

KEY LEGAL SECRETARY SKILLS



Delivering Client Care

In today's competitive legal market, the relationship between clients and staff is more important than ever. Clients must feel confident that everyone handling their matter—not just the Lawyers, but the entire team—is competent, professional, and committed to providing a high standard of service. Legal Secretaries play a vital role in supporting this standard and in upholding the firm's reputation.

Legal Secretaries are often the first point of contact for clients, whether by phone, email, or in person. In many cases, they represent the firm when the Lawyer is unavailable. As such, the relationship that exists between a Lawyer and a client should also extend to the Legal Secretary. You are, in effect, an extension of the Lawyer and the wider legal team.

Your professionalism, communication skills, and responsiveness directly influence the client's perception of the firm. While it is the Solicitor's responsibility to provide legal advice and guide the client through available options, you play a crucial part in ensuring clients feel heard, informed, and supported.

Excellent client care goes beyond being polite and efficient. It involves understanding that many clients are facing unfamiliar or stressful situations and need clear, compassionate communication. Your ability to remain composed and courteous builds trust and helps put clients at ease from the outset.

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Consistency is key. Deliver the same high standard of service regardless of the client's background, the complexity of the matter, or external pressures. This approach not only supports positive outcomes for clients but also contributes to the long-term reputation and success of the firm.

At the start of each matter, a Client Care Letter should be issued. This document outlines essential information such as the name of the Solicitor handling the case and an estimate of costs. Your firm will have a template for this, which you may be responsible for personalising and sending.

Throughout the client relationship:

- Always remain professional and calm, even under pressure
- Provide clear, accurate information within your remit
- Show empathy and patience, especially when clients are distressed or frustrated
- Reassure clients by keeping them informed of progress or by confirming that their concerns have been passed to the appropriate person

Even if a problem arises that you cannot resolve directly, your communication can help reassure the client that it is being addressed.

Managing Expectations

Dealing with clients can be one of the most challenging aspects of legal practice. While many clients are appreciative and patient, others may be demanding, distressed, or difficult to satisfy. Some may have unrealistic expectations about timelines, outcomes, or costs. In more serious cases, dissatisfied clients might withhold payment, lodge complaints, or even pursue legal action if they believe they've been treated unfairly.

To manage this effectively:

- Always be honest and transparent
- Never make promises outside your authority or expertise
- Keep detailed records of all client communications—emails, letters, telephone calls, and meetings—with accurate dates and summaries. This documentation is vital in the event of disputes or misunderstandings

Growing with Experience

Client service is a skill that develops over time. The more experience you gain, the more confident you'll become in handling a range of client interactions. It is one of the most rewarding aspects of being a Legal Secretary—and one of the most significant ways you can make a meaningful impact within a legal practice.

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Understanding AI

ILSPA is committed to equipping you with both the traditional skills of your role and the knowledge needed to navigate the legal profession as it evolves. As technology continues to change the legal landscape, this dual approach ensures you are grounded in core competencies while also gaining an understanding of how emerging tools such as AI can support and enhance your work. Whether you join a firm that fully embraces AI-driven systems or one that adopts a more cautious approach, you'll be well-prepared to adapt, contribute and thrive.

The legal skills taught in our courses remain essential. These skills form the foundation of a Legal Secretary's role—ensuring you understand not just what to do, but why it's done that way. This knowledge allows you to check and validate AI-generated work with confidence, maintain accuracy, and perform tasks manually when needed. Whether you're working alongside AI or operating without it, our courses equip you with the practical expertise and understanding required to perform your duties to a professional standard in any legal environment.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to technology that allows computers or software to perform tasks that normally require human thinking. These tasks include understanding language, learning from data, making decisions, and solving problems.

AI is still in its early stages within the legal profession. While many tools are already available—offering benefits in speed, accuracy, and productivity, the adoption of AI varies widely across the industry. Some large international law firms are actively investing in AI-powered software to streamline tasks. Others, especially smaller high street firms, may be more cautious or slower to implement these tools due to cost, tradition or data security concerns.

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As a Legal Secretary, your experience with AI will depend on where you work. In some firms, you may use advanced tools like document automation or AI transcription daily. In others, you might not see these technologies yet. However, as AI becomes more reliable, affordable, and secure, it is expected to become a common part of legal work.

Legal Secretaries play a vital role in ensuring the smooth operation of legal offices, often managing a wide range of tasks that demand precision, efficiency, and confidentiality. AI can be a powerful assistant in this role. By reducing human errors, such as typos or missed details, it enhances the accuracy of important documents. It also takes over repetitive and time-consuming tasks like form-filling, drafting and scheduling. This increased efficiency empowers you and your firm to expand your capacity to support clients and legal matters.

It is important to understand that AI is not designed to replace people, but to support them and help them work more efficiently and effectively. In a legal environment, where attention to detail, critical thinking, and human judgement are essential, AI functions as a tool rather than a substitute for human expertise. When used appropriately, it can be a powerful assistant. AI enables Legal Secretaries and other legal professionals to produce high-quality work in less time, while responding to the increasing demands of modern legal practice.

AI Tools in Legal Firms

There is a wide range of AI-powered software designed to support administrative professionals in their day-to-day work. In the legal field, AI is gradually being integrated into the systems that Legal Secretaries commonly use. From document automation and smart email management to transcription services and scheduling assistants, these technologies are reshaping how legal support work is done.

We would like to introduce you to some of the AI tools currently being used, or soon to be adopted, in legal settings. While not every firm will use all these tools, being familiar with them will help you be prepared, adaptable, and confident in a changing workplace.

This is a preview of our course materials. For full access, enrol through our website [here](#).

A multiple-choice achievement test is included in this subject to assess overall knowledge and understanding.