

Looking for a law firm
where the Partner
knows your name? 🖋️



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Welcome to the
Duncan Cotterill
Grad Guide



Who is DC?

Duncan Cotterill is one of New Zealand's largest and most significant full-service law firms. With five offices nationwide, Duncan Cotterill supports startups, privately owned businesses, NFPs, corporates and individuals with their full suite of legal needs both in Aotearoa and internationally.

From employment and health & safety through to litigation, corporate & commercial, finance, property, trusts, family law and beyond, Duncan Cotterill is a heavyweight player with a boutique firm feel.



DC is:



A firm where work life's not your whole life

We take our work seriously, but we don't take ourselves too seriously. You can expect to show up and work hard in your workday on stimulating deals, but be able to clock off and have time for the hobbies and people that are important to you.



A firm where the partner knows your name

Right from day one you'll be collaborating closely with partners and clients.



A firm that works with cool clients and on big deals

Regardless of which team you choose, you'll be working with clients face-to-face. Our clients include well known national and international businesses, as well as a thriving private client practice.



A firm that takes you places

We've got alumni working in big firms in Australia, the UK and beyond. DC's international network provides a springboard for your career.



A firm where 'a welcoming environment' isn't just a saying

We're proud to be the 2025 Prosple Top Overall Law Graduate Employer.

Why work at Duncan Cotterill?

Work Environment

- **Supportive, Dynamic & Friendly:** A vibrant atmosphere prioritising your growth. You'll be working with world-class lawyers who are genuinely invested in your growth.
- **Regular Morning Teas:** From sausage rolls through to granola mornings & smoothie bowls, there's always something happening at DC.
- **Social Events:** Office social clubs are highly active, planning a range of fun activities from bowling nights and skiing through to charity events, team-building activities, and seasonal celebrations.
- **Weekly Newsletters:** Spearheaded by Graduates, the weekly Friday newsletter is a meme-packed extravaganza.

★ Perks and Benefits

- **Free Refreshments:** Enjoy free fruit, tea, biscuits, cheese & crackers and barista-quality coffee.
- **Active Sporting Teams:** Opportunities to participate in a range of sports organised by team members.
- **Access to Clearhead:** Our internal wellbeing resource & EAP Provider

Mentorship and Support

- **Buddy Mentorship Programme:** Pairing new Graduates with experienced buddies for guidance.
- **Regular Coffee Catch-ups & Check-ins:** Invaluable insights and professional support from lead partner or other lawyers through regular 1:1s and catchups.
- **Multiple Levels of Support:** From peers, colleagues, partners, and other professionals.

Career Development

- **Clear Career Progression:** Pathways and career development resources to achieve your professional goals.
 - Monthly Lunch and Learn Sessions
 - Regular Performance Reviews
 - Comprehensive Training Programmes: Tailored to individual needs, including in-house, external, and on-the-job training.
- **Specialisation and Global Opportunities:** Support for specialising in law or making your mark overseas.
- **Aspiring to Partnership:** Guidance and support to become a Partner.
- **Pro Bono Work:** Opportunities to contribute to charitable and community organisations.

Who we work with:



Practice Areas:

One of the perks of being a full service firm is being able to touch a wide variety of areas of the law. Our clients benefit from being able to use one firm for all of their legal needs, rather than needing to go to different firms for different things.

Check out all our areas of expertise

Key dates for 2026



Life at Duncan Cotterill

Life at Duncan Cotterill is vibrant and full of opportunities for new Graduates. You'll enjoy a supportive and dynamic work environment where your growth is our priority.

We offer fantastic perks like free fruit, tea, and barista-quality coffee to keep you energised throughout the day. Our regular morning teas are a great way to connect with colleagues from across the firm and build lasting relationships. We also host a variety of social events, have weekly firm wide newsletters spearheaded by our Graduates and have active sporting teams (across a range of sports) that you can opt to get involved in!

One of the highlights of our Graduate experience is our buddy mentorship programme. As a new Graduate, you'll be paired with experienced buddies who are dedicated to guiding you through your early career. Your buddy will provide invaluable insights, support your professional development, and help you navigate the complexities of legal practice and the working world through regular coffee catch ups and check ins.



We also offer clear career progression pathways to help you achieve your professional goals. From monthly lunch and learn sessions to regular performance reviews, you'll have a clear roadmap for advancing your career. Whether you're aiming to specialise in a particular area of law, make your mark overseas, or aspire to become a Partner, we'll support you every step of the way.

Join us and experience a balanced, fulfilling career, with plenty of opportunities to learn, grow, connect and have fun!



What we are looking for

At Duncan Cotterill, we're looking for people who are passionate and motivated to join our team; we're on the hunt for the next generation of legal minds who are ready to make a real impact and see DC as the place to kickstart their career.

Everything we do is built upon the firm's values: authenticity, excellence, enterprising and he tāngata. Our values embody why our people and clients enjoy working with Duncan Cotterill. We're looking for people that align with our values both in a professional and personal sense, some of the areas we'll be considering are:



Passion and Drive

We want individuals who are genuinely passionate about the law and eager to dive into the complexities of legal practice and see DC as the place to do this.



Team Players

Collaboration is key in our firm, and we take a lot of pride in one of our core values, he tāngata - the people. We're looking for team players who can work seamlessly with colleagues and clients. Your ability to communicate effectively and work well in a team will be crucial.



Adaptability

The legal landscape is constantly evolving, and so are we. We're looking for people who are adaptable and can thrive in a fast-paced environment. If you're someone who can pivot quickly and embrace change, you'll fit right in.



Strong Ethical Foundation

Integrity and excellence are at the heart of everything we do. We're looking for graduates who uphold the highest ethical standards and are committed to practicing law with honesty and fairness.



Continuous Learners

The learning never stops in the legal field. We're looking for graduates who are committed to continuous learning and professional development. If you're always seeking out new knowledge and skills, you'll thrive here.



Authenticity

Our people come from all walks of life and backgrounds. Something that makes DC such a great place to work, is our emphasis on authenticity. Being able to have honest, upfront conversations and be yourself is important to us and will mean you can flourish in the workplace.

What to expect from our interview process and how to prepare

Our interview process is designed in a way that allows us to get to know you, but also to provide you with genuine insight into what life is like at Duncan Cotterill. You'll get to meet local Partners and senior members of the team, who are all invested in ensuring you have the best possible experience with us!



Initial interview

We'll start with a 25-minute interview to get to know you better and understand your interest in Duncan Cotterill, what you've enjoyed in your studies so far and where you see your legal career heading! This is your chance to shine and show us why you're passionate about joining our team and is equally a great opportunity to get to know us a little better too. Be prepared to discuss your past work experiences, your careers aspirations and goals, and how you handle teamwork and pressure.



Second interview/ social mixer

If your first interview was successful, you'll be invited to a second interview which is usually done in person. If you're not located in the city of the office you're interviewing for, we will typically fly you to that city.

At your second interview, you'll meet more of the team. These will be senior lawyers who will get to know you on a deeper level, as well as dive into your experience, skills and aspirations.



Offer

If everything clicks, you'll receive an offer to join one of our teams. Get ready to embark on an exciting career with us!

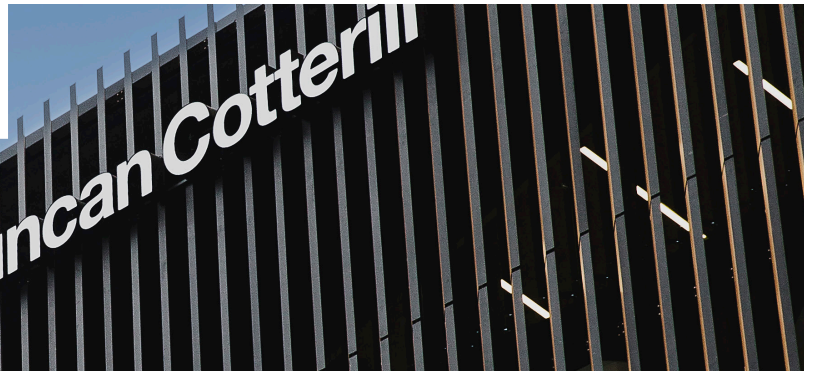


Graduate induction week

If you're joining the firm as a Graduate, you will typically start with us in March following the completion of your degree and Professional studies. In May of each year, we host our annual Graduate induction in Christchurch, which is a highlight for many of our Graduates.

This takes place over three days and will allow you to meet your fellow Graduate cohort from across the country. This is an action packed few days where you will hear from a number of Partners and senior leaders from across the firm around various facets of law and other behind the scenes insights.

You'll also get involved in a range of team building games and events designed to help foster lasting connections with your fellow Graduates. Highlights from previous induction weeks include escape rooms and cooking classes.



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