

My First Month At Akin

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Starting your training contract is a mix of excitement and nerves. You've worked so hard to get here, but nothing quite prepares you for that first day in the office. Before I joined Akin, I had a lot of questions: What will the first day be like? Will I be thrown into complex work straight away? How does a trainee really fit into the team?

Now that I've completed my first month at Akin, here's an inside look at what you can expect.

Starting Out

The onboarding process at Akin was incredibly thorough and welcoming. From the moment I accepted my training contract, the graduate recruitment team stayed in touch. A few weeks before we started, we were told what to expect from our starting week, along with tips and FAQs for our first day.

When we arrived, the induction was comprehensive. We covered everything from IT systems training to talks from senior members of the firm about expectations and tips for trainees. HR also walked us through benefits and holiday booking. I felt like every detail was covered before we even sat at our desks.

One misconception I had was that I'd be expected to know everything from day one. In reality, Akin has a genuinely friendly culture where questions are encouraged. At the end of the day, asking shows you care about what you are doing and people appreciate that.

My top tip for day one? Get a good night's sleep. The first week is full of information, and you want to be fresh and ready to take it all in. Our cohort also met for coffee an hour before induction, which was a great way to break the ice and calm any nerves.

The Work

From the start, I was involved in meaningful work. In my first few weeks, I attended calls with international counsel and prepared notes on the impact of certain areas of international law for clients. I also carried out commercial research, which is particularly important in my competition seat, where we monitor high-profile deals and market trends. Responsibility came quickly, but at a pace I was comfortable with. Associates on the team have often checked in to see if I was happy to take on a task and always made sure I had the context I needed before starting. International exposure was a big part of my first month. I worked closely with colleagues in other jurisdictions and even joined a client call on my third day, a daunting but fantastic way to learn how senior lawyers communicate and advise.

Support & Development

One of the standout aspects of Akin is how approachable everyone is. It's a true open-door culture, and people are happy to answer questions or just have a chat when things are quieter. Feedback is consistent and constructive. Associates and counsel always respond to my work, whether that is with a quick "good job" or with detailed comments to help me improve. The firm also invests heavily in trainee development. We have an attorney development team that schedules monthly one-to-one catch-ups and runs sessions to build both technical knowledge and soft skills, which is a fantastic way to progress as a future lawyer.

Culture & Life at Akin

The team culture in my first seat has been friendly, open, and incredibly supportive. People take the time to explain the wider context of tasks so I can understand the bigger picture, and they check in to make sure I'm getting work I'm interested in without feeling overwhelmed. The social side is fantastic too. From puppies in the office for mental health awareness, to weekly team lunches and even a pasta-making class with other trainees, there's no shortage of opportunities to connect and unwind.

Final Thoughts

Looking back on my first month, I've realised that the biggest challenge wasn't the work—it was managing my own expectations. You're not expected to know everything on day one. My advice? Ask questions, stay curious, and don't be afraid to get involved. You'll be supported every step of the way.

