

The Expert Witness Readiness Assessment

Use this checklist to evaluate your current readiness and identify areas for development. Answer each question with Yes, No, or Needs Work.

✔ Section 1: Qualifications & Knowledge

- Do you have formal qualifications, certifications, or significant experience in your specific field?
- Can you clearly define your specific area of "specialised knowledge" as per the Evidence Act?
- Have you undertaken recent professional development to keep your knowledge current?
- Do you maintain an up-to-date CV that highlights experience relevant to expert witness work?

✔ Section 2: Understanding the Legal Framework

- Are you familiar with the *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) and its rules on expert opinion?
- Have you read and do you understand the Expert Witness Code of Conduct for your relevant court?
- Do you know your overriding duty is to the court, not the party who hires you?
- Are you aware of the specific report requirements for different courts (e.g., Federal Court vs. State courts)?

✔ Section 3: Report Writing Skills

- Can you structure a report with all required sections (Instructions, Facts, Assumptions, Opinion, etc.)?
- Do you write in clear, plain English, avoiding unnecessary jargon?
- Are you confident in clearly stating the facts, your assumptions, and the reasoning behind your conclusions?
- Do you always include a statement that you have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct?

✔ Section 4: Practical Experience & Profile

- Have you taken any expert witness training courses?
- Have you shadowed an experienced expert or observed a court proceeding?
- Do you have a plan to gain initial experience (e.g., pro bono work, small cases)?
- Is your profile visible to lawyers (e.g., on LinkedIn, professional directories, through publishing articles)?

✓ Section 5: Courtroom Demeanor & Testimony

- Have you practiced explaining complex topics in simple terms for a non-expert audience?
- Could you confidently defend your report's conclusions under friendly questioning?
- Have you participated in a mock cross-examination to practice staying calm under pressure?
- Do you understand the importance of professional dress and conduct in a courtroom?

How to Score Your Readiness

- **Mostly YES:** You are on the right track! Focus on refining your skills and seeking your first formal engagements.
- **Many NEEDS WORK:** You have a solid foundation. Prioritize the sections where you need the most development, such as training or building practical experience. **We recommend [signing up for our core expert witness course](#)**, where we break down the legal framework, report writing, and courtroom skills you need to succeed with confidence.
- **Mostly NO:** This is a great starting point. **Begin with Section 1 and 2** to build your foundational knowledge of the legal system and your duties.

Recommendation: Revisit this assessment every 6-12 months to track your progress as you build your expert witness practice.

