

A guide to writing a successful application

A great application is

open, honest & engaging



Freshfields

Successful job applications

Applicants always outnumber available places at Freshfields. So how can you maximise your chances of being shortlisted for that all-important interview?

Perhaps the best piece of advice is to remember that it's a real person reading your application. They have only your words to tell them everything they need to know. Your application must be engaging but clearly explain why you are a great candidate and why Freshfields is your firm of choice.



An application which stands out is one that covers more than just your academic achievements. Be

open, honest & engaging

It shows that you have thought about what we and our clients need and that you have the potential to be a great trainee.

Andrew Austin

Graduate recruitment partner



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Why law?

You should have a clear idea of why you want to work at a firm like Freshfields.

You're spending time applying for what will be a challenging job, so you may well already have a very good reason why a career in commercial law appeals to you. Your application will be much stronger if you make this reason clear.

Think extra hard about why you want to be a commercial lawyer. When addressing this point in your application, avoid saying things like 'I enjoy being challenged' or 'I find the law interesting'. Instead say why legal work will stimulate you and what your longer-term career ambitions are.

When it comes to showing your knowledge of Freshfields, include something about the firm only if it genuinely supports a point you're making.

We already know all the facts and figures from our website – it's much more interesting for us to read about why Freshfields appeals to you. Perhaps it's because you want to join an international firm like ours. Or maybe you've heard good things about us from an existing trainee. Be as specific as you can.



Make it clear why our work interests you – and why you are interested in Freshfields.

What am I being asked for?

Application forms aren't all the same.

What we ask for may differ from what other firms request, so make sure you have done some research and have your personal and professional information on hand before you start writing.

We ask for 850 words on your activities during university, your work experience and your reasons for applying. The fluency of your application is really important so avoid pasting a bullet-point extract from your CV.

Avoid repetition. You only have a limited number of words, so don't say the same thing twice. Applicants sometimes tell us their name and the name of their university, but we already know this from the personal information section. Make every word count.

Tailor the information to the firm and don't repeat anything.



How should I write?

We read a lot of application forms.
Help us by writing in a style that's
simple and direct, but still distinctive.

This means avoiding cliché.

Do not, for instance, talk about 'honing' your analytical skills. Avoid 'relishing' the chance to work on 'cutting-edge, high-profile deals'. Find some meaningful words of your own.

And keep your sentences short. Long sentences can be difficult to follow and can make it harder to understand the point you're trying to make.

Tone is extremely important. Don't be too informal – or deferential. We want your writing to reflect who you are.

Finally, structure what you say. Put what's most important first. Use headings if that helps and don't forget paragraphs.

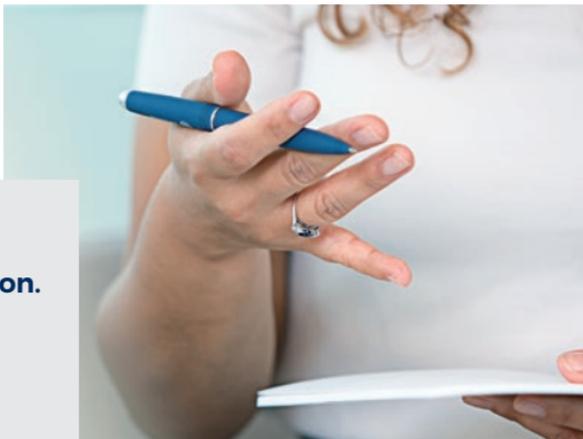
Check for mistakes

The work our lawyers produce has to be spot on. So it doesn't look good if the first document you write for us has errors in it.

Make sure you submit a form that reflects you in the best possible light. Spelling mistakes are common, particularly towards the end when you may be in more of a rush.

So read out what you've written, edit it and edit it again. Then get someone else to read it and make suggestions.

**Ask someone
else to check
your application.**



How should I pitch myself?

You need to strike the right balance between modesty and self-assurance.

If you state that your ability to speak fluent Portuguese, for example, will be ‘an invaluable asset’, a recruiter could conclude that you lack humility and/or common sense – both of which you will need if you work for a law firm like Freshfields.

If you are going to claim an attribute, such as being a team player, you need to provide evidence – for example, you play football or sit on a committee at university.

To sell yourself properly, put in as much relevant information as possible. Include any legal work experience completed and any other relevant work you’ve done, even if unrelated to law.

If you have worked part-time outside of your studies, for example, that might tell us a lot about your sticking power and ability to work in teams.

Also, if your exam results one year weren’t what you were expecting, explain why – and say how you’ve tried to improve things. If we know the full picture, we can take this into consideration when reviewing your application.

Finally, tell us about your interests – what you do outside work and your studies. We want to know what makes you tick.

Provide evidence to back up your claims. And highlight your achievements, even if unrelated to the law.



Application dates 2017/18

London training contract

Winter

2 Oct 2017 – 4 Jan 2018

Summer

1 June 2018 – 17 July 2018

London/Asia training contract

2 Oct 2017 – 31 Jan 2018

Vacation scheme

2 Oct 2017 – 4 Jan 2018

For more information
about application eligibility,
please see our website.

Workshops

For details on our workshops
and two-day programmes, see
freshfields.com/ukgraduates.

Contact us

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP
65 Fleet Street
London
EC4Y 1HT

T +44 20 7785 5554

E ukgraduates@freshfields.com



freshfields.com/ukgraduates



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