# Table of Contents

Conducting an Effective Job Search .............................................. 1
The Resume .................................................................................. 3
Action Verbs for Resume Writing .................................................. 6
Sample Resume Language ............................................................... 7
Sample Resumes ........................................................................ 10
The Cover Letter. .......................................................................... 14
Sample Cover Letters .................................................................. 16
The Thank-You Letter .................................................................. 23
Sample Thank-You Letters ........................................................... 24
The Interview ................................................................................ 26
The Call-Back Interview ................................................................. 30
Before You Accept That Job Offer .............................................. 32
Why Job Applicants Receive Rejections ...................................... 33
Mock Interview Program ............................................................... 33
Rules and Regulations Governing the Job Search

As with most undertakings in life, there are rules and regulations by which you must abide during the course of your job search. Hofstra is a law school that is accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA). As such, our students must abide by the ABA standards. Standard 304(c), which governs student employment, is printed below. Hofstra Law School is also a member of the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), and our students must adhere to NALP’s rules for prospective employees. The rules, titled “Principles for Candidates,” are reprinted herein in their entirety. Similarly, Hofstra Law School has adopted its own Code of Academic Conduct by which all students are bound. Those portions of the Code of Academic Conduct that relate to the job search process are restated here for your convenient reference.

A. American Bar Association Standard 304(c)

A law school shall not award full-time residence credit to a student who does not devote substantially all of the student’s working hours to the study of law or engages in employment for more than 20 hours per week, whether outside or inside the law school. Regular and punctual class attendance is necessary to satisfy residence credit and class hour requirements.

B. NALP Principles for Candidates

Candidates should prepare thoroughly for the employment search process. Before beginning an employment search, candidates should engage in thorough self-examination. Work skills, vocational aptitudes and interests, lifestyle and geographic preferences, academic performance, career expectations and life experiences should be carefully evaluated so that informed choices can be made. General instruction should be obtained on employment search skills, particularly those relating to the interview process. Prior to making employment inquiries, candidates should learn as much as possible about target employers and the nature of their positions. Candidates should interview only with employers in whom they have a genuine interest. Candidates should comply with the policies and procedures of law schools whose services they use.

Throughout the employment search process candidates should represent their qualifications and interests fully and accurately. Candidates should be prepared to provide, at employers’ request, copies of all academic transcripts. Under no circumstances should academic biographical data be falsified, misrepresented, or distorted either in writing or orally. Candidates who engage in such conduct may be subject to elimination from consideration for employment by the employer, suspension or other academic discipline by the law school, and disqualification from admission to practice by bar admission authorities.

Candidates should be prepared to advise prospective employers of the nature and extent of their training in legal writing. Writing samples submitted as evidence of a candidate’s legal skills should be wholly original work. Where the writing was done with others, the candidate’s contribution should be clearly identified. Writing samples from law-related employment must be masked adequately to preserve client confidentiality and used only with the permission of the supervising attorney.

Throughout the employment search process students should conduct themselves in a professional manner. Candidates who participate in the on-campus interview process should adhere to all scheduling commitments. Cancellations should occur only for good cause and should be promptly communicated to OCS or the employer. Invitations for in-office interviews should be acknowledged promptly and accepted only if the candidate has a genuine interest in the employer. Candidates should reach an understanding with the employer regarding its reimbursement policies prior to the trip. Expenses for trips during which interviews with more than one employer occur should be prorated in accordance with those employers’ reimbursement policies.

Candidates invited to interview at employer offices should request reimbursement for reasonable expenses that are directly related to the interview and incurred in good faith. Failure to observe this policy, or falsification or misrepresentation of travel expenses, may result in non-reimbursement and elimination from consideration for employment or the revocation of offers by an employer.

Candidates should notify employers and OCS of their acceptance or rejection of employment offers by the earliest possible time, and no later than the time established by rule, custom, or agreement. Candidates should expect offers to be confirmed in writing. Candidates should abide by the standards for student responses set out in Part V and should in any event notify the employer as soon as their decision is made, even if that decision is made in advance of the prevailing deadline date. In fairness to both employers and peers, students should act in good faith to decline promptly offers for interviews and employment that are no longer being seriously considered. In order for law schools to comply with federal institutional reporting requirements, students should notify OCS upon acceptance of an employment offer, whether or not the employment was obtained through the office.
Candidates seeking or preparing to accept fellowships, judicial clerkships, or other limited-term professional employment should apprise prospective employers of their intentions and obtain a clear understanding of their offer-deferral policies.

**Candidates should honor their employment commitments.** Candidates should, upon acceptance of an offer of employment, notify OCS and notify all employers who consider them to be active candidates that they have accepted a position. If, because of extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances, it becomes necessary for a candidate to modify or be released from his or her acceptance, both the employer and OCS should be notified promptly.

**Candidates should promptly report to OCS any misrepresentation, discrimination or other abuse by employers in the employment process.** Students who engage in law-related employment should adhere to the same standards of conduct as lawyers. In matters arising out of law-related employment, students should be guided by the standards for professional conduct that are applicable in the employer's state. When acting on behalf of employers in a recruitment capacity, students should be guided by the employer principles in Part IV. Students should exercise care to provide representative and fair information when advising peers about former employers.

**C. Hofstra Law School’s Code of Academic Conduct**

**Part 1. Violations**

A. A student violates the Code of Academic Conduct if the student purposely or knowingly engages in or attempts to engage in or aids another to engage in the conduct defined in the following paragraphs 1, 2 or 3.

(3) Other Violations

(i) To make a material misrepresentation concerning the student's law school performance and activities on a resume or other written communication to a potential employer.

B. Plagiarism

(1) Definition: A student plagiarizes when the student represents the work of any other person as the student's own work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

a) Copying or substantially copying someone else's words without both citing the author of the quotation and using either quotation marks or an indented block quotation; or

b) Paraphrasing someone else's words or work without citing the source.

(2) The Violation: A student violates the Code of Academic Conduct when the student:

a) Purposely or knowingly plagiarizes or aids another student to plagiarize; or

b) Plagiarizes with knowledge of circumstances which should alert a reasonable student that there is a substantial risk that the student would be plagiarizing.
Writing a resume is indeed a challenge. It is difficult to take the story of your life, all of your accomplishments, achievements, skills and experiences and summarize them in a single page that distinguishes you from every other job applicant. Many law students find it particularly daunting to put pen to paper if they do not have prior experience that is “legal.” Here are a few tips on how to approach the resume writing process. Directly following this section are some sample resumes.

**Think in terms of the types of skills a legal employer would like to see.**

Whether or not you have held a legal position, it is likely that you possess some of the skills that would make you appealing to a prospective employer. These include the ability to research, write, communicate, analyze, take initiative, follow instructions, solve problems and advocate. Positions that demonstrate that an employer trusted you with a significant level of responsibility or supervisory authority over other personnel, or the fact that an employer promoted you will make a favorable impression.

**Include any professional, volunteer or academic experience in which you used or acquired these types of skills.**

Whether you waited tables, volunteered at a homeless shelter, did research for a professor or worked for an attorney, any experience that involved the types of skills discussed above belongs on your resume.

**Brainstorm**

Sit down with a blank sheet of paper and write down every job or volunteer experience you can think of going back no further than the beginning of college (unless you had some extraordinary pre-college experience that will make your resume stand out). For each such experience, write down everything you did, all of your responsibilities and duties. From this list, pick the most impressive things that best demonstrate your skills and abilities. These are the things to include in your resume.

**Be Concise - The One-Page Rule**

Unless you have had extensive professional experience prior to entering law school, your resume should be no more than one page. A study found that employers spend approximately 30 seconds reading a resume. Highlighting the strongest elements of your background and omitting everything else will work to your advantage. Remember, the objective of the resume is usually to get you an interview. At the interview you will have the opportunity to provide additional details about the experiences listed on your resume. If you are truly stretched for space, you can use an 11 or 10 point font (but nothing smaller than 10 point). A 12 point font is standard.

**Proper Organization**

**1. Education:** As a general rule, your resume should be set out in two or three sections. The top section is Education, beginning with law school and including your undergraduate education and any other postgraduate degrees you have received. You should only include the date your degree was or will be conferred, not the span of years you attended the school. For each institution you attended, you can include subsections for honors, activities and publications, if applicable. Summer study abroad during law school and undergraduate education should be included (see sample resumes).

**Honors:** Include any academic honors received, honor societies to which you have been elected, journals you have been invited to join after a competitive process or merit scholarships you have been awarded. Scholarships awarded through a lottery or non-competitive selection process should not be included as an “honor.” Do not list that you have been included in publications such as Who’s Who in American Colleges.

**Activities:** Include organized athletics, student organizations, fraternities and sororities, student government and volunteer work. Only include bar associations or other organizations in which you have been an active member. Finally, you can include a heading for publications if you have written a paper or article that has been published. Your high school should not appear on your resume unless you attended a particularly prestigious school that is likely to impress a prospective employer.

**2. Experience:** In this section include all paid and volunteer positions you have held beginning with the most recent position and working backward in time. Describe each experience with the responsibilities that are most relevant to the work that lawyers do and list the most impressive first (i.e., do not put “answered telephones” as your first responsibility unless it was your only responsibility).

**3. Additional Information:** If you speak a foreign language, pursue an interesting hobby or have some other unique skill or background that does not fit nicely into any other part of your resume, an “Additional Information” section on your resume is appropriate. Be careful not to be too broad (e.g., interests include sports) or too controversial (e.g., active member of the National Rifle Association). Also, be prepared to “talk the talk.” If you state that you are fluent in French, don’t be surprised if your interviewer asks you to conduct the interview in French.

**Avoid including the following on your resume:**

- Information about high school. Your high school experience is generally not relevant or important to prospective employers unless there is something about your high school experience that is truly unique and differentiates you from all other applicants.

**Directly following this section are some sample resumes.**
• Your LSAT scores. LSAT scores are not relevant to prospective employers.
• A statement of objective. Your objective, which is to obtain a law-related internship or post-graduate position, is something that you will state in your cover letter to an employer.
• A list of your law school courses unless (1) you received an award for the highest grade in a particular course (which would be listed under “Honors”) or (2) a particular course or courses are directly relevant to the job you are seeking.
• A listing of your computer skills, such as proficiency with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc. A legal employer is going to hire you based on your ability to perform substantive legal work; unless an employer specifies in a job posting that you must possess certain computer-related skills, you are not going to be hired because you do or do not possess these skills.
• Westlaw and/or LexisNexis certifications, while helpful, are also not credentials that make a significant difference in an employer’s hiring decision. Legal employers are going to assume that all law students have gone through extensive Westlaw and/or LexisNexis training; adding this to your resume does not necessarily make you a more marketable candidate.
• A list of references or a statement that references are “available upon request”. If an employer wants to check references, it will ask you to separately provide a list of references. This information should not be included on your resume.
• Do not include graphics, unusual font types or unusual formatting. Graphics and unusual fonts/formatting bring no value to your resume and are distracting to prospective employers.

Make Your Resume Easy to Read and Pleasing to the Eye
There are no hard and fast rules about how a resume should look. The most important thing is that it should be well organized, easy to read and aesthetically pleasing. Your reader should be able to easily access the information contained in the resume. Your name should be a little bit larger than the substantive portion of your resume so that it stands out. Do not forget to include your telephone number. The use of large headings, capital letters, bold typeface and italics can help make your resume look better and be easier to read. But don’t overdo it! Use underlining sparingly, if at all. While you want your resume to stand out, the legal profession is still relatively conservative. This is not the place to be overly creative. All text should be lined up toward the left margin. Do not put information like dates of employment or location of employer toward the right margin, as this tends to distract the reader. Computer-generated resume programs are not recommended.

Paper and Printing
Your resume should be printed using a laser printer. One is available for students’ use at OCS. Your paper should be a high-quality, heavy bond (but not overly thick, i.e., not construction-paper weight) that is white or ivory.

Watch Out for Typographical and Grammatical Errors
Your resume is often the first sample of your writing that a prospective employer sees. Typographical and grammatical errors are a sure way to lose a job opportunity. Do not rely on your computer’s spelling or grammar check. Read your resume over many times and ask several other people to do so as well, including a careers services counselor. MAKE CERTAIN TO SPELL ALL NAMES AND TITLES CORRECTLY.

Do not rely on using your computer’s spell-check function to ensure that your resume is error-free. Spell check will not pick up words that are spelled correctly but are used incorrectly, such as “their”, “there” and “they’re”. There is no substitute for carefully proofreading your resume several times before sending it out to a prospective employer.

Use Dynamic and Interesting Language
Instead of saying that you were “responsible for customer service,” you can say that you “analyzed problem situations and responded in a manner that maximized customer satisfaction.” Use the “Action Verbs for Resume Writing” listed in this booklet as well as a thesaurus and your own creativity. Try not to use the same words and phrases repeatedly.

Be Accurate
Everything you include on your resume is fair game for employers. While you want to put a positive spin on your credentials and experience, you must never misrepresent or mislead. If a prospective employer discovers that you have exaggerated or lied about your grades, previous job responsibility, or anything else, it may not only cost you an interview but may also affect your future career or bar admission.

GPA and Class Rank
Students are often unsure whether to include their GPAs and class ranks on their resumes. As a general rule, you should only include your undergraduate GPA if you are also including your law school GPA, and vice versa. Also, a law school GPA alone is meaningless unless you also include your class rank. Generally, OCS recommends including your GPA and class rank if you are ranked at least in the top 1/3 of the class, but there are exceptions to every rule. If you have any questions about stating your GPA, speak to a career services counselor. In addition, if you were invited to join a journal and declined, you must state that you declined.
An important word of caution regarding the listing of your class rank and percentile on your resume: Be absolutely certain that the class rank and percentile listed on your resume are EXACTLY the same information provided to you by the Registrar’s Office. OCS will verify the accuracy of all class ranks and honors listed on resumes submitted. Resumes containing incorrect information will not be accepted and will be returned to the student with instructions for correction.

To calculate your class rank as a percentage for use on your resume, apply the following formula: (your position in the class x 100) divided by the total class size. For example, if you are ranked 50th in a class of 375, your rank is calculated as (50 x 100) divided by 375, which is top 13.33%. Hofstra Law School does not permit the rounding down of class ranks. For example, a rank of 13.33% cannot be rounded down to 13%. It can be properly reflected as top 13.33%, top 13.5% or top 14%.

Part time or evening students must add “(Part-time Division)” or “(Evening Division)” directly following their anticipated graduation date. For example, a part-time student in the class of 2013 should express the graduation date in this manner: “Juris Doctor expected May 2013 (Part-time Division)”.

Those part-time or evening students who transfer to the full-time division must include “Prior to Transfer to Full-Time Division” after their Class Rank. For example, a student who has transferred from the part-time program to the full-time program would show their rank in this manner: “Class Rank: 5/50; Top 10% Prior to Transfer to Full-Time Division”.

**Listing Your Personal Web Site**

Include your personal website address on your resume only if the site is professional in all respects. An employer may be impressed with the fact that you designed and developed your own website, but inappropriate, immature or controversial content may cost you an interview or a job. If in doubt, see a member of OCS counseling staff, or err on the side of caution and leave it out. Be very careful about the content of any account that you may have on sites such as Facebook or MySpace, as many employers search these sites for information on prospective hires.

**References**

It is wise to choose your references for a particular job after you obtain information about the desired position, the place of employment, and the people who will make the hiring decision.

Of course, general guidelines are that you should choose people who can attest to your practical and intellectual skills, i.e., professors and legal and non-legal employers for whom you have worked. These people are preferred references. If you do not have at least three of them, consider using as a reference someone who can speak strongly for your character and moral integrity.

You should contact proposed references ahead of time in order to determine whether they would feel comfortable serving as a reference and to inform them about the job(s) for which you are applying.

Please also note that many employers have internal policies that either prohibit their employees from providing references or limit them to simply confirming dates of employment. It is therefore important that you do not wait until the last minute to seek out and obtain your references.

A separate sheet should be used for references. Put “References for [your name]” at the top of the page. List the references, including their job titles, place of employment, business address, email address and phone number(s), and, if not obvious from your resume, your connection to them. Letters of recommendation are perfectly appropriate but they do not substitute for a “live” reference.

**Writing Sample**

You will frequently be asked to submit a writing sample to a prospective employer and, therefore, should have one prepared in advance. Writing samples reflect your ability to organize your thoughts, analyze and write clearly and succinctly. Be sure to “white-out” or otherwise obscure all confidential information and that your name, address, and phone number appear on the first page. If you use a writing sample you produced for a past employer, be sure you have the employer’s permission. If you are using an excerpted piece, determine whether you need to prepare an introduction to provide a context for the reader. OCS will be happy to discuss with you the appropriate topic, length and format of a writing sample, but we are unable to critique them for you.

**Be Prepared to Write and Rewrite**

As with any good piece of writing, it is unrealistic to think that the first draft of your resume will be the final draft. You must be ready and willing to write, revise, solicit suggestions and revise some more.
# ACTION VERBS FOR RESUME WRITING

- accomplished
- accounted
- achieved
- acquired
- acted
- addressed
- administered
- adjusted
- advised
- aided
- allocated
- analyzed
- answered
- applied
- appointed
- appraised
- arranged
- articulated
- ascertained
- assembled
- assessed
- assigned
- assisted
- attained
- audited
- authored
- awarded
- began
- briefed
- built
- calculated
- carried out
- cataloged
- categorized
- chaired
- challenged
- changed
- channeled
- chose
- clarified
- closed
- coached
- collaborated
- collected
- committed
- communicated
- compared
- competed
- compiled
- completed
- composed
- computed
- conceived
- concluded
- conducted
- confronted
- constructed
- consulted
- contacted
- continued
- contracted
- contributed
- controlled
- convened
- conveyed
- cooperated
- coordinated
- corrected
- corresponded
- counseled
- created
- critiqued
- dealt (with)
- defined
- delegated
- delivered
- demonstrated
- derived
- described
- designed
- determined
- developed
- devised
- directed
- discovered
- discussed
- dispensed
- displayed
- distributed
- drafted
- drew up
- edited
- educated
- interpreted
- intervened
- interviewed
- introduced
- invented
- investigated
- involved
- joined
- judged
- launched
- learned
- lectured
- led
- located
- made
- maintained
- managed
- manipulated
- marketed
- mastered
- maximized
- measured
- mediated
- met
- mentored
- modeled
- modified
- molded
- monitored
- motivated
- named
- negotiated
- observed
- obtained
- operated
- ordered
- organized
- outlined
- oversaw
- participated
- perceived
- performed
- persuaded
- planned
- predicted
- prepared
- presented
- printed
- processed
- produced
- programmed
- prohibited
- projected
- provided
- publicized
- published
- purchased
- qualified
- quantified
- questioned
- raised
- rated
- received
- recognized
- recommended
- reconciled
- recorded
- recruited
- reduced
- referred
- regulated
- related
- rendered
- renovated
- reorganized
- repaired
- reported
- represented
- reproduced
- researched
- resolved
- responded
- restored
- retrieved
- reviewed
- revised
- risked
- scheduled
- screened
- searched
- selected
- sensitized
- served
- shaped
- showed
- simplified
- skilled
- sold
- solicited
- solved
- sought
- spearheaded
- specified
- stimulated
- structured
- studied
- submitted
- succeeded
- suggested
- summarized
- supervised
- supported
- surveyed
- synthesized
- systematized
- targeted
- taught
- tested
- took initiative
- traced
- tracked
- trained
- translated
- treated
- tutored
- united
- updated
- used
- utilized
- verified
- visualized
- volunteered
- wrote
The following information contains sample language for various pro bono projects and popular internships. Some of the most valuable legal experience you gain may very likely come from doing volunteer work. For resume purposes, it is irrelevant whether you received a paycheck; that is why the heading used is “experience” rather than “employment.” So do not forget to include this kind of work on your resume!

Please keep in mind that when drafting your own resume, do not copy this language verbatim, unless it exactly describes the work that you undertook. The kind of work you have done may vary greatly from the language used in these examples. You need to craft a resume that describes your own experience.

**AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION**
Washington, D.C.
*Legal Intern, Summer 2010*
Developed legal briefing papers and lobbied Congressional staff on abortion and death penalty legislation. Conducted research and writing for amicus brief for pending United States Supreme Court case. Drafted hearing testimony.

**BANKRUPTCY CLINIC**
*NASSAU COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION, Mineola, New York*
*Student Advocate, September 2008 - December 2009*
Interviewed clients and prepared bankruptcy petitions for debtors in bankruptcy actions. Attended trustee meeting and observed courtroom proceedings. Completed thorough training program conducted by bankruptcy practitioner. Filed papers in Bankruptcy Court.

**BRONX LEGAL SERVICES**
Bronx, New York
*Legal Intern, Summer 2010*
Interviewed clients and explained court proceedings. Gathered information from witnesses for lead paint prevention and abatement project. Drafted memos and court documents on housing cases, including evictions and summary proceedings. Attended depositions and hearings and assisted attorneys in court.

**CARECEN (Central American Refugee Center)**
Hempstead, New York
*Legal Intern, September 2008 - December 2009*

**CITY OF LONG BEACH, CORPORATION COUNSEL**, Long Beach, New York
*Legal Intern, Summer 2010*
Researched and wrote memoranda on zoning and land use matters. Drafted motions and attended depositions. Drafted correspondence and worked with various governmental agencies to resolve disputes. Assisted attorneys in court.

**COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE**
New York, New York
*Legal Intern, Summer 2010*
Reviewed work of parties responsible for placing foster children in permanent homes, and gave status reports to Manhattan Family Court judges at case hearings. Conducted client intake and assisted clients through the court process.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**
Stony Brook, New York
*Legal Intern, Summer 2010*
Drafted consent orders, notices and complaints pertaining to the use of wetlands, hazardous substances and toxic wastes. Conducted penalty calculation reports to be used as exhibits in litigation. Prepared witnesses for hearings. Attended pre-trial conferences and observed hearings.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLINIC**
Central Islip, New York
*Legal Intern, Summer 2010*
Represented clients seeking Orders of Protection in Suffolk County Family Court. Conducted several successful trials under the supervision of an attorney. Conducted client interviews, negotiated to effectuate case settlements, and performed legal research on standards for harassment and assault. Subpoenaed witnesses for testimony. Attended arraignments for respondents who violated Orders of Protection.

**FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION**
New York, New York
*Legal Intern, Summer 2010*
Conducted legal research and writing pertaining to bankruptcy matters, commercial mortgage foreclosures and lender liability claims in both federal and state courts. Helped attorneys prepare for depositions, motion arguments and trials. Attended meetings with staff attorneys and bank supervisors.

**JUDGE JOANNA SEYBERT, U.S. DISTRICT COURT, E.D.N.Y.**
Uniondale, New York
*Judicial Intern, Summer 2010*
Conducted extensive legal research on a variety of substantive areas of the law. Drafted judicial opinions for review by the judge. Observed all stages of the judicial process from the bench, including hearings, trials and sentencings. Assisted the law clerk in conferencing cases.
MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITIES LAW PROJECT
Islandia, New York
Legal Intern, Summer 2010
Researched and wrote memoranda on various subjects, including the rights of people with mental and physical disabilities to give informed consent to medical treatment, and regulations qualifying medically needy families for Medicaid and other benefits. Represented clients at fair hearings.

NASSAU COUNTY LEGAL AID SOCIETY
Hempstead, New York
Legal Intern, Criminal Defense Division, Summer 2010
Worked closely with attorneys on all aspects of defense for felony and misdemeanor offenses and parole violations. Conducted legal research and drafted motions. Assisted in bench conferences. Observed extensive court proceedings, including arraignments, felony examinations, parole and evidentiary hearings, trials and sentencings.

NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION PROJECT
Mineola, New York
Law Student Leader, Massapequa High School September - December 2004
Taught a 10-week class to high school students about civil rights and racial relations. Designed course curriculum, prepared and presented materials, and elicited student participation. Provided students with critical analytical tools and utilized the Socratic method. Program was administered by the New York Civil Liberties Union, Nassau County Chapter.

NEW YORK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE
New York, New York
Legal Intern, Summer 2010
Interviewed witnesses and aided in the preparation of evidence for cases involving assault, tax evasion and illegal possession of drugs. Assisted with the arraignment process. Attended preliminary hearings, trials and sentencings. Worked closely with assistant district attorneys.

NEW YORK STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE
New York, New York
Legal Intern, Consumer Frauds Division, Summer 2010

NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
Hempstead, New York
Legal Intern, Summer 2010
Investigated employment and housing charges of discrimination. Conducted fact-finding conferences. Negotiated settlements between disputing parties. Researched applicable state and federal law. Drafted investigatory reports for submission to Commissioner’s Office.

R.E.A.C.H. (Research, Education, and Advocacy to Combat Homelessness)
Hofstra University School of Law, Hempstead, New York
Student Advocate, January-May 2010
Provided law-related counseling to homeless persons at weekly clinics. Successfully advocated on behalf of clients to obtain government entitlements and social services. Referred clients to various community resources and programs. Appeared before administrative law judges at fair hearings. Conducted legal research and writing on behalf of clients to resolve disputes with the Department of Social Services.

SEPA MUJER
Hempstead, New York
Legal Intern, September-December 2009
Advocated on behalf of battered immigrant women who are being sponsored for their legal residency by their husbands. Conducted client intake, prepared petitions, drafted affidavits and gathered evidence. Researched applicable law, including the Violence Against Women Act. Completed training program in immigration and family law.

STATE SENATOR CARL KRUGER
Brooklyn, New York
Legislative Intern, Summer 2010
Researched pending legislative issues and drafted portions of new bill pertaining to health care reform for the elderly. Attended interoffice strategy sessions. Met with constituents and addressed individual and community concerns.

SUFFOLK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE
Riverhead, New York
Legal Intern, Summer 2010
Interviewed sex crime victims and arresting officers and assessed their cases. Wrote arraignment papers and letters to the Parole Board. Assisted prosecutors with trial preparation. Referred victims to counseling services.
THE WORKPLACE PROJECT
Hempstead, New York
Legal Intern, January-August 2010
Conducted client intake and assessed cases. Conducted research and writing on basic worker’s rights law. Assisted with training immigrant workers to represent themselves in Small Claims Court and in unemployment benefit hearings. Created informational pamphlet on the legal rights of immigrant workers.

UNEMPLOYMENT ACTION CENTER (U.A.C.)
Hofstra University School of Law
Hempstead, New York
Student Advocate, January-May 2010
Represented clients seeking unemployment insurance benefits in proceedings held before administrative law judges. Conducted intake interviews to assess the validity of potential claims. Researched labor and employment issues. Formulated and developed case strategy and prepared witnesses. Drafted and submitted appellate brief to the New York State Administrative Law Appeals Board.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (V.I.T.A.)
Hofstra University School of Law
Hempstead, New York
Tax Assistant, January-April 2010
Provided assistance to taxpayers with the preparation of basic tax returns. Instructed taxpayers on how to complete their own tax returns. Clarified provisions and explained treatment of taxes pursuant to the Tax Code. Participated in training program and passed examination administered by the Internal Revenue Service.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT
Hempstead, New York
Legal Intern, September-December 2009
Assisted attorneys in court with representation of clients seeking child support in Family Court. Conducted client intake and assessed validity of claims. Briefed attorneys regarding cases on the daily calendar. Provided information to judges and hearing examiners. Filed papers in court. Observed courtroom proceedings.
Jane Swift
123 Front Street, Hempstead, NY 11549 (516) 555-5555 js1@pride.hofstra.edu

EDUCATION: Hofstra University School of Law, Hempstead, NY
Juris Doctor anticipated, May 2010
Activities: Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, President
National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA)
Public Justice Foundation (PJF)

Villanova University, Villanova, PA
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, minor in Criminal Justice, May 2007
Honors: Dean's List (2 semesters)
Activities: Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, Treasurer

EXPERIENCE: Schwartzberg, Katz & Levy, LLP, Hempstead, NY
Law Clerk, Summer 2009
Worked closely with attorneys on personal injury cases. Conducted extensive legal research. Drafted motions, memoranda and discovery documents. Corresponded by telephone and letter with clients, opposing counsel, and insurance companies. Observed trials and depositions.

Professor Perry Mason, Hofstra University School of Law, Hempstead, NY
Research Assistant, September-December 2008
Conducted legal research on issues of criminal law. Assisted in drafting and editing an article on federal habeas corpus to be published in the Hofstra Law Review.

Honorable Jane Roe, Suffolk County Supreme Court, Central Islip, NY
Summer Law Clerk, June-August 2008
Conducted extensive legal research on issues involving equitable distribution law. Drafted proposed decisions on motions in matrimonial cases. Assisted the judge's law secretary. Observed conferences between the court and attorneys, hearings and trials.

Unemployment Action Center, Hofstra University School of Law, Hempstead, NY
Student Advocate, January 2008-May 2009
Represented clients seeking unemployment insurance benefits in proceedings held before administrative law judges. Conducted intake interviews to assess the validity of potential claims. Researched labor and employment issues. Formulated and developed case strategies and prepared witnesses.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Competent in Sign Language. Literacy Volunteer of America: Certified Instructor.
John J. Doe

EDUCATION

Hofstra University School of Law, Hempstead, NY
J.D. anticipated, May 2011
G.P.A.: 3.48, Rank: 65/250, Top 26%
Honors: Hofstra Labor and Employment Law Journal, Staff Editor
Merit Scholarship
Activities: Asian-Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA)
Nassau County Bar Association, Labor & Employment Committee

Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY
Honors: Dean's List (3 semesters), Golden Key Honor Society
Activities: Intramural Soccer, Big Sister Program

Financed more than 50% of undergraduate education by working 20-30 hours each week throughout school year.

EXPERIENCE

Nassau County District Attorney's Office, Mineola, NY
Legal Intern, Summer 2010
Managed caseload of thirty criminal cases. Investigated and researched factual basis of cases to prepare for trial. Negotiated plea agreements with opposing counsel. Conducted extensive legal research. Drafted subpoenas, motions and memoranda. Observed several trials from jury selection through summation.

Criminal Justice Clinic, Hofstra Law School, Hempstead, NY
Intern, January 2010 – May 2010
Represented six indigent clients pursuant to a Student Practice Order of the Appellate Division, Second Department. Negotiated plea offers with Nassau County Assistant District Attorneys and Town Attorneys. Attended seminars on bail applications, voir dire and challenging accusatory instruments for facial insufficiency.

Hon. John Smith, United States District Court, Eastern District of New York, Central Islip, NY
Judicial Intern, September 2009 – December 2009
Conducted extensive legal research on a variety of substantive areas of law, in particular, labor law. Drafted judicial opinions for review by the Judge. Observed all stages of the judicial process including hearings, trials and sentencing.

Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, Riverhead, NY
Legal Intern, Summer 2009
Conducted legal research and drafted memoranda. Interviewed witnesses and police officers in preparation for hearings and trials. Assisted deputy district attorneys at trial.
James G. Edwards
111 California Avenue
Hempstead, N.Y. 11549
(516) 888-9999
jedwards@pride.hofstra.edu

EDUCATION: 
Hofstra University School of Law, Hempstead, NY
Juris Doctor anticipated, May 2012
GPA: 3.55, Rank: 2 of 25 (prior to transfer to full-time division)
Honors: Hofstra Journal of International Business and Law

American University, Washington, D.C.
Bachelor of Arts, magna cum laude, in Political Science, May 2003
Honors: Presidential Merit Scholarship Award
National Society of Collegiate Students - National Honors Society

EXPERIENCE: 
Capital One Bank (f/k/a North Fork Bank, Melville, NY
Assistant Manager, July 2005 - Present
Manage home mortgage department. Review all legal and financial documents.
Implemented new electronic database to expedite responses to client inquiries.
Supervise 14 staff members.

Franchishep, Elmsford, NY
Research Analyst, July 2004 - June 2005
Researched companies for prospective investors and investment banks through analysis of financial reports and databases. Drafted corporate structure reports and marketed them to financial analysts, researchers and executives.

The Gap, Albany, NY
Store Manager, June 2003 – June 2004
Responsible for daily operations of high volume retail store. Supervised staff, reconciled daily receipts, monitored store inventory, and responded to customer complaints.

American University, Washington, D.C, NY
Residential Adviser, August 2001 - May 2003
Maintained a safe and enjoyable environment for 100 undergraduate dormitory residents. Provided peer counseling and mediated disputes. Developed educational and recreational events and programs.
Curtis Smith
567 Elm Drive
Mineola, NY 11500
(516) 555-5555
csmith1@pride.hofstra.edu

EDUCATION:  

**Hofstra University School of Law**, Hempstead, NY  
J.D. anticipated, May 2012  
**Activities:**  
  - Environmental Law Society  
  - Student Bar Association Moot Court Association

**Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna**, Pisa Italy  
Hofstra University School of Law Study Abroad Program, Summer 2010  
Course work included International and Comparative Health Law

**American University**, Washington, DC  
B.S. in Business Administration, May 2008  
**Activities:**  
  - Delta Sigma Pi Professional Business Fraternity

EXPERIENCE:  

**Nassau County Family Court**, Westbury, NY  
**Law Department Intern**, June – August 2010  
Assistant to Head of Legal Department. Performed legal research on family court issues, including divorce, child support and separation. Observed hearings and trials and participated in settlement discussions.

**Andrews and Edwards, Attorneys at Law**, Garden City, NY  
**Legal Assistant**, November 2008 – June 2009  
Performed legal research. Drafted pleadings and motions and responded to discovery requests. Assisted responding to daily inquiries of clients.

**The American Bar Association**, Washington, DC  
**Student Intern**, September 2007 – December 2007  
Assistant to the head of Presidential Communications. Performed research on various legal issues. Wrote news releases, advisories, opinion editorials and speeches.

**U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton**, Washington, DC  
**Student Intern**, December 2006 – June 2007  
Performed research for proposed legislation/constituent issues. Drafted memos on legislative briefings. Prepared written responses to constituent mail and phone inquiries.
The Purpose of the Cover Letter

Just like your resume, the purpose of a cover letter is to get you an interview, not to get you a job. While your resume provides the hard, cold facts, your cover letter is your marketing tool. It is your opportunity to use a little more creativity to put your resume into context, describe who you are and highlight particular skills you have that would make you an asset to that employer. Unlike a resume, the rules to follow regarding format and content are not quite so rigid, but there are some general guidelines worth considering.

Do Your Homework

Know something about the employer to whom you are writing before you put pen to paper. Not only will it enable you to speak to the nature of the position, but it also demonstrates genuine interest, something every employer likes to see. Your goal is to explain how your skills and background are ideally suited to the work and needs of the targeted firm or organization, and this is easier to accomplish when you know something about who they are and what they do. Each law firm or organization has its own personality, culture and accomplishments. You must understand what sets this employer apart from others before you can write a compelling cover letter. Some possible sources of information about employers are: the OCS counseling staff; Lexis; Westlaw; Martindale Hubbell (www.martindale.com), the employer’s website; the NALP Directory of Legal Employers (www.nalpdirectory.com); student surveys; and other materials available in the OCS Resource Center. Not only will this research help you with your cover letter, it will also be useful if the employer grants you an interview.

Remember, your cover letter should be focused on demonstrating to a prospective employer that you are the best person for a particular job. As you draft your letter, think about it from the perspective of the employer – in the eyes of the employer, are you making a compelling case for yourself as the best applicant? The cover letter is not about what YOU will get out of the opportunity. Rather, it is all about you differentiating yourself from other applicants and convincing an employer that you possess the skills, qualities and characteristics that will enable you to bring immediate value to the employer’s business.

Properly Address Your Letter

- Unless you are responding to a blind listing, your letter should be addressed to a specific individual. Make sure to have the correct spelling of the individual’s name and his/her title.

- If you are responding to a blind listing, there is no rule as to how you should address your cover letter.

- If you are addressing a lawyer, the name in the address portion of the letter should be followed by “Esq.” However, in the salutation of the letter you should use Mr. or Ms. (i.e., Dear Mr. ________).  

- Unless you are completely unable to determine a specific person to whom you should address/send your cover letter, do not address your letter “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To Whom it May Concern”. When you address a letter “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To Whom it May Concern”, it indicates a lack of due diligence on your part to ascertain the name of a specific person to whom you should be sending your application and it also creates the impression that you are sending out generic cover letters that are not specifically tailored to an employer or for a particular job opportunity.

- If you are writing to a judge, your salutation should read “Dear Judge ________”.

- Always include your return address on the letter and the envelope. Make certain that you include a reliable telephone number with an answering machine that has a mature and professional sounding greeting.

3-Paragraph, 1-Page Format

This approach works well for most cover letters. As with your resume, the cover letter should be no more than one page unless you have been asked to write some sort of personal statement.

First Paragraph

a. Identify yourself, including your year and school (but never begin with “My name is ...”).

b. Mention the position in which you are interested.

c. Indicate why you are interested in this specific employer. Your reasons may range from the geographic location to some particular background or interest in the employer’s area of practice. Caution: Do not state your reasons for interest in the employer in terms of what the employer can do for you. Employers hire people who can do something for the employer, not because the employer can do something for the employee.

Second Paragraph

a. Describe the skills and experiences that make you well-suited for this position. If you do not know the specific requirements of the position, try to think about the skills and traits that would make someone successful in this job. Employers don’t want to hear that you want this job because you will learn a lot from it. They want to know what you can do for them.
b. Draw on the information in your resume, but don’t repeat everything contained in it. Highlight something in your resume as it relates to the particular job you are seeking. You may want to briefly mention a specific project or event you worked on for one of your former employers. You may also want to mention specific courses you have taken that relate to the employer’s practice.

**Third Paragraph**

a. Ask for an interview in a polite way (i.e., I look forward to meeting you in the near future; I would appreciate the opportunity to interview with you and other members of your firm).

b. Indicate how you can be reached and your availability for interviews. Make certain that you provide a working telephone number with an answering machine that you will check several times a day during business hours.

c. If you say that you will call the employer, make sure to do so.

d. Finally, thank the reader for taking the time to consider your application.

**Other Documents to Send**

**Beyond Your Resume and Cover Letter**

Where appropriate, you may enclose additional materials, such as a particularly good writing sample, an article you wrote that was published, an unofficial copy of a transcript with relevant course work highlighted, or a particularly glowing recommendation. If you are sending such additional documents, reference them in your cover letter (i.e., In addition to my resume, I am enclosing…; For your further consideration I have enclosed…). These types of materials should not be sent under all circumstances. For example, if you are responding to a job posting and the job posting asks you to submit a cover letter and resume, the general rule is that you should send only the requested documents. If you send other documents in addition to those requested, an employer may infer that you are not capable of following instructions. If you have any doubts about what documents to include with an application, please speak with an OCS counselor.

**Walk the Fine Line Between Self-Promotion and Arrogance**

Some students find it hard to promote themselves, but that is what a cover letter requires. On the other hand, while you want to come across as confident and self-assured, you do not want to seem cocky or arrogant. Although a cover letter allows for some creativity, don’t be so creative that your letter is considered weird or inappropriate. Remember, lawyers are still a very conservative bunch. Have a career counselor read your cover letter to provide some useful perspective.

**Paper and Printing**

a. Use standard, conservative colors for your cover letter stationery: white or ivory. Do not use paper that is distracting (i.e., mottled, a design watermarked on it, little bits of other material woven into it, etc).

b. Use good bond weight paper (generally 16-25 lbs.) but do not use paper that is so stiff that it looks and feels like cardboard or construction paper. It is often a good idea to use the same paper your resume is printed on.

c. As with your resume, make sure that your print quality is good. Do not use a dot matrix printer. If you do not have a good printer, use the one we have at OCS.

d. Use a professional font size and style (i.e., 12 point Times New Roman font).

e. Do not handwrite the address on the envelope. Use a laser printer or even a typewriter.

**Miscellaneous Cover Letter Writing Tips**

a. Do not discuss salary or benefits desired in a cover letter unless this information is specifically requested by the employer in the job announcement.

b. Remember to sign your letter.

c. Check your letter carefully for spelling, grammar and awkward sentence structures. Colloquialisms and contractions are inappropriate.
March 4, 2010

Jeffrey Alan Seigel, Esq.
Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee
77 E. Main Street
Bay Shore, NY 11706

Dear Mr. Seigel:

I am enclosing my resume for consideration as a staff attorney with the Disability Advocacy Project at Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee. Currently, I am a third-year student at your alma mater, Hofstra Law School, and expect to receive my J.D. in May. I believe I can bring substantial value to Nassau/Suffolk Law Services because of my longstanding commitment to assisting the under-served populations in our community and the skills I developed throughout law school.

As a graduate of Hofstra Law School, I am sure that you know of the extraordinary work being carried on in our various clinics. I had the privilege of working in the Asylum Clinic where I handled my own caseload representing political asylum applicants in immigration proceedings. I am also an active participant in Hofstra’s student-run Unemployment Action Center (UAC). Through the UAC I have represented clients in administrative hearings regarding their right to receive unemployment benefits. This work has been most gratifying and has deepened my commitment to continue helping the indigent after graduation. My other legal experience has also helped to prepare me for a position as staff attorney. I have developed my research and writing skills through my work for Professor Perry Mason and as a law clerk at Schwartzberg, Levy & Katz. Finally, serving as a literacy volunteer has enabled me to confront some of the issues of working with individuals whose backgrounds are very different from my own.

If your schedule allows, I would enjoy meeting with you to learn more about the work of a Nassau/Suffolk Law Services attorney and to explore with you in more detail why I would be an asset to your staff.

Very truly yours,

Jane Swift
September 15, 2010

Sheryl Marks, Esq.
Marks, Robinson & Jones
345 Old Country Road
Mineola, NY 11500

Dear Ms. Marks:

I am a third-year student at Hofstra University School of Law and am interested in working for a mid-size firm with a significant real estate practice. My superior research and writing skills coupled with my course work in real estate law would be an asset to your office. I would be interested in a part-time position with your firm, if such a position is available.

I have strong research and writing skills, which I have developed through my course work and legal positions. My research for Professor Perry Mason required me to revise and edit an article to publishable quality. Through the Housing Rights Clinic and my summer at Schwartzberg, Katz & Levy, I learned how to deal professionally and effectively with clients, investigate and develop a case, and draft legal documents, including pleadings. Last spring, I took Real Estate Transactions, which sparked my interest in this field. In addition to enjoying the course tremendously, I was the only student in the class to receive an A.

Enclosed are my resume and a writing sample. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you regarding a position with your firm during the school year. Please contact me at your earliest convenience at (516) 555-5555. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Swift
November 10, 2010

Margaret Chin, Esq.
National Labor Relations Board, Region 12
201 E. Kennedy Boulevard
Tampa, Florida 33602-5824

Dear Ms. Chin:

I am a second-year student at Hofstra University School of Law with a strong interest in labor law and am writing to you regarding summer internship opportunities with your office. I am confident that my background and qualifications make me well-suited for the work performed by the NLRB, and I would welcome the opportunity to work for the Board.

My interest in the issues surrounding labor law dates back to when I was in high school and the teachers in my school district engaged in an illegal walk out after they failed to successfully negotiate a new contract. A number of teachers were arrested, and I began asking questions about why they were not allowed to strike and what mechanisms existed to protect the teachers, the district and the students. This interest has grown while in law school. In order to further develop my legal research and writing skills, I entered our law school writing competition and was selected as a member of the Hofstra Labor & Employment Law Journal. My note on collective bargaining over the issue of drug testing will be published in the spring volume. I am also taking Labor Law and Collective Bargaining this spring, so I will have further developed my knowledge of labor law before the summer.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you regarding summer positions in your office. Enclosed are my resume and a copy of my note. I will be in Florida from December 23 to January 7 and am available to come to Tampa at that time. Please contact me if you would like to schedule an interview or require any additional materials from me.

Sincerely,

John Doe
February 15, 2011

Paul D’Amore, Esq.
D’Amore & Johnson, P.C.
32 Franklin Avenue
Garden City, New York 11531

Dear Mr. D’Amore:

I am a second-year student at Hofstra University School of Law and am responding to your job announcement at our Office of Career Services for a part-time law clerk during the school year. My current class schedule allows me to work a full day on Friday and half days on Monday and Tuesday. I am particularly interested in working for D’Amore & Johnson because of your extensive practice in labor and employment law. It is my intention to seek employment in this field upon graduation.

Through my work on the Hofstra Labor and Employment Law Journal and the introductory Labor Law course I took during the fall semester with Professor Grant Hayden, I already have a working knowledge of many of the laws and legal principles that govern this area of practice. In researching my article for the Journal, I had the opportunity to read and analyze the leading collective bargaining case of Moe v. Curley and its progeny. Further, as an active member of the Labor & Employment Committee of the Nassau County Bar Association, I am helping to plan a CLE program on “How to Handle Basic Employment Discrimination Cases.” Last summer, as an intern for the Suffolk County District Attorney’s office, I learned some basic litigation skills when I was given responsibility for interviewing witnesses and assisting the assistant district attorneys at trial. I hope to be able to apply the skills I learned at the district attorney’s office to effectively resolve labor and employment disputes.

My resume and a copy of my journal article are enclosed for your review. Thank you for your time and consideration of my application. I look forward to having the opportunity to meet you at your convenience to learn more about D’Amore & Johnson and to discuss my qualifications for this position in greater detail.

Very truly yours,

John Doe
Curtis Smith
567 Elm Drive
Mineola, NY 11500
(516) 555-5555
csmith1@pride.hofstra.edu

December 1, 2010

James Black, Esq.
Techno Enterprises
One Corporate Drive
Anywhere, NY 11111

Dear Mr. Black:

Like many members of the Long Island community, I have watched with great interest the incredible success of Techno Enterprises. I have been particularly impressed with the way in which it has evolved from a systems management company for the mainframe platform into a dynamic and diverse business. I am a first year law student at Hofstra Law School and am looking for ways to combine my legal training with my background in business and finance.

From an outsider’s perspective, your position as general counsel for Techno Enterprises seems like an ideal blend of business and law. In addition to wanting to learn more about the work performed by in-house counsel and how lawyers move into such positions, I am also seeking input from corporate lawyers as to whether it is advisable for someone with my background and interests to enroll in the J.D./M.B.A. program at Hofstra.

I realize that you have many demands placed on you throughout your work day, but I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you briefly in person or by telephone. I will contact you at your office next week to see if you are available for such a discussion. If you would prefer to contact me, I can be reached at (516) 555-5555.

Sincerely,

Curtis Smith
March 14, 2010

Jane Collins, Esq.
Legal Department
Citibank
Reckson Plaza
Uniondale, NY 11553

Dear Ms. Collins:

My former colleague at Capital One Bank, Patricia Adams, suggested that I contact you about a position as a law clerk in your department this summer. I am just completing my first year at Hofstra Law School and am eager to utilize both my legal education and my background in banking and business during my summer recess.

My experience in banking and finance will enable me to assess the legal issues confronted by the bank with a deeper level of understanding. As the assistant manager for a branch of the Capital One Bank, I became familiar with many aspects of the banking industry, especially home mortgages. At Franchisehelp, I had the opportunity to work closely with numerous investment banks and to observe that process from the inside. I also became quite adept at analyzing financial reports and assessing the economic stability of various corporate entities.

Ms. Adams has spoken very highly of you and the quality of the work of your department. If there is a position available, I would be honored to be part of your office this summer. Enclosed is my resume for your review. Please contact me at your convenience if you have any questions or require any further documentation. I look forward to having the opportunity to meet you in the near future.

Sincerely

Curtis Smith
SAMPLE JUDICIAL INTERNSHIP LETTER

Curtis Smith
567 Elm Drive
Mineola, New York 11500
(516) 555-5555

January 15, 2010

Honorable Denis R. Hurley, Sr.
United States District Court, Eastern District of New York
Long Island Federal Courthouse
200 Federal Plaza
Central Islip, New York 11722

Dear Judge Hurley:

I applied to law school with the intention of becoming a litigator and, during my first year at Hofstra Law School, my passion for litigation remains unabated. I am interested in participating in the judicial process during my summer break from law school. I am certain that learning how cases are handled within the court system will make me a better litigator. To clerk in your chambers this summer would be an honor because my law school colleague, John Doe, who clerked for you last summer, spoke so highly of you and the interesting research assignments he was given.

The research and legal writing skills I am learning in school will enable me to effectively assist the court with its work. For my legal writing class, I am currently drafting a memorandum of law about the constitutionality under the Equal Protection Clause of certain racial classifications that are used to foster voluntary integration of students in public schools. I have found this project to be exceedingly interesting and would like to continue to engage in research and writing during the summer.

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. I would enjoy the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience. I can reached at (516) 555-5555. Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to consider my application.

Respectfully,

Curtis Smith
THE THANK-YOU LETTER

OCS Policy on Thank-You Letters
As a general rule, OCS recommends discretion with respect to the sending of thank-you letters. Most attorneys prefer not to receive thank-you letters, and, more often than not, these letters are disregarded in their entirety. More importantly, you are not likely to obtain a job on the basis of a thank-you letter, however, you could easily lose a job if you send one that is poorly drafted. A single typographical error in a brief thank-you letter can be enough to convince a prospective employer that you do not possess the attention to detail the employer expects and demands.

The ultimate decision whether or not to send a thank-you letter is yours. If you feel compelled to send a thank-you letter, OCS recommends that you keep the following guidelines in mind.

When to Send a Thank-You Letter
• Within 24 hours after an interview.

• EXCEPTION: On-campus screening interviews do not generally require you to send a thank-you letter. Usually the decision to invite you for a call-back interview is made within 72 hours of the screening interview.

To Whom Should the Thank-You Letter Be Sent?
• To each attorney you interviewed with (partners and associates). On call-back interviews at large law firms, you may interview with four or five different attorneys and the recruiting coordinator. The same is true for second-round interviews with some government agencies. At a small or mid-size firm or when interviewing with a nonprofit organization, it may only be one or two people.

• Make sure to note the full name, correct spelling and title of each attorney you meet with.

• Consider sending a typed letter or hand-written thank-you note as opposed to an email. Attorneys are now so inundated with email that your emailed thank-you note may never be read or may get caught up in an aggressive spam/junk mail filter. You may actually get yourself noticed and stand out in the crowd by adhering to the old school method of sending a letter or hand-written note. Again, however, do not send anything to any employer that is not absolutely perfect. A poorly written or typo-filled thank-you note will do much more harm than good.

The Content of a Thank-You Letter
• When writing to several different people at the same firm, make each letter a little different and personalized.

• Thank the person for taking time from their busy schedule to meet with you.

• Refer to some topic or issue that you particularly enjoyed discussing with the individual.

• Refer to, and enclose, any follow-up documents that you agreed at the interview to supply.
April 10, 2010

Jeffrey Alan Seigel, Esq.
Nassau/Suffolk Law Services Committee
77 E. Main Street
Bay Shore, NY 11706

Dear Mr. Seigel:

I enjoyed meeting with you and the other Law Services attorneys and staff earlier this week. The meeting gave me a much better understanding of the work performed by Law Services and the significant challenges and rewards involved in such work.

I am enthusiastic about the prospect of joining the other Hofstra alumni at Law Services. I am confident that my commitment to work on behalf of the indigent combined with my legal and interpersonal skills will make me an asset to your office.

Please let me know if you need any additional materials or information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Swift
January 5, 2011

Margaret Chin, Esq.
National Labor Relations Board, Region 12
201 E. Kennedy Boulevard
Tampa, Florida 33602-5824

Dear Ms. Chin:

It was a pleasure meeting with you and your colleagues yesterday. Seeing the work environment at the NLRB first hand confirmed my desire to work there. I especially appreciated the input of attorneys in your office on my journal note. It was reassuring to learn that my perspective on collective bargaining over drug testing is a realistic one, as it is my desire to apply the principles that I am learning in law school to practical situations.

As you requested, I have enclosed a list of professional references. Please contact me if you need further information. I look forward to hearing from you, and I hope that I will be seeing you this summer.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Doe
The successful interview is no accident. It requires:

- Thorough preparation.
- Comprehensive research about the employer.
- An analysis of what special skills, abilities and qualities you have that will enable you to contribute to the organization.
- A convincing presentation of your career goals.
- Thoughtful questions to ask the prospective employer.
- Intelligent answers to tough questions.

How do I prepare for an interview

A request for an interview from a prospective employer means that you have half a job offer. That should give you a feeling of confidence and hope. The employer has been impressed by your resume and cover letter and wants to find out if you are the person he/she assumes you to be and if you will fit well into his/her firm or office. Something in the resume has made you seem to be an ideal employee. It is up to you to assess what that might be. Then prepare by taking the following steps.

1. Assess your own strengths that would make you an ideal employee for this firm or office. The following list represents the results of a Harvard Law School survey of alumni/ae and a National Law Journal survey of managing partners at major law firms identifying the skills important to the partnership evaluation process.

   Top Qualities Key to Success in the Practice of Law
   (in no particular order)

   - Ability to build networks.
   - Ability to get along with and impress clients.
   - Ability to get along with colleagues.
   - Ability to manage complex tasks.
   - Ability to solve problems creatively.
   - Ability to work well under pressure.
   - Ability to deal with and manage people.
   - Ability to inspire confidence.
   - Agreement with firm’s lifestyle and philosophy.
   - Achievement in a related field.
   - Analytical abilities.
   - Business planning.
   - Commitment/Drive.
   - Determination.
   - Fact gathering and analysis.
   - Financial analysis and management.
   - Good judgment and common sense.
   - Interviewing skills.
   - Leadership skills.
   - Legal research.
   - Legal drafting and writing.
   - Mediation.
   - Negotiation.
   - Oral advocacy/communication skills.
   - Outgoing personality/professional appearance.
   - Political judgment.
   - Productivity/Ability to use firm’s time and resources efficiently.
   - Public service/community involvement.
   - Rainmaking (ability to bring in new clients and new business from existing clients).
   - Willingness to put in long hours.

   Which of these are your strengths?

   My strengths:
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 
   6.

   Past achievements that demonstrate these strengths:
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 
   6.

2. Research the prospective employer for information that makes that firm or office outstanding or at least very interesting in comparison with its peers. It is imperative that you thoroughly research an employer prior to your interview. You will be expected to be knowledgeable about the firm and its work. When you are asked at the end of the interview whether you have any questions, “What kind of work do you do?” is not an appropriate response!

After reviewing all information about the firm, conduct a LEXIS/NEXIS search to locate stories about the firm, its personnel, and recent notable cases and transactions that the firm worked on. It is quick and easy — and demonstrates your interest in the firm to the interviewer. A most valuable research tool is the Internet. The majority of larger firms and many small or mid-size firms will have websites, some of which are quite extensive.

Another resource to be aware of is the Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory. This multi-volume directory, updated annually, is a list of lawyers admitted to practice in the United States. Every lawyer in the directory is listed alphabetically in their geographical location (usually by town or city) in the “blue” pages in the front of each hard copy volume. The balance of each volume contains information about firms and their members (note hometown, undergraduate school and law school, areas of practice, position, and years with the firm to guide you in the questions you pose to each interviewer); firms must pay per line for these listings, so some firms elect to print the names and biographies of their partners but not their
Be courteous and professional to each and every person with whom you come in contact at a law firm. Hiring attorneys expect you to be obsequious — the key is to demonstrate your respect for and ability to get along with every member of the team, from the Managing Partner to the entry-level file clerk. Many firms put a very high premium on democratic treatment of staff, and a pushy, arrogant law student will go over like a lead balloon.

4. Make sure you have a respectable looking folder with several copies of your resume and a writing sample. You may also want to bring a separate sheet listing three references.

5. Plan what you will wear. The ideal is to look “Brooks Brothers” professional (although you need not pay Brooks Brothers prices to achieve “the look”). You should wear a suit even if the firm has a casual dress policy (unless otherwise instructed by someone at the firm).

**MALE ATTIRE**

* Your hair and beard (if any) should be short and neatly trimmed. Minimal facial hair is ideal. At the risk of squelching your individuality or ethnic identity, think professional, businesslike and conservative.

* Wear a freshly pressed single-breasted suit, with a crisp white or blue shirt and conservative tie. Your suit need not be Armani or Hugo Boss, but it must be well-cared for and professional.

* Make sure your breath is fresh and clean. No gum, please. Don’t smoke before the interview.

* Your shoes should be neatly polished business oxfords; remember, the socks should match the shoes, not the suit. No excessive jewelry, flashy watches or bracelets. Earrings or other visible body piercings are not advisable.

* No after-shave or cologne.

**FEMALE ATTIRE**

* Your hair should be neatly coiffed; if below shoulder-length, a professional look off the face is preferred. As with the gentlemen, think professional; you don’t want the attention to be called to your appearance but to your qualifications.

* Choosing an appropriate outfit for the interview is important; women’s wardrobes are more flexible than the “business uniform” men can easily jump into. While dresses are suitable for work, stick to a two-piece suit for interviews. It need not be a cookie-cutter blue wool suit, but do confine yourself to quiet, professional tones. No short skirts and no ankle-length skirts. At the knee or slightly above is appropriate. Pantsuits that are professional in appearance are also now considered generally acceptable interview attire.

* You should not wear perfume. Your nails should be neatly trimmed. If you wear nail polish, use clear or nude colors.
**At the Interview**

The three “Ps” apply: poised, pleasant and professional:

1. **Handshake**

   Nothing gets an interview off to a rocky start like a weak handshake. It veritably screams: “I lack confidence! I’m nervous! I don’t belong here!” Smile and look the interviewer in the eye and offer a firm, not bone-crushing, shake. This seemingly minor detail is a skill worth mastering. There is a misconception that somehow women are immune from this rule, and that it is acceptable, even “ladylike,” to offer a dainty handshake instead of a confident and professional one. This is business; your firm handshake will convey assertiveness, confidence and poise.

   If your palms tend to be clammy when you’re nervous, plan ahead and keep a cotton handkerchief in your pocket.

2. **Greetings**

   The secret to leaving a positive impression with your interviewer is to walk the fine line between confident friendliness and appropriate businesslike formality. Address each attorney as “Mr.” or “Ms.” until you are told, “Please, call me [first name].” This may seem a small point, but some attorneys are particularly sensitive to the pecking order and will resent being addressed on a firstname basis by a law student, even if you are in fact older than the interviewer.

3. **Have a Seat**

   Sit up straight with both feet on the floor. You want to appear relaxed but alert and interested, so you do not want to perch anxiously on the very edge of your seat, but neither do you want to lounge carelessly. Feel free to change position as the topic of conversation switches, to lean forward to make a point. If you tend to use your hands expressively, that’s fine. You should gesture but don’t flail them about as if you’re conducting a symphony orchestra. Hands can be folded in your lap or one may be placed gracefully across each other but do not clasp fingers together – that looks tense and restricts gestures. The aim is not to follow these guidelines to the letter, but to adopt a comfortable professional posture and keep wild gesturing and quirky habits to a minimum, so that the attention remains on the substance of the conversation, your qualifications for the job.

4. **Breaking the Ice**

   There is a psychological component to the art of interviewing. Each and every attorney with whom you speak will adopt a different style and bring his or her own set of preconceived notions and personality traits to the process. Your goal is to be observant and responsive to the subtle cues the interviewer is sending. Remember, interviewing is a two-way street. You are expected to be a participant, not a spectator. The most successful interviews take place when the parties immediately establish common ground, a mutual interest or common acquaintance that serves as an ice-breaker. To assist in that process, include on your resume your hobbies, travels and other seemingly irrelevant information under the heading “Additional Information”.

   Certainly, if you’ve done your homework and are aware that you and the interviewer attended the same undergraduate school, you’re in luck. Tales of campus life, sports, professors and alumnì/æ events will go a long way toward breaking the ice. If the attorney is an addition to your schedule, or the firm or the attorney is not listed in Martindale-Hubbell, sneak a glance at the diplomas on the wall. Evidence of sorority or fraternity membership (“Hey, I’m a member of the Loyal Order of Water Buffaloes, too!”) is a wonderful starting point. If you get desperate, there are always current events, sports and traffic conditions.

5. **Smoking**

   In a race between two equally qualified people, the nonsmoker will win out over the smoker 94% of the time, according to a study by a professor of business at Seattle University. Obviously, do not smoke at any time during your time at the firm, even if the interviewer does. **Make sure that your clothes and breath have no trace of tobacco smoke.**

6. **Voice**

   Your voice should be well-modulated and expressive. Make sure it is loud enough to be heard. Avoid colloquialisms (yeah, like, you know, me and my friend as subject).

7. **Eye Contact**

   Maintain direct eye contact most of the time. Otherwise you are not projecting an image of trustworthiness nor are you communicating assertively.

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**Extension of the Office Interviews**
When taken out for a meal by a prospective employer, avoid ordering the most expensive item on the menu; avoid food that might have more than a hint of garlic or many onions; don’t order something that will be difficult to eat (i.e., lobster is not a good idea); MOST IMPORTANTLY, do not order any alcoholic drink. A little alcohol in a food sauce would not be a problem since it evaporates in the cooking process. Remember, a meal with a prospective employer (even junior associates) is still part of the interview. Stick to appropriate conversation topics (i.e., don’t discuss the all-night bar-hopping party you attended last week).

Questions You Must Be Ready to Answer
After a review of your background, the interviewer can ask you some of the following questions, for which you should have prepared but not memorized answers. Be clear and concise, not rambling. Most interviews last for a total of 20 minutes to half an hour.

• How did you learn about us?
• Why did you decide to interview with us?
• What criteria are you using to distinguish us from other employers?
• With which other employees/firms are you interviewing? Why? (Don’t be afraid to answer this question – employers know that they are not the only firm you have applied to.)
• Why did you choose Hofstra Law School?
• What law school course have you enjoyed the most? The least? Why?
• Why did you choose law as a career?
• How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
• Where do you see yourself in five (5) years? (Be very careful how you answer this one ... if you see yourself in your own practice, a law firm may not want to spend the time and money training you.)
• What are the most important rewards you expect from a legal career?
• What qualities should a successful lawyer possess?
• What qualifications and personal qualities do you have that make you think you will make a successful lawyer?
• What do you think it takes to be successful in a firm like ours?
• In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our practice?
• What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
• How would you describe yourself?
• What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
• How do you work under pressure?
• In what kind of environment are you most comfortable?
• How do you determine or evaluate success?
• What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
• What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives? When and why did you establish these goals, and how are you planning to achieve them?
• What are your interests outside of work?
• What was the last movie you saw or last book you read?

Questions You Can Ask the Interviewer
One can only discern a certain amount of information from resumes, newspaper articles and even informational interviews with alumni/ae. As you conduct your research, make note of the questions that arise. Intelligent, genuine inquiries are easy to recognize; employers will appreciate your sincerity and interest in the firm. Plus, the more you know about each organization, agency or employer the better able you will be to distinguish among employers when it comes time to accept that job offer. One should NEVER bring a pad to take notes or to read from notes at an interview.

The type of questions that you might want to pose in the course of an interview include:

• How is work assigned?
• What is your typical work day like? What is the typical day of an employee in the position you are interviewing for?
• Does an employee in the position for which you are interviewing have an opportunity to work directly with partners? With clients?
• Have you always worked in this practice area? How did you come to be in this area?
• What do you enjoy most about working at this firm/organization?
• Is there a sense of team work and collegiality among the attorneys?
• How would you describe the office culture and work environment?
• Are there formal training opportunities? (this may be addressed in their written material)
• Are employees in the position for which you are interviewing given regular formal or informal feedback on the quality of their work and their progress?
• What do you think are the benefits of working in a [large firm] [small firm] [government agency] [public interest organization] [corporation] such as this?
• I read about the firm/organization’s involvement in the [xxx litigation] [yyy transaction]. How is a [case] [deal] like that staffed? What part could an employee in the position for which you are interviewing play in such a matter?
• Do most attorneys have the opportunity to engage in pro bono work? In what types of pro bono projects are firm attorneys involved? Is there an opportunity to have pro bono work supervised? What is the firm’s policy on pro bono work?
• How has the firm/organization changed in the years since you began working here?
• How do you think the firm/organization will change in the next five years?
• What practice areas show promise of significant growth? Decline?
• What makes an attorney a success here?
• What skills are valued most?
• What qualities are most important in the selection of an employee in the position for which you are interviewing? What is the next step in the hiring process?
• Is there anything else I can tell you about myself or my qualifications?

When you truly have no more questions to ask: “I really don’t have any further questions right now, thank you. I appreciate your taking the time to speak with me. It’s helpful to know that this is a firm [with a lot of potential for growth and advancement] [with a supportive environment and such extensive associate training] [where an associate can take on as much responsibility as he or she can handle]. I’m extremely interested in working here this summer; I hope I’ll have the opportunity to see you then.”

Other Specific Questions
I Want to Ask the Interviewer.
At the end of the interview there is always an open-ended question, e.g., Is there anything else that we have not discussed that you would like me to know?

Answer this with some information that may have been omitted that you feel is very important for the interviewer to know. Otherwise, go into your concluding remarks. Be upbeat, enthusiastic.

Be Prepared to Discuss at Length
Any Item on Your Resume.
• Review written work from past positions (that is why it is vital to keep a copy of each and every piece of work you complete for each employer). A prospective employer will want to see that you can clearly and concisely articulate issues.
• Practice explaining your appellate advocacy brief, the substance of a major research assignment you completed or your Note topic, and be ready to respond to questions about it.
• If you feel confident enough about an experience to list it on your resume, a prospective employer will expect you to discuss it intelligently.
• If you have provided an employer with a writing sample, reacquaint yourself thoroughly with its content.

You Want to See Them, But Why Do They Want to See You?
Something on your resume or in your cover letter attracted the attention of this particular employer. Can you identify what it is? Typically, the important factors to an employer will depend upon the nature of the organization’s practice, its plans for growth, and the qualities these attorneys value in their own employees. All employers do not have the same perceptions of what makes a successful entry-level attorney. What may be perceived as a negative to one firm might be the most positive factor to another. A small general practice firm might be seeking an applicant who can work extremely well with little supervision, putting a high premium on past business experience and maturity. A large firm might give a candidate with a strong record of academic achievement and less practical experience serious consideration, understanding that this person shows great promise for learning complex corporate transactions and need not work unsupervised in this environment. The work of a legal services organization demands the practical experience, common sense and expertise in dealing with clients that clinical work provides. The bottom line is that something attracted the attention of this organization – you are being given the chance to build upon that positive reaction and to educate the attorney about all of the exceptional abilities and qualities you have that cannot be expressed in a resume. The more you know about the prospective employer, the better sense you will have about why you were an attractive applicant for this organization.

In order to identify your potential contribution to the organization, you must be aware of the specific requirements of the job, what qualities are valued in employees there, and how successful performance is measured. A comment regarding the organization’s bottom line: In law firms that bill clients by the hour, naturally an associate’s billable hours will be scrutinized; an attorney must work hard enough to meet or exceed the target for monthly billable hours, while accomplishing assignments efficiently and effectively so that the client considers the fee reasonable for the matter involved. In the case of firms that charge clients a flat fee or accept matters on a contingency basis, efficiency is essential; an attorney must work hard enough to meet or exceed the target for monthly billable hours, while accomplishing assignments efficiently and effectively so that the client considers the fee reasonable for the matter involved. In the case of firms that charge clients a flat fee or accept matters on a contingency basis, efficiency is essential; an attorney must be capable of juggling as many cases as possible. In a large firm’s office or other organizational environment, an attorney’s record of successful disposition of cases is important.

The Call-Back Interview
If you succeed in impressing the interviewer during the on-campus or initial screening interview, you will probably be invited to a “call-back” interview at the employer’s office. The purpose of the call-back interview is twofold: a wider variety of attorneys from the firm or organization will have the opportunity to meet and evaluate you, and the employer, should it decide you are a “hot-prospect,” can further the process of selling itself to you.

The key to making the most of the call-back interview is to keep your eyes and ears open at all times —observe everything.
• What is the overall atmosphere?
• Is there a hushed silence and formality, or does bustling chaos predominate?
• Do the attorneys keep their doors open or shut?
• Is there friendly chatting going on in the halls and common spaces?
• Do the attorneys seem to treat the support staff respectfully?
• Does a good rapport among the attorneys seem to exist?
• Do the attorneys walk the halls with jackets on or off?
• Most importantly, do you feel comfortable here?

In the case of a large firm, you will probably interview individually with four or five attorneys and have lunch with two more. If you choose to send thank you notes, do not send the same note to each person. Make sure you take note of the names of each interviewer. Often the recruiting coordinator will provide you with a written schedule of your visit to the firm, including the names and departments of the attorneys and recruiting personnel with whom you will meet. If not, note the name on the attorney’s door and unobtrusively make a note between interviews; you can always check names and spelling with the recruiting department or in the Martindale-Hubbell directory following your visit to the firm. If you have a call-back interview with a small firm, government employer or nonprofit organization, the logistics may vary. You may meet with a single attorney or multiple attorneys, and you may also meet with other members of the staff. As with a big firm call-back, this is another opportunity for you to market yourself and for you to find out if this employer is right for you.

A call-back interview can be somewhat grueling; you are ushered from office to office and are often asked many of the same questions repeatedly. It is critical to keep your energy level and enthusiasm high; approach each separate interview as a new challenge and a fresh opportunity to give the interviewer an opportunity to get to know a different facet of your personality and capabilities.

Inappropriate and Illegal Questions — And How to Handle Them

Even though attorneys should clearly know better, interviewers sometimes ask inappropriate or even illegal questions of job applicants. Because the ignorance of one lawyer does not necessarily reflect the views or environment of the firm, you need to know how to handle such questions with grace and tact.

1. Do not become angry or defensive. Calmly rephrase and restate the question in a way that permits you to avoid the inappropriate issue and focus instead on a selling point for you. An illegal question regarding your marital status, for example, can be responded to by saying, “I want to assure you that my career is my top priority, and I understand that working with this organization will require a total commitment and long hours. I am fully prepared to give this position my complete attention and dedication.” You may then proceed to illustrate your hard-working nature by citing another job where such commitment was required and you rose to the occasion.

2. The most important thing to do following such an incident is to report it immediately to Dean Ende in OCS. OCS takes such matters very seriously. Please let us help you handle these difficult situations and take the appropriate action. (All such investigations are handled with the utmost discretion and confidentiality to protect our students and alumni/ae.)

3. Be aware that various federal, state and local laws protect you against employment discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, veterans, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation. OCS requires every employer using our services to adhere to our Statement of Non-Discrimination, which states:

Hofstra University School of Law is committed to a policy against discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, handicap or disability, or sexual orientation. The Career Services facilities of the Law School are available only to employers whose practices are consistent with this policy. Your signature below indicates your understanding that use of Hofstra Law School Career Services’ Facilities requires adherence to this policy.

According to government and private guidelines, the interviewer must refrain from the following inquiries to avoid conflict with federal or state laws:

Race or Color: No comment should be made regarding your race or color in an interview, and you are not required to provide such information on a job application. You should not be asked to supply a picture of yourself when you apply for a job.

National Origin: An interviewer should not inquire as to your national origin, lineage, ancestry or descent, or that of your spouse, unless the employer is an organization promoting a particular national heritage. If fluency in a foreign language is relevant to the job, you will obviously be asked about your skills, but the interviewer should not ask whether the language is your native tongue or even how you acquired that fluency if that might reveal information about your national origin. Regarding citizenship, if the job requires that an attorney be a U.S. citizen, the interviewer may ask only if you would have the requisite citizen status to accept the job at the time you would be commencing work. No broad questions regarding your citizenship, immigration status or whether you are a U.S. born or naturalized citizen may be asked about you or your parents or spouse.
Religion or Creed: An employer, other than a religious organization, should not inquire into your religious background or beliefs. If your religious convictions are relevant to your performance of the job, such as your ability to work on a particular day, this issue may be discussed, but the interviewer cannot raise the issue by asking your religion or suggesting that you might have objections to the job for that reason.

Gender and Marital Status: Your gender should be irrelevant to any hiring decision. An interviewer should not raise questions regarding your marital status, whether or not your spouse is employed, even whom you would wish to be notified in the case of an emergency. A woman should not be asked if she prefers to be addressed as “Mrs., Miss or Ms.” Likewise, questions regarding children, child care arrangements, the likelihood of pregnancy and your views about birth control are off-limits. Even seemingly relevant questions such as “Can you type?” can be discriminatory if asked of women but not of men.

Age: Generally, as long as you are an adult under the age of 70, your age should be irrelevant in a hiring decision. Because special laws govern the employment of minors and individuals aged 70 and older, applicants can be asked whether they fall into either of those two categories. However, employers can usually accurately ascertain an applicant’s age by reviewing work experience and education records.

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act protects employees from discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap and in many cases requires employers to provide appropriate accommodations to employees in the work environment. If you have questions regarding the duties required for a particular position and your rights to accommodations under the ADA, you should discuss the matter prior to the interview with Dean Ende in OCS.

Before You Accept That Job Offer: Can You Answer These 25 Key Questions?

In order to ensure your job satisfaction and success, carefully evaluate the prospective employer and feel confident that the “fit” is right for you. Why do you want to work for this organization? (“Because the firm gave me an offer” is not the right answer!) A partner at a top Wall Street law firm provides this list of important questions for you to consider before you make this critical professional decision. (For those of you interviewing with government agencies or nonprofits substitute your employer where it says “firm” and many of these questions will apply.) Please note: Some of these questions will be inapplicable to solo or small firms.

1. What is the firm’s general character - its stability and reputation? Have there been any significant split-ups in its history?
2. What are its specialties and major areas of practice?
3. Are its clients solid and varied, with important and interesting problems?
4. Is the firm’s success tied to many clients or a few? How is the firm affected by the business cycle, i.e., periods of recession?
5. Is the caliber of the firm’s lawyers uniformly high, with solid and able people at all age levels and in all important legal areas?
6. Are the firm’s lawyers persons in whose legal ability, judgment and standards you will have confidence and pride?
7. Are the firm’s lawyers persons with whom you will enjoy working? Are they of sufficiently varied types and backgrounds to make the office interesting?
8. Do you think the composition of the firm and its management is sufficiently diverse (e.g., gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation)? Are efforts being made to make the firm more diverse?
9. Are the firm’s organization and administration systems sound, and apparently running smoothly? Are there cliques or dissidence?
10. What is the firm’s future? Is it getting and keeping new people of high caliber?
11. Has the number of the firm’s partners and associates grown significantly in the past 15 years?
12. What do new associates do? How is their work determined and assigned? How do the associates’ work and responsibilities change over the years?
13. When does an associate become established in a particular department or field of law? Who decides and how?
14. What about compensation - initial, bonuses, raises? What is the firm’s general philosophy on this? And are there significant “fringe benefits” (bar association membership, continuing legal education sponsorship, etc.)?
15. What are the firm’s policies in key areas such as parental leave and sexual harassment?
16. What emphasis is placed on getting new business and how does this affect compensation?
17. How is performance judged and by whom? What are the criteria for advancement? When does an associate become a partner?
18. Are partnership opportunities significantly affected by the business cycle, i.e., has the firm admitted fewer associates to partnership during periods of business decline?
19. On what basis is admission to partnership determined? Is it a “competitive standard,” i.e., restricted to a small proportion of partners to lawyers in a given field, or “meet
the firm's standards," i.e., all associates who meet the firm's standard of performance will become partners?

20. What does partnership entail - compensation, responsibilities, financial contribution?

21. If an associate does not become a partner, what opportunities does the associate have available? Does the firm help in this regard? Does the firm have many prominent and successful alumni/ae?

22. What is the relationship between younger and older lawyers in the firm - the channels of communication (formal and informal), the degree of contact and formality?

23. What are the firm's prevailing attitudes - and practices on such matters as pro bono work, community service, government service and bar association involvement?

24. Does the firm have a friendly atmosphere? Is it a place where people can laugh and enjoy themselves in spite of their hard work or is it stiff and formal? Is there a spirit of cooperation among the lawyers — a desire to help each other to get the job done well, or is there a harsh competitive spirit?

25. Is the locality a good place to work and live — with cultural and recreational activities, citizen interest, convenient, attractive residential areas with good schools?

Why Job Applicants Receive Rejections

- Late to interview without just cause.
- Lack of proper career planning purposes and goals ill-defined.
- Inability to express themselves clearly, poor diction, grammar.
- Insufficient evidence of achievement or capacity to excite action in others.
- Not prepared for the interview, no research on legal employer.
- No real interest in the firm, corporation or agency – merely “shopping around.”
- Little enthusiasm and interest, generally indifferent, apathetic.
- Overbearing, overly aggressive, conceited, arrogant.
- Ask no or poor questions about the job, especially questions proper research would have answered.
- Answer only “yes” or “no” to open-ended questions. Do not let their individual personality shine through.
- Overly focused upon money, interested only in best salary offer. (Do not discuss this topic until they make a salary offer.)
- Unwillingness to start at the bottom — expect too much, too soon.
- Make excuses — evasiveness — hedge on unfavorable factors in record — lie.
- Condemnation of past employers, no tact.
- Any sign of not following instructions or obeying rules.
- Insincerity — low ethical standards.
- Any sign of irresponsibility or tendency to goof off.
- Lack of vitality, slow-moving, lazy, lack of motivation.
- Any sign of constantly complaining or blaming things upon others.
- No knowledge of current events, world at large.
- Cynicism.
- No confidence and poise — fail to make eye contact with interviewer. Lack of maturity.
- Sloppy resume — typographical or grammatical errors in resume, cover letter, thank-you letter or writing sample.
- Weak/limp handshake (equally applicable to men and women).
- Unprofessional behavior — inappropriate comments, jokes, attitude.
- Intolerance, strong prejudices.
- Lack of courtesy to interviewer, secretary, receptionist, recruiting staff.
- Poor personal appearance.

Remember, you may not receive a job offer from an employer simply because the requisite fit is not there. And of course, there are always more exceptional and qualified candidates than there are job openings — and you only need one job. You want to find an organization where you can do your best work, feel comfortable in the work environment, contribute to the firm’s practice, and shine. If you have prepared thoroughly, presented yourself with enthusiasm, and made sure to communicate your most important relevant qualities and abilities for the job at hand, relax. You will find the right job opportunity in time, and if you have eliminated all possible negative aspects of your interviewing technique, the job offer will be yours to win.

Mock Interview Program

Successful interviewing is both an art form and a learnable skill. An interview for a career-related position can be a very stressful experience, but you can gain insight and learn to express yourself comfortably if you first study the requirements of interviewing and then practice your new skill in a mock interview offered by OCS.

Mock interviews are available, without charge, to students by appointment. Do not wait until a prospective employer calls you for an interview — participate in a mock interview well in advance of the real thing. Simply contact Diane Gayer at OCS at (516) 463-5871 or lawdlg@hofstra.edu to make an appointment for a mock interview.