Professional Development Programs

Wilson Sonsini invests heavily in the career development of our attorneys through providing learning and coaching programs to build legal knowledge and strengthen professional skills. In the firm’s quest to enhance the services we offer to our clients, we expand our existing resources, provide real-world experience, and implement innovative and in-depth training to our attorneys. Our attorneys are encouraged to continually hone their skills, capitalize on the firm’s phenomenal pool of knowledge, achieve recognition, and make their own marks as they build the firm’s expertise profile. From new associates to more senior attorneys, Wilson Sonsini is committed to developing and evolving its attorneys extensively from the day they enter the firm.
Substantive Legal Training

As our attorneys’ careers grow, we progressively build their expertise. Some of the training and educational resources we offer include:

- Junior-level training programs which provide context for each department’s practice, highlight sensitive issues, and provide practical instruction on matters for which newer associates typically are responsible.
- Continuing education opportunities for attorneys at all levels, including sessions that explore technical points of the law that affect our clients, legal updates and discussions of recent development and cutting-edge issues and current topics of concern to our clients.
- eLearning and external training content, including our robust library of internal class recordings, just-in-time microlearning videos, interactive eLearning modules and access to PLI. Experienced attorneys are also encouraged to attend outside seminars and conferences.
- MCLE support: We make it easy to comply with MCLE requirements through internal training classes, on-demand learning, downloadable media, external programs, and online compliance tracking.
- Our popular shadowing program, which provides opportunities for junior associates, patent agents, and scientific advisors to develop skills by watching experienced attorneys perform high value tasks.

Academies

Our annual academies bring together attorneys from all of our offices for multi-day programs designed to develop their careers at the firm.

- First Year Academy: Acquaints new associates with the firm’s mission, strategy, and culture. Provides a framework of practical advice to facilitate stellar junior associate work performance and to introduce key support systems around the firm.
- Third Year Academy: Transitions mindsets from “being a junior” to “becoming a mid-level” and begins teaching supervisory skills. Boosts knowledge and techniques to meet increasing client and member expectations.
- Fifth Year Academy: Connects associates from around the firm to help develop and nurture relationships, teaches project management techniques, and provides guidance on how best to navigate the transition to senior associate status.
- Seventh Year Academy: Helps senior associates think strategically and holistically about their career paths and build good team leadership skills.
- Junior Member Academy: Welcomes newly-elected members and recent junior lateral members, and encourages relationship building and business development best practices.

Professional Skills

Our professional skills curricula help our attorneys develop and improve their comfort level and performance in the necessary areas of business acumen, business development and client relations, communication, management and leadership, and risk management. The firm also offers a well-being curriculum that focuses on personal wellness, emphasizing stress management and recognizing possible signs of excess strain, including mental distress or substance abuse.

Mentoring

We want to hire great people, develop great people, and retain great people. The firm offers multiple internal mentoring resources to help our attorneys (and staff) strengthen their skills and build a fulfilling career.

- Wilson Sonsini Connects Mentoring Program: Encourages associates and staff to build relationships with and access career advice from more experienced mentors.
- Career Coaching: Allows associates to craft their professional skills development focus on their careers and to work within an individual context for more targeted support and faster return on investment. Our career coaches listen objectively, provide honest feedback, help prioritize goals, and serve as resources for information and support.
- First Year Guide & Lateral Link Programs: Pair new associates with guides to help them transition successfully into life at the firm. First Year Guides and Lateral Links advise on how to work within their practice groups and provide information about firm resources to assist new attorneys with their integration.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We are committed to the principle that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are vital components of a thriving organization. Diversity of thought, experience, identity, and background, as well as an inclusive culture, enable our firm to deliver greater value to our clients, provide a richer work experience to our employees, and make meaningful, lasting contributions to our communities.

- Affinity Groups: provides opportunities to connect across offices, build relationships, access mentors and become more involved and visible at the firm. Open to all employees of the firm.
- Diversity Summit and Women’s Leadership Summit: features interactive panel discussions, presentations, and networking opportunities. In 2021, we held our second Diversity Summit bringing together over 150 attorneys from across the firm for a two-and-a-half-day interactive virtual event themed “Amplifying All Voices.”