

blog post | 19 November 2015

PRIME candidates: How Totum is supporting social mobility in law

Helping to support students from less privileged backgrounds to access work experience in law.

We have been delighted to once again join CMS to help run a workshop for students spending a week at the firm as part of PRIME, an alliance of law firms and legal departments, which gives school-age students from less privileged backgrounds access to quality work experience in the legal sector.

Our involvement with CMS, and the PRIME initiative, started in 2013, when we worked with the firm (one of 23 founding members of PRIME) to develop a workshop for students designed to help them think about applying for jobs, interview skills and CV preparation.

This year's event followed a similar format, but this time in CMS's swish new central offices, located in Cannon Street. We started by doing a mock-interview where Totum's James Rosenthal and Georgia Girling did two interview scenarios – one for a 'good' interview and the other for a 'bad' one. Tim Skipper then asked the students what they thought of the interviews and welcomed feedback. The students were attentive and came back with interesting and in-depth comments. We could tell they were a smart bunch.

We then broke out into groups with each consultant (Tim, Georgia, James, Jessica Hill, Elizabeth Fletcher and I) taking a table each and going through some interview scenarios with students. My table was a mix of students, with one currently at St Andrews University, a student starting at Birmingham University next year and another who has just started his A Levels, and is looking to go and work for the UN. All were engaging and fun and impressively receptive to the constructive criticism given on their interview styles.

Tim then chose two pairs of students from the event to go to the front and perform an interview scenario in front of their colleagues – much like Georgia and James had done at the beginning of the session. We then invited feedback from their peers, as well as offering our own.

The session rounded up with us going through the CVs of the students, offering advice on format, content, and do's and don'ts, as well as a general Q&A on anything they wanted to know about the legal sector or applications. Being a recent LPC graduate, I was happy to share my experiences.

Students gave hugely positive feedback to the morning's session. And for us, it was a great opportunity to share our practical insights into best practice CV writing and interview skills. It is great to know that we have played our part in helping these students perform at their best in interviews and applications – and we wish them the very best of luck in building a bright future in the highly competitive legal sector.

We look forward to further working with the legal sector and PRIME to support their endeavours in supporting such students well into the future.

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