

# Skills and Competencies in Fashion Law



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01.

# SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Day 3 shifts the conversation away from job titles, labels, or imagined roles and toward what you can actually do. In African fashion law contexts, competence is defined less by where you work and more by whether you can apply legal skills to real market conditions.

This day helps participants understand:

- What skills are genuinely required to function in fashion law
- Which skills are foundational versus advanced
- How legal and non-legal competencies work together
- That competence is built deliberately, not inherited or assumed

**Core Idea:** Fashion Law Competence Is Applied, Not Theoretical

02.

THE SKILLS FRAMEWORK: WHAT YOU  
ACTUALLY NEED

## **Core Legal Competencies (Foundational)**

These are the non-negotiables. Without these, fashion law work is difficult to perform credibly.

### **01. Intellectual Property (IP):**

#### **What competence looks like:**

Understanding trademarks, copyrights, and design protection

- Knowing what can and cannot realistically be protected in African markets
- Advising on registration, misuse, and basic enforcement options

#### **Foundational vs advanced:**

- Foundational: spotting IP issues, advising on registration, basic infringement analysis
- Advanced: enforcement strategy, cross-border protection, litigation or policy work

## 02. Contracts

### What competence looks like:

- Drafting clear, practical agreements for real fashion relationships
- Understanding manufacturing, collaboration, licensing, and influencer contracts
- Anticipating disputes before they happen

### Foundational vs advanced:

- Foundational: drafting, reviewing, and explaining contracts
- Advanced: negotiation strategy, complex licensing, dispute escalation

## 03. Consumer Protection and Commercial Law

### What competence looks like:

- Understanding refunds, disclosures, advertising rules, and fair trading
- Advising brands selling online or through informal channels
- Translating consumer law into usable guidance for businesses

### **Foundational vs advanced:**

- Foundational: identifying consumer risk and compliance gaps
- Advanced: regulatory enforcement strategy, multi-jurisdictional compliance

03.

PRACTICAL LEGAL SKILLS  
(APPLICATION SKILLS)

## **Drafting**

Competence looks like:

- Writing contracts in plain, functional language
- Drafting documents with terms and clauses that reflect how the fashion industry actually operates

## **Research**

Competence looks like:

- Locating relevant laws, regulations, and policies
- Understanding enforcement realities, not just statutes

## **Negotiation**

Competence looks like:

- Balancing legal risk with commercial reality
- Advising without blocking business unnecessarily

04.

NON-LEGAL SKILLS THAT MATTER  
JUST AS MUCH

## **Industry Literacy**

### **What competence looks like:**

- Understanding production cycles, timelines, and margins
- Knowing how designers, manufacturers, and platforms actually operate
- Appreciating informal and hybrid business models

## **Commercial Awareness**

### **What competence looks like:**

- Knowing when legal perfection is impractical
- Advising in ways that support growth, not paralysis
- Understanding cost, speed, and risk trade-offs

## Communication

### What competence looks like:

- Explaining legal concepts clearly to non-lawyers
- Educating clients without intimidating them
- Building trust across creative and business teams

These skills are not optional. They determine whether clients return.

05.

FOUNDATIONAL VS ADVANCED:  
A REALITY CHECK

## **Building foundational competence is about:**

- Spotting issues
- Drafting clearly
- Giving practical advice (advice that takes into consideration the realities of the market your client is operating in)
- Understanding context

## **Advanced competence develops later and includes:**

- Cross-border strategy
- Enforcement and disputes
- Policy and regulatory leadership
- High-level advisory roles

06.

FASHION LAW SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT

## **Purpose**

This self-assessment is a tool to help you understand where you currently stand, what you already have, and what you need to build to practice fashion law effectively in African markets.

Rate yourself honestly for each skill area using the scale below.

## **Scale**

- 1 – No exposure
- 2 – Basic awareness
- 3 – Working knowledge
- 4 – Applied in practice
- 5 – Confident and independent

## 01. Core Legal Foundations

Intellectual Property (Fashion-Relevant)

Understanding trademarks, copyright, design protection, and enforcement in African contexts.

1  2  3  4  5

Contracts and Commercial Agreements

Drafting and reviewing supplier contracts, collaborations, licensing, influencer agreements, and NDAs.

1  2  3  4  5

Consumer Protection and E-Commerce Law

Awareness of refund policies, online sales terms, advertising rules, and consumer rights.

1  2  3  4  5

## 02. Regulatory and Market Knowledge

Product Regulation and Compliance

Understanding labeling, quality standards, import/export rules, and regulatory variation across African markets.

1  2  3  4  5

Trade and Cross-Border Awareness

Familiarity with customs processes, regional trade frameworks, and informal trade realities.

1  2  3  4  5

### 03. Practical Legal Skills

#### Legal Drafting

Ability to draft clear, practical, plain-language agreements for fashion businesses.

1  2  3  4  5

#### Legal Research and Analysis

Finding, interpreting, and applying laws across multiple jurisdictions.

1  2  3  4  5

#### Negotiation and Risk Assessment

Identifying risks and proposing commercially sensible solutions.

1  2  3  4  5

## 04. Industry Literacy and Commercial Awareness

Understanding How Fashion Businesses Operate

Knowledge of production cycles, supply chains, pricing, and distribution in African fashion markets.

1  2  3  4  5

Working with Informal and Hybrid Markets

Comfort advising SMEs, artisans, and creatives operating outside formal structures.

1  2  3  4  5

## 05. Professional Readiness

Client Communication

Explaining legal issues clearly to non-lawyers.

1  2  3  4  5

Ethical Judgment and Professional Responsibility

Recognising boundaries, conflicts, and ethical obligations.

1  2  3  4  5

## REFLECTION

- WHICH **THREE SKILLS** ARE CURRENTLY YOUR STRONGEST?
- WHICH **THREE SKILLS** REQUIRE THE MOST DEVELOPMENT?
- ARE YOUR GAPS LEGAL, PRACTICAL, OR INDUSTRY-RELATED?

07.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR DAY 3

- FASHION LAW COMPETENCE IS PRACTICAL AND APPLIED
- LEGAL KNOWLEDGE ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT
- INDUSTRY LITERACY AND COMMERCIAL AWARENESS ARE ESSENTIAL
- FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS CREATE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES
- ADVANCED SKILLS COME LATER AND BUILD ON STRONG BASICS

**FLAA**  
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