



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

BSALO301A Assist in prioritising and planning activities in a legal practice

Release: 1

Modification History

Not Available

INTRODUCTION

This Unit covers assisting others (for example, Partner, Solicitor, Fee Earner, Human Resources Manager, External Client) to organise a legal schedule. This involves arranging appointments and other activities based upon court dates and required legislative timelines.

This unit can be assessed alone or in combination with other units making up a job role.

Element of Competency

Performance Criteria

Record file-related critical dates and times

- File related deadlines are identified
- File related deadlines are recorded according to a firm's policies and procedures

Make and record appointments on behalf of designated person

- Priorities of designated person/s are established and clarified in discussion
- Timelines for achievement of priorities are agreed and documented/recorded
- Appointments are arranged and/or re-arranged to a time or date which is more convenient for parties involved

Assist designated person/s to prepare for critical dates

- Records are checked daily for upcoming appointments and commitments
- Designated person/s are reminded of critical file dates
- Information meeting legislative requirements is prepared and distributed to the designated person/s prior to critical dates
- Timelines are monitored regularly in consultation with designated person

Follow up outcomes of meetings or other activities

- Appropriate follow up actions and activities are planned and organised in conjunction with designated person and relevant parties
- File notes are updated according to a firm's policies and procedures

RANGE OF VARIABLES

File related deadlines may include:

- court appearances
- settlement dates
- document lodgement cut off dates
- legislated timelines

Critical dates may include:

- court appearances
- court mentions
- property settlements
- meetings with clients
- travel arrangements
- meetings:
 - external
 - internal
- lodgement of documents
- settlement of accounts

Designated person may include:

- external client
- lawyer
- partner
- legal practice manager
- supervisor

The diary system may be:

- paper
- duplicate
- electronic
- networked

Records may include, but are not limited to:

- client's details may include:
 - name
 - telephone number
 - type of matter
- court details may include:
 - date
 - time
 - location
 - matter
- dates on which follow-up actions are occur may include:
 - progress report to client
 - property settlement
 - payment of fees

Appointments may be arranged:

- to meet legal matter requirements
- to meet court requirements

- to meet the need for consulting experts
 - in response to new/existing client enquiry/request
 - in response to continuing legal education requirements as designated by relevant Law Societies and Institutes
- Legislative requirements may relate to:
- relevant State/Territory/Commonwealth legislation – their legal process time and action requirements eg. required amount of time serving notice, timeline for submission/exchange of documents and/or monies, number and type of meetings required between parties.
 - Governing legal practice Acts in each State/Territory
 - the client and a firm (eg. Consumer Credit Code, Privacy Act, secrecy laws, Codes of Practice, Common Law and Statutory Duties of Care involving financial relationships)
 - schedule of fees and duties payable
 - employee-employer agreements and legislation
- Difficulties in meeting timelines may relate to:
- failure of other parties/agencies to produce required materials on time
 - court adjournments
 - variations to contracts
 - available resources
 - client needs
- File notes may be stored:
- in date order
 - on a file note spike
 - on the computer
 - paper based
 - electronically
 - with client file
 - on a checklist/form
- File notes may include:
- mode of attendance (eg. in person/telephone)
 - file concerned
 - people involved
 - date
 - time expended on matter
 - discussion notes
 - resulting activity, action outcome

EVIDENCE GUIDE

Critical aspects:

- an understanding of the responsibility involved in making arrangements for others is demonstrated
- diary entries are accurately transferred to duplicate if necessary
- interaction with other parties when making, confirming, and changing appointments is courteous and efficient
- appropriate information is given to clients
- non-disclosable information is not communicated and where any doubt exists as to the information's status it is not disclosed
- problems (such as double bookings or non-attendances) are solved promptly and satisfactorily using standard procedures
- all relevant details of appointments and file deadlines are diarised accurately and legibly
- activities, actions and outcomes are documented and time is recorded
- file/matter number is attached to all relevant documentation and filed appropriately
- legal consequences of not meeting critical timelines are understood eg. failing to give appropriate notice of impending trial
- records are kept up-to-date, legible, accurate and accessible according to a firm's policies and procedures
- diary records are checked regularly to ensure follow up occurs as required
- consideration is given to failure of diary system and need to check files, eg. backup system is understood and firm's policies and procedures are followed
- all work is conducted within accepted codes of conduct including those relating to: maintaining confidentiality, use of company property, duty of care, ethical behaviours, privacy, non-discriminatory practice, conflict of interests and compliance with reasonable direction

Resource implications:

The assessor must have access to appropriate documentation and resources normally found in the work environment and required to allow the job or task to be properly performed. These may include:

- appropriate legislation and regulations
- workplace manuals and reference materials such as company policy, procedural manuals and checklists
- sample legal diaries, hard-copy and electronic
- appropriate technology such as computers with relevant software

Consistency in performance:	This unit of competency will require evidence to be collected across a range of events, eg. dealing with different organisational requirements, and over a period of time to ensure that situational variables are consistently achieved.
Context of assessment:	Evidence of competency can be met in different situations, including: • on the job assessment • off the job assessment • placement in an enterprise • participation in a New Apprenticeship (traineeship) arrangement • use of a Practice Firm or simulated work environment • flexible delivery methods used by training providers to cater for distance education students • Recognition of Prior Learning, Recognition of Current Competencies (in skill areas where there has been no significant change to work practice in recent times). Evidence gathering methods may include: • workplace performance • role-play • simulation • projects/assignments • third party reports
Underpinning knowledge and skills	Knowledge • a firm's relevant software packages • a firm's administrative systems • a firm's policies and procedures for recording and informing designated person/s of critical file dates • file relevant to the matter • roles and responsibilities of those involved in the matter • contingency management • authorised 'signing parties' • security • confidentiality Skills • literacy: follows a firm's legal procedures; sequences writing with attention to organising principles of date, time, importance or file code according to organisation's requirements • numeracy: orders and compares sets of dates using simple everyday data; adheres to deadlines; accurate record keeping • communication: listens to clear sequenced instructions;

questions to clarify information; discusses and confirms requirements and priorities of others; listens to and notes individual preferences regarding arrangements for group activity; clarifies defined purposes and objectives to be achieved by working with others

- problem solving: negotiates task distribution with other members of the group; selects most efficient and appropriate times for appointments etc.
- technology
- organisational: plans and prioritises own and other's activities and time

KEY COMPETENCIES

Utilisation of the Key Competencies required in the performance of this unit

Communicating ideas and information	Collecting, analysing and organising information	Planning and organising activities	Working with others in a team	Using mathematical ideas and techniques	Solving problems	Using technology
2	2	2	2	1	2	2

Performance levels:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• carries out established processes • makes judgements of quality using given criteria	• manages processes • selects the criteria for the evaluation process	• establishes principles and processes • evaluates and reshapes processes • establishes criteria for evaluation of processes