
- Legal understanding
- Account Management
- Assessing Claims
- Client Relations and Support
- Commercial Awareness
- Content Creation
- Developing Arguments
- Due Diligence Activities
- Event Management
- Legal Document Drafting & Review
- Legal Research & Analysis

General soft skills

Soft skills are related to how you work and interact with your colleagues, clients, or partners. They are related to your personality and they are not necessarily tied to one specific job.

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Ambitious, dedicated and disciplined
- Impeccably honest
- Problem-solving
- Able to handle stress and pressure
- Able to resolve any crisis
- Able to elicit trust and respect from clients and colleagues
- Exceptional communication skills, both in speech and in writing
- Can explain difficult legal concepts in easy terms
- Well-developed sense of fairness and justice
- Willingness to serve people
- The ability to work under pressure

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☰ CV examples

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Focused Legal Secretary with solid administrative support background. Pays attention to details as well as considering larger picture when managing court filing procedures and deadlines.

WORK HISTORY

MARCH 2017 - CURRENT

Legal Secretary | *Novis Associates Pllc* | Austin, TX

- Assisted attorneys in collecting information such as employment, medical and other records.
- Conducted daily accounting on all finances, deposits and safe.
- Diligently edited legal correspondence for grammar and spelling.

APRIL 2013 - JANUARY 2017

Legal Support Team Member | *Branch Law Firm* | Great Falls, TX

- Conferred with clients and other involved parties to gather and track case information.
- Attended depositions and court proceedings and prepared summaries on cases.
- Provided assistance on compliance projects leading to a 14% increase in case success.

JUNE 2010 - JANUARY 2011

Office Intern | *Carson Bank* | Austin, TX

- Completed clerical tasks such as filing, copying and distributing mail.
- Answered high volume, multi-line phone promptly and courteously.
- Sorted and organized materials such as physical files, tracking spreadsheets and reports.

SKILLS

- Legal Trek proficient
- Efficient multi-tasker
- Document filing
- Spreadsheets
- Editing and proofreading
- Legal coding
- Executive calendars
- Administrative support

EDUCATION

Associate of Science: Paralegal Studies
Austin Business College, Austin, TX

Objective

Highly qualified Legal Intern with experience in the industry. Enjoy creative problem solving and getting exposure on multiple projects, and I would excel in the collaborative environment on which your company prides itself.

Skills

Software: MS Office - Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Outlook; Photoshop.

Work Experience

Legal Intern

ABC Corporation - May 2004 - August 2004

- Responsible for all facets of case management for a caseload of approximately 75 misdemeanors.
- Duties included client contact, all in-court appearances, motions and memorandum, investigation and communications with the State.
- Responsible for all bail hearings, both misdemeanor and felony.
- Represented the agency in a variety of in-court appearances, including status hearings, trial calls and changes of plea.
- Argued and won a misdemeanor case as a matter of law, on an issue previously undecided in the State of Alaska.
- During that process, was unassisted in all phases of the trial.
- Assisted in numerous other trials, duties to include motions in limine, jury selection and opening statements.

Legal Intern

ABC Corporation - 2002 - 2004

- Assisted in preparing cases for trial in federal and state court involving claims of false arrest, malicious prosecution, medical indifference, and excessive police force under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
- Assisted in preparing cases for trial in federal court involving claims such as consumer misrepresentation, false advertising, and product liability under various state statutes.
- Conducted supervised client interviews.
- Conducted document review.
- Researched federal and New York civil rights law.
- Drafted memoranda, summons and complaints, and composed settlement letters..

Education

Juris Doctor - (BENJAMIN N. CARDOZO SCHOOL OF LAW - New York, NY)



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Questions which are helpful to prepare

There would be a mix of standard behavioral questions and technical questions to assess your skills and where you would be most utilized within the company during your internship.

1. Why choose a career in law?
2. What do you know about our firm?
3. How would you make yourself stand out as a trainee?
4. If you could bring any law into force what would it be and why?
5. Give an example of a time you used your ability to negotiate.
6. Give an example of a time you dealt with conflict and how you resolved this.
7. How would you work with a difficult client or court member?
8. How do you hope to serve your clients and the community?
9. What can you bring to the firm?
10. What areas of law interest you the most?
11. Describe a group project where you were in charge and had to deal with a difficult team member.
12. Describe a situation when you were unexpectedly put in a leadership role. What was the result or outcome?

Remember, that this is an internship, and if there are things you are unsure of – that is completely okay! This is a learning experience and your supervisor is there to support you. Be sure to be honest and transparent regarding your skills and capabilities.