



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

The Law School

**THE
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE GUIDEBOOK**

Career Development Office

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INTRODUCTION

The Notre Dame Law School Career Development Office staff has prepared this guide to serve as a basic introduction to the services we offer and the skills that all successful job seekers need to develop. Much more information is available on our website at law.nd.edu/careers, and we encourage you to explore that site fully.

We are here to assist you while you are a student and throughout your career as a Notre Dame Lawyer. Let us know how we can help!

GENERAL OVERVIEW

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Twitter: @NDLawCareers

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SERVICES

The Career Development Office is here to assist you in acquiring the tools and skills with which you can engage in a successful job search. These skills will serve you both during law school and in your post-graduate professional life.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

COUNSELING

Beginning October 15 of your 1L year and continuing throughout your career as a Notre Dame Lawyer, our career counselors are available to meet with you on an individual basis to discuss your personal goals and career development strategy.

There are two ways to meet or speak with CDO counselors:

- *Appointments*: Use Symplicity to schedule an appointment with a counselor. You can access Symplicity through the CDO website (Quick Link at the bottom of every page). Counseling appointments are generally thirty minutes long and can be conducted in person (preferable) or by telephone.
- *Walk-In Hours*: You may also speak with a CDO counselor by utilizing our walk-in hours. One CDO counselor is available to answer brief, career-related questions during walk-in hours each day: Monday – Friday: 12:45 – 4:45 p.m. and Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Walk-in meetings are generally fifteen minutes long. Should you need more time to speak with a CDO counselor, we encourage you to schedule an appointment.

CDO counselors are happy to assist with all aspects of your job search and routinely work with students on career path planning, resume and cover letter review, mock interviews/interview preparation, and networking.

CAREER PATH PLANNING

Planning your career path is an important element of a successful job search. CDO counselors are available to discuss your career goals and help you formulate a plan to develop the skills and experience you will need to enter your field of interest.

RESUME REVIEW

CDO counselors are happy to review and critique 1L student resumes beginning on October 15. Prior to meeting with a counselor for a resume review, you should review the Resume Guide on our website. You should format your resume by inserting your personal information directly into one of the CDO's resume templates, which are also available on our website. Please be sure to send your resume to the counselor you are meeting with at least 24 hours prior to your appointment to ensure they have time to review it in advance.

COVER LETTER REVIEW

Cover letters are a critical part of an application. CDO counselors can help you convey your interest in a position and articulate why you are an ideal candidate. Prior to meeting with a counselor for a cover letter review, you should review the Cover Letter Guide available on our website. Please be sure to send your cover letter to the counselor you are meeting with at least 24 hours prior to your appointment to ensure they have time to review it in advance.

MOCK INTERVIEW / INTERVIEW STRATEGY PREPARATION SESSION

CDO counselors are available to assess and critique interview skills through mock interviews. You can arrange for a mock interview by scheduling an appointment through Symplicity.

CDO counselors are also available to help you strategize about an upcoming interview and discuss how best to prepare for and present yourself to potential employers.

NETWORKING

No matter what career path you plan to pursue, networking is a critical component of every student's job search. CDO counselors can help you develop your networking strategy and teach you how to identify networking contacts, craft an outreach email, conduct a networking meeting, and maintain your contacts over time.

RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS (OCI):

Each year, the CDO coordinates on-campus interviews for 2L and 3L students (1L students may also participate during the spring). Legal employers come from all parts of the country to interview students for summer positions and permanent employment. See the Resource Center on the CDO website for details regarding this year's OCI program.

While NDLS offers a robust OCI program, we strongly encourage you not to rely solely on OCI. Instead, utilize all the job search resources at your disposal in order to maximize your career opportunities. Only a small percentage of students obtain long-term employment through the OCI process. The vast majority of students obtain positions through networking or other self-initiated contact with employers.

OFF-CAMPUS INTERVIEW PROGRAMS (OCIPs):

In addition to OCI, each year the CDO coordinates OCIPs in certain large legal markets popular with law students (e.g., New York City). Through membership in The Law Consortium, students can also participate in OCIPs in other markets such as Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington, DC. Through the OCIPs, 2L and 3L students have the opportunity to interview with local employers unable to come to campus to participate in our OCI program. See the Resource Center on the CDO website for more information regarding current OCIPs.

RESUME COLLECTIONS

Employers interested in Notre Dame Law School students and alumni also post opportunities in Symplicity. From unpaid internships to summer associate positions and more, employers from all over the country share opportunities. Symplicity is accessible through our website.

PROGRAMS

The CDO hosts a wide variety of career-related programs throughout the year designed to assist in your job search. Guest speakers, student panels, and CDO counselors provide practical information to help plan and navigate your job search. Programs are generally held over the lunch hour with food provided. All CDO programs are posted on the main NDLS calendar online. Watch for weekly program reminder e-mails, tweets @NDLawCareers and postings on Facebook (NDLawCareers). Programs can be recorded upon request. If you would like a program to be recorded, please contact the CDO in advance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TIMELINES

The professional development timelines that follow provide a general sketch of the basic activities you may engage in during your job search throughout law school. The specifics of your individual search will depend entirely on your own career interests and goals. We encourage all students to meet regularly with a CDO counselor to discuss their career interests and goals and plan the details of their own job search.

1L PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Fall Semester

- **Mandatory:** Attend the CDO Introduction Program in September.
- **Mandatory:** Have your professional photo taken. (The CDO will bring in a professional photographer for this purpose.)
- **Mandatory:** Attend the CDO 1L Orientation Program in October.
- Clean up social media accounts and increase privacy settings.
- Create a LinkedIn account if you do not already have one.
- Sign up to like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. (The CDO routinely posts important information on both.)
- Join student groups that are related to your career interests.
- Sign up for GALILEE (Group Alternative Live-In Legal Education) in your target market if interested.

After October 15

- **Mandatory:** Prepare your resume and cover letter using CDO templates and guides and meet with a CDO counselor between October 15 and November 15.
- Read through the 1L Year and Job Search Guide sections of the CDO website.
- Research summer employers who may be of interest to you and begin reviewing the Job Postings section on Symplicity, PSJD, the Government Honors & Internship Handbook, and other resources for summer job opportunities.
- Begin preparing application materials for the jobs for which you plan to apply.
- Starting on December 1, begin applying for summer jobs.
- Plan a trip to your target market(s) during Christmas Break and reach out to Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network (former employers, parents of friends, and friends of parents, etc.) to schedule networking meetings while there (see the Networking Guide on the CDO website for more details).

Christmas Break

- Travel to your target market(s) and conduct networking meetings with Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network.
- Continue preparing job application materials and applying for summer jobs. Keep checking the Job Postings section on Symplicity, PSJD, the Government Honors and Internship Handbook, and other resources for newly posted summer job opportunities.

Spring Semester

- **Mandatory:** If you have accepted summer employment, notify a CDO counselor and provide the name and location of your summer employer.
- Meet with a CDO counselor by late January to discuss the status of your job search and your plans for the spring semester.
- Continue applying for summer jobs and checking the Job Postings section on Symplicity, PSJD, the Government Honors & Internships Handbook, and other sources for newly posted summer job opportunities.
- Attend the Interview Skills program in late January.
- Research deadlines for the Summer Stipend Program and other public interest funding (e.g., Equal Justice Works Americorps JD) and attend the CDO information session for the Summer Stipend Program.
- Begin to research bar exam requirements for the states in which you may be interested. Some states have early registration deadlines, and some offer significant cost savings for early interest.
- If you are interested in pursuing a judicial clerkship, attend the CDO programs regarding the judicial clerkship application process.
- Plan a trip to your target market(s) during Spring Break and reach out to Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network to schedule networking meetings.

Spring Break

- Travel to your target market(s) and conduct informational meetings with Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there.

Spring Semester (continued)

- Sign up for job fairs of interest (many have early deadlines even though they are for next year's job search).
- Continue preparing job application materials and applying for summer jobs.
- Meet with a CDO counselor to discuss how your course selections fit with your career path.
- If you plan to participate in OCI and/or the OCIPs, attend all OCI programming.
- Attend the Effective Job Searching: What You Need To Do This Summer program.
- If you are participating in the Summer Stipend Program, complete and turn in your paperwork in advance of the deadline.
- Meet with a CDO counselor by late April to discuss your 2L summer job search and your networking plans for the summer.

Summer Break

- **Mandatory:** Schedule and complete a mock interview through the Summer Mock Interview Program.
- Read weekly emails from the CDO for summer job tips, recruiting updates, and important OCI/OCIP information.
- Notify the CDO of any changes in your contact information during the summer.
- Join the local bar association and the local Notre Dame Club and attend functions to build contacts in the local community.
- Contact Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network in your target market(s) to schedule informational meetings and phone calls.
- Keep track of your work experience by creating a file that includes copies of

- Brief descriptions of your assignments
- Your written work product
- List of clients for whom you worked
- List of attorneys with whom you worked
- Begin preparing for your 2L job search in early June by
 - Updating your resume (submit your updated resume to a CDO counselor for review)
 - Updating your cover letter (submit your updated cover letter to a CDO counselor for review)
 - Selecting one or more writing samples and revising or redacting them as necessary
 - Contacting potential references and making a reference list.
 - Obtaining a current transcript
 - Researching potential employers (see the Job Search Guide section of the CDO website for more details)
- If you are applying for judicial clerkships, prepare all application materials and provide them to the CDO as directed.
- Schedule and complete a meeting or phone call with a CDO counselor to discuss any questions you have about your summer experience and/or your preparation for your 2L job search.
- Participate in bidding for OCI and OCIPs (see the Resource Center on the CDO website for more details).
- Check the Job Postings section on Symplicity and apply for positions with employers not participating in OCI or OCIPs.
- Beginning in early July, send application materials to employers of interest who are not participating in OCI or OCIPs or otherwise recruiting at NDLS.
- Participate in the OCIPs, if interested in the OCIP markets and participating employers (see the Resource Center on the CDO website for more details).

2L PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Fall Semester

- **Mandatory**--If you have accepted summer employment, notify a CDO counselor and provide the name and location of your summer employer.
- Participate in the OCI program (see the Resource Center on the CDO website for more details).
- Continue to check the Job Postings section on Symplicity and apply for summer positions with employers not participating in OCI or OCIPs.
- If you are applying for judicial clerkships, prepare all application materials and provide them to the CDO as directed.
- Follow-up with employers to whom you have applied outside of OCI, OCIPs and other Symplicity job postings.
- Meet with a CDO counselor by mid-September to recap your summer and discuss your job search plans for the fall semester.
- Research bar exam requirements for states of interest and begin preparing your application if necessary. The bar application process for some states can begin as early as the fall semester of 2L year.
- Plan trips to your target market(s) during Fall Break and contact Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network (former employers, parent of friends, friends of parents, etc.) to schedule networking meetings while there (see the Networking Guide on the CDO website for more details).

Fall Break

- Travel to your target market(s) and conduct networking meetings with Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there.

Fall Semester (continued)

- Plan a trip to your target market(s) during Christmas Break and contact Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there to schedule networking meetings.
- Continue preparing job application materials and applying for summer jobs.
- Consider registering for a spring semester externship or clinic in your practice area of interest.

Christmas Break

- Travel to your target market(s) and conduct networking meetings with Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network.
- Continue preparing job application materials and applying for summer jobs.

Spring Semester:

- **Mandatory**--If you have accepted summer employment, notify a CDO counselor and provide the name and location of your summer employer.
- Meet with a CDO counselor by mid-February to discuss the status of your job search and your plans for the spring semester.
- If you are interested in pursuing a post-graduate fellowship, attend the CDO program regarding the post-graduate fellowship application process.
- Participate in the Spring OCI program, if interested in the participating employers.

- Continue to check the Job Postings section on Symplicity and apply for summer positions with employers not participating in Spring OCI.
- If you are applying for judicial clerkships, prepare all application materials and provide them to the CDO as directed.
- Follow-up with employers to whom you have applied outside of OCI and other Symplicity job postings.
- Plan a trip to your target market(s) during Spring Break and contact Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there to schedule networking meetings.

Spring Break

- Travel to your target market(s) and conduct networking meetings with Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there.

Spring Semester (continued)

- Sign up for job fairs of interest (many have early deadlines even though they are for next year's job search).
- Continue preparing job application materials and applying for summer jobs.
- Consider registering for a fall semester externship or clinic in your practice area of interest.
- If you are participating in the Summer Stipend Program, complete and turn in your paperwork in advance of the deadline.
- Meet with a CDO counselor by late April to discuss your post-graduation job search and your networking plans for the summer.
- Continue preparation of bar application(s). Be mindful of applicable deadlines in your state(s) of interest.

Summer Break:

- **Mandatory:** If you have accepted an interview for a judicial clerkship, notify a CDO counselor. After each interview, complete an interview evaluation.
- **Mandatory:** If you have accepted a judicial clerkship, notify a CDO counselor and provide the name of the judge and the court.
- Schedule and complete a mock interview through the Summer Mock Interview Program.
- Notify the CDO of any changes in your contact information over the course of the summer.
- If you are applying for post-graduate fellowships, work on applications (you will go over your applications with a CDO counselor during the summer or early in the fall semester).
- If you are participating in the Summer Stipend Program, schedule and complete your three required check-in phone calls with a CDO counselor during the designated time periods.
- Join the local bar association and the local Notre Dame Club and attend functions to build contacts in the local community.
- Reach out to Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network in your target market(s) to schedule informational meetings and phone calls.
- Keep track of your work experience by creating a file that includes copies of:
 - Brief descriptions of your assignments.
 - Your written work product.
 - List of clients for whom you worked.
 - List of attorneys with whom you worked.
- Begin preparing for your 3L job search in early June by:
 - Updating your resume (submit your updated resume to a CDO counselor for review).

- Updating your cover letter (submit your updated cover letter to a CDO counselor for review).
- Selecting one or more writing samples and revising or redacting them as necessary.
- Contacting potential references and making a reference list.
- Obtaining a current transcript.
- Researching potential employers (see the Job Search Guide on the CDO website for more details).
- Schedule and complete a meeting or call with a CDO counselor to discuss any questions you might have about your summer experience and/or your preparation for your 3L job search.
- Participate in bidding for OCI and OCIPs (see the Resource Center on the CDO website for more details).
- Check the Job Postings section on Symplicity and apply for positions with employers not participating in OCI or OCIPs.
- Beginning in early July, prepare and send application materials to employers of interest who are not participating in OCI or OCIPs or otherwise recruiting at NDLS.
- Participate in the OCIPs, if interested in the OCIP markets and participating employers (see the Resource Center on the CDO website for more details).

3L PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Fall Semester:

- **Mandatory:** If you have accepted employment, notify a CDO counselor with the name and location of your employer.
- Participate in the OCI program, if participating employers are of interest to you (see the Resource Center on the CDO website for more details).
- Continue to check the Job Postings section on Symplicity and apply for post-graduation positions with employers not participating in OCI or OCIPs.
- Follow-up with employers to whom you have applied outside of OCI, OCIPs and other Symplicity job postings.
- Meet with a CDO counselor by mid-September to recap your summer and discuss your job search plans for the fall semester.
- If applying for post-graduate fellowships, review applications with a CDO counselor and prepare for interviews.
- Register for the MPRE.
- Plan trips to your target market(s) during Fall Break and reach out to Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network (former employers, parents friends, friends of parents, etc.) to schedule informational meetings while there (see the Networking Guide on the CDO website for more details).

Fall Break:

- Travel to your target market(s) and conduct informational meetings with Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there.

Fall Semester (continued):

- Take the MPRE.
- Plan a trip to your target market(s) during Christmas Break and reach out to Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there to schedule informational meetings.
- Continue preparing job application materials and applying for post-graduation jobs.
- Consider registering for a spring semester externship or clinic in your practice area of interest.
- Continue/complete preparation of bar application. Be mindful of applicable deadlines in your state(s) of interest.

Christmas Break:

- Travel to your target market(s) and conduct informational meetings with Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there.
- Continue preparing job application materials and applying for post-graduation jobs.

Spring Semester:

- **Mandatory:** If you have accepted employment, notify a CDO counselor with the name and location of your employer.
- Meet with a CDO counselor by late January to discuss the status of your job search and your plans for the spring semester.
- Participate in the Spring OCI program, if interested in the participating employers.
- Continue to check the Job Postings section on Symplicity and apply for post-graduation positions with employers not participating in Spring OCI.

- Follow-up with employers to whom you have applied outside of OCI and other Symplicity job postings.
- If you did not do so during the fall semester, register for and take the MPRE.
- Continue/complete preparation of bar application. Be mindful of applicable deadlines in your state(s) of interest.
- Plan a trip to your target market during Spring Break and reach out to Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there to schedule informational meetings.

Spring Break:

- Travel to your target market(s) and conduct informational meetings with Notre Dame Lawyers and other members of your network there.

Spring Semester (continued):

- ***Mandatory:*** Meet with the CDO alumni counselor by late March to discuss the status of your job search and your plans for the summer.
- Continue preparing job application materials and applying for post-graduation jobs.
- Complete a graduate employment survey (a link will be provided by the CDO).

CAREER PATHS

Planning for your professional life begins early in your law school experience, and it is important to take the time to explore the numerous career paths available to you, some of which include:

- Private Practice
- Public Interest, Government & Military
- Corporate Counsel
- Academia
- JD Advantage
- Compliance
- Judicial Clerkships
- International Career Opportunities

In determining which career paths may be of interest to you, it is imperative that you understand both your goals and your personality. Accordingly, self-assessment is a key factor in deciding on a career path and taking ownership of your own legal career. If you are not an active participant in the process of assessing what you want out of your NDLS education and subsequent legal career, then the path you follow may be based entirely on the needs and criteria of others. Identify what skills, knowledge, and talents you possess that you can channel into your legal career.

Self-assessment begins with asking several basic questions:

- What are my skills, values, interests?
- What are my goals?
- Why did I go to law school?
- What potential practice areas do I want to pursue?
- Who is likely to hire someone like me?
- In what geographical locations am I interested?
- For what type of employer do I want to work?
- What are my monetary needs?
- What kind of work/life balance do I want?
- What am I willing to sacrifice to achieve my goals?

In addition to these questions, some students find the Keirsey Temperament Sorter and a more in-depth self-assessment review helpful. Links to these and other resources appear on the Career Paths page of our website. Once you have conducted a self-assessment and determined what career paths are of interest to you, you will be better prepared to move forward with your job search in a meaningful way.

Private Practice

Many NDLS students choose to launch their careers working for a private law firm. Much of the large law firm hiring is done during the fall of a student's 2L year through On-Campus Interviews and/or the Off-Campus Interview Programs. Students interested in private practice will frequently return to their 2L summer employer following graduation. The benefits of working at a large law firm include higher salaries, a diverse client base with sophisticated work and a large support staff.

Recently, more and more NDLS students are opting to join mid-sized or small firms. We strongly encourage students to initiate contact with the many excellent mid-sized and small law firms nationwide

that may not be able to participate in OCIs, OCIPs or other job fairs. Associates at mid-sized and small firms often enjoy a varied legal practice, more flexible work schedules, early and significant client contact and an abbreviated track to partnership compared to larger firms.

Working at a private law firm provides valuable experience and opens many doors to attorneys in their professional lives. While some attorneys will choose to stay at one firm for their entire career, most will eventually change firms, move to an in-house counsel position at a company, join a governmental agency or make another lateral move.

Public Interest, Government & Military

Public interest organizations, such as public defender offices and legal aid societies, are also popular employment choices for NDLS students. These positions offer practical experience and provide the intrinsic value of working for an organization that promotes justice by representing individuals, groups and causes traditionally under-represented in our society. For more information on public interest careers, summer internship funding and post-graduation fellowships, see the Public Interest page of the CDO website.

In recent years, a growing number of NDLS students have chosen employment within state, local and federal government. NDLS students have started their careers at state and county prosecutor's offices, state attorney general's offices, the Internal Revenue Service and many other government agencies and offices. NDLS is also proud to continue providing outstanding lawyers and leaders to the United States military through commissions as officers in the Judge Advocate General's Corps.

Corporate Counsel

Some NDLS students choose to pursue jobs in the business world with the in-house legal department of a company. While many in-house legal departments require several years of practice experience, there are some that will hire students directly out of law school. More commonly, though, students who are interested in in-house positions will begin their careers working in private practice or government. After gaining several years of relevant experience, they will then transition into the business world, taking a job with the in-house legal department of a company.

Academia

A number of NDLS students aspire to a career in legal academia. As a general rule, certain credentials are necessary to be a strong candidate for such positions, including a stellar academic record, extensive writing experience (such as a Law Review note), a prestigious judicial clerkship and/or teaching fellowship, and frequently several years of practicing law. Recent NDLS graduates seeking to obtain entry-level, tenure-track teaching positions may consider a one or two year teaching fellowship. While these fellowships vary by institution, typically they provide opportunities to gain teaching experience and to write substantive articles for publication.

Other NDLS students aspire to a career in academic administration or with the general counsel's office of a college or university. These positions also typically require professional experience beyond law school. Students aspiring to these positions should plan their career paths accordingly. If their desired job is not attainable upon graduation, then they should seek post-graduation jobs that will provide them with the skills and experience necessary to transition into their job of choice as their career progresses.

JD Advantage

Some NDLS students choose to pursue jobs that do not require admission to the bar but for which their JD is considered to be an advantage by employers. Such jobs are commonly referred to as JD Advantage. Recent graduates have accepted JD Advantage jobs with accounting firms, banks, construction companies, oil and gas companies, think tanks and others.

The universe of potential JD Advantage jobs is diverse, so you must undertake serious self-assessment to discern which jobs you wish to pursue and why. JD Advantage employers will not be impressed to hear that you applied for a job with them simply because you do not want to practice law. You must be able to articulate to an employer what you want to do and how it affirmatively matches your potential employer's position/work, etc. This typically requires a student to undertake independent research and to speak with JD Advantage professionals in his or her potential fields of interest.

Compliance

Compliance jobs are a type of JD Advantage job that is growing in popularity. Companies in industries that are heavily regulated by the government, such as health care and banking, often have internal compliance departments. Their role is to ensure the company is obeying the rules and regulations promulgated by its government regulators. While compliance positions do not involve the practice of law, companies often prefer to hire law school graduates for them because of their familiarity with statutory and regulatory frameworks.

Judicial Clerkships

Many NDLS graduates begin their careers by serving as judicial clerks. NDLS alumni can be found nationwide at all levels of the federal and state judiciaries. Among the most prestigious and competitive employment opportunities, clerkships provide new attorneys with the rare opportunity to observe the judicial decision-making process from a judge's perspective. Usually lasting one or two years, clerkships provide a way to learn about effective advocacy, broaden one's understanding of procedural issues and gain exposure to a wide array of legal practice areas. These positions are a valuable way to bridge the gap between law school and the practice of law. For more information, including the Judicial Clerkship Handbook, please visit the Judicial Clerkships section of the CDO website.

International Career Opportunities

Each year, several NDLS students pursue summer internships and post-graduate positions abroad. While very competitive, these positions can be immensely rewarding, providing exposure to a different culture while gaining substantive experience in international legal affairs.

Students and graduates who secure overseas employment opportunities obtain them through proactive applications to organizations of interest, utilizing the same comprehensive job search tools used in a domestic search. It is especially important to reach out to business and personal contacts when searching for these types of opportunities. In addition, there are several online resources you can use to assist you in your search for an international internship.

1L YEAR

The Career Development Office is committed to getting to know every NDLS student by offering individualized counseling and tailored advice. While your focus during the first semester of law school should be squarely on academics, it is important to begin contemplating which career path you may wish to pursue. *NALP Guidelines provide that the CDO may not offer job search services to individual 1L students prior to October 15 and also that students and employers may not initiate contact with one another prior to December 1.* 1L students may, however, attend general educational programs hosted by the CDO and view information here and on our website to begin charting a career path.

Summer Jobs

There are a variety of professional opportunities available to students during their 1L summer. Public interest organizations, government agencies, law firms, professors in need of research assistants and judges all hire 1L students.

The right opportunity for you depends on your intended career path. If possible, it is an excellent idea to spend the summer in the geographic area in which you intend to practice after graduation so that you can establish a connection to the region on your resume and can begin to create contacts within that particular legal community. It is also helpful if you are able to gain experience in a legal field that aligns with your practice interests.

There are several types of employers that hire 1L students for the summer and many different ways to identify potential employment opportunities. The list below contains references to some resources that may be helpful. Additional resources for your job search, including more information on types of legal jobs, how to search for jobs, as well as resume and cover letter preparation, can be found on our website. Be sure to chat with a CDO counselor about your career interests and goals so we can help identify the types of opportunities that would be best for you.

1. Public Interest Organizations & Government Agencies: NDLS students have spent rewarding summers working for public defender offices, legal aid societies, prosecutor's offices, state attorney's offices and many other public interest organizations and government agencies. These jobs can be excellent opportunities to gain substantive legal experience, but please be aware that the vast majority do not lead to long-term employment. It is critical to maintain your networking efforts and continue to make contacts during your summer employment.

While there are often numerous positions available in public interest organizations and government agencies, many of these employers cannot afford to pay summer interns. The CDO will provide more information on the NDLS Summer Stipend Program, which offers funding for your public interest internship. Additionally, several outside funding sources, such as Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps JD program, are available.

NDLS subscribes to several online job search tools for public interest and government employment, including PSJD, which lists internship opportunities nationwide, public interest conferences, and fellowships, and the Government Honors & Internship Handbook, which lists government internship opportunities. The CDO also maintains a Fellowship Database with a long list of available summer fellowships. More information can be found on the Public Interest section of our website.

2. Law Firms or In-House Counsel: Every year, NDLS students obtain positions with law firms or in-

house legal departments for the summer. The primary means of securing these positions is by submitting an application (often consisting of a cover letter, resume, transcript and writing sample) directly to employers. These employers range in office size and practice groups, and they generally hire students much earlier in the year than public interest and government employers.

It should be noted that many law firms do not hire 1L students at all. Thus, summer associate positions for 1L students with law firms are very limited, and the hiring process is quite competitive. You can check the NALP Directory to identify which NALP member firms hire 1L students for summer positions. Additionally, Vault Career Insider provides in-depth reviews regarding law firm culture and hiring statistics. Keep in mind that many excellent mid-sized and small law firms that are not listed members of NALP or in Vault Career Insider may hire 1L students.

See the Identifying Potential Employers section of the Job Search Guide section of our website for more information on researching law firm employers.

3. Judicial Internships: A judicial internship (also called an externship) is the summer equivalent of a traditional post-graduate judicial clerkship, with the exception that most summer internships in a judge's chambers are unpaid positions. Funding is often available for these positions through the NDLS Summer Stipend Program. These internship experiences provide excellent insight into the judicial system and are especially useful to students intending to pursue a career in litigation or looking to make legal contacts in a community in which they wish to practice. While the post-graduate application process for judicial clerkships does not begin until after your 1L year, an internship will help you decide if a clerkship would interest you and may provide you with a valuable contact within the judiciary.

For a list of judges who have hired NDLS summer interns in the past, please see the Resource Center on our website.

4. Positions as Research Assistants for Professors: Many NDLS students stay in South Bend during their 1L summer to assist NDLS professors with a variety of research projects. Professors often need assistance in updating a casebook or researching materials for a law review article. In addition to providing you with great training in legal research and writing, the professor may be able to serve as a reference for you in the future. Potential references are especially important if you will be seeking a judicial clerkship after graduation. NDLS professors announce these openings throughout the spring semester.

Additional Methods for Identifying 1L Employers

Symplicity is the web-based recruiting system and job bank used for individual job postings and resume collections, as well as scheduling and bidding for On-Campus Interviews and the Off-Campus Interview Programs. You should check Symplicity regularly for updated job posting information. You can log into Symplicity through the Quick Link at the bottom of every page of the CDO website.

Job Fairs: There are several job fairs throughout the year that give students opportunities to engage with a variety of employers. Each year, NALP collects information on public interest career fairs for publication online (visit www.psjd.org and click on Resource Center for the current list). The Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference (MPILCC) occurs in Chicago each spring and is a major public interest job fair connecting students with public interest opportunities throughout the Midwest. Also visit the Job Fairs page of the CDO website for more information about job fairs nationwide.

Diversity Opportunities: There are a number of outstanding opportunities available for students of

diverse backgrounds. See our website for links containing information on diversity job fairs and diversity scholarship and fellowship opportunities available to 1L students throughout the year.

RESUMES

Resumes are a vital part of the interviewing and job search process. A resume serves as an introduction to prospective employers and is a representation of your writing abilities. It usually serves as a prospective employer's first impression.

You should assume that a reader will spend no more than 30 seconds on an initial scan of your resume. Therefore, it should be neat, error-free and extremely easy to read.

When drafting your resume, keep the following in mind:

- NDLS students are required to follow one of the resume templates found on the following pages. Electronic versions of the resume template can also be found online in the Resource Center on our website.
- List your educational institutions and experiences in reverse chronological order. Remember, you are studying for a “Juris Doctor” and not a “Juris Doctorate.”
- Start your descriptions with action verbs. Use the past tense for experiences in which you are no longer engaged or have already completed at a present employer.
- Be succinct, but use enough detail to distinguish your experiences and achievements. To the degree possible, tailor your work descriptions to match the skills you need for the job to which you are applying.
- Describe large or important projects and focus on any industry sectors, client/customer groups or skills that are relevant to your prospective employer. Focus on results and how you added value to the position.
- Keep your resume to one page.
- Make sure your resume is error-free.
- Update your resume on a regular basis and have it reviewed by a CDO counselor.

For a more thorough discussion of resumes, please see the Resume Guide located in the Resource Center on our website.

First Name MI. Last Name, Suffix

Permanent Address
City, State Zip

(xxx) xxx-xxxx • email@nd.edu

Current Address
City, State Zip

EDUCATION

University of Notre Dame Law School

Notre Dame, Indiana
Month 20XX

Juris Doctor Candidate

GPA: X.XX

- Leadership/Extracurricular Activity 1, Position Held (If Applicable)
- Leadership/Extracurricular Activity 2, Position Held (If Applicable)
- Academic Research or Activity 3, Position Held (If Applicable)
- Community Service or Activity 4, Position Held (If Applicable)
- Mentorship Programs/TA/Activity 5
- Honors Society/Scholarship/Fellowships

Undergraduate Institution

City, State
Month Year

Undergraduate Degree and Concentration

GPA: X.XX

- Academic Achievement
- Scholarships/Leadership Activities
- Sports, Extracurricular Activities, Position Held (If Applicable)
- Honors Societies, Position Held (If Applicable)

EXPERIENCE

Company/Organization Name

City, State
Month 20XX – Month 20XX

Job Title

- Primary Responsibility
- Additional Job Responsibility
- Additional Job Responsibility/Tangible Results of Internship (if applicable)

Company/Organization Name

City, State
Month 20XX – Month 20XX

Job Title

- Primary Responsibility
- Additional Job Responsibility
- Additional Job Responsibility/Tangible Results of Internship (if applicable)

Original Job Title (if promoted within company)
20XX

Month 20XX – Month

- Primary Responsibility
- Additional Job Responsibility
- Additional Job Responsibility/Tangible Results of Internship (if applicable)

Company/Organization Name

City, State
Month 20XX – Month 20XX

Job Title

- Primary Job Responsibility
- Additional Job Responsibility
- Additional Job Responsibility/Tangible Results of Internship (if applicable)

VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY WORK Title, Organization Name (Month 20XX – Month 20XX) State

City,

- Title, Organization Name (Month 20XX – Month 20XX)

City, State

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Language – Level of Proficiency (Read, Write, Speak), Study Abroad Program (if applicable) (City, Country)

INTERESTS

Short Description of Interest

Name
Phone Number ♦ *Email*

[Permanent Address]
Street ♦ City, State Zip Code

[South Bend Address]
Street ♦ City, State Zip Code

EDUCATION

University of Notre Dame Law School, Notre Dame, Indiana

Juris Doctor Candidate, May 20XX

GPA: X

HONORS: Dean's List; Scholarship; Honors Society; Other Honors; Other Honors
ACTIVITIES: Journal; Moot Court; Club, Office; Other Activity; Other Activity

Undergraduate Institution, City, State

Bachelor of Arts in X, magna cum laude, cum laude, or summa cum laude (if applicable), Graduation Month and Year (e.g., May 2015)

GPA: X

HONORS: Dean's List; Thesis (including title and name of publication if published); Honors Society; Scholarships; Other Honors; Other Honors
ACTIVITIES: Club, Office; Sports; Other Activity; Other Activity

EXPERIENCE

Name of Employer, City, State

Job title, Month and Year Started – Month and Year Ended (e.g., May 2016 – July 2016)

- Description of job responsibility
- Description of job responsibility

Name of Employer, City, State

Job title, Month and Year Started – Month and Year Ended (e.g., May 2016 – July 2016)

- Description of job responsibility
- Description of job responsibility

Original job title (if promoted within company), Month and Year Started – Month and Year Ended (e.g., May 2016 – July 2016)

- Description of job responsibility
- Description of job responsibility

VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY WORK

Organization, City, State

Title, Month and Year Started – Month and Year Ended (e.g., May 2016 – July 2016)

Organization, City, State

Title, Month and Year Started – Month and Year Ended (e.g., May 2016 – July 2016)

LANGUAGES

Language – Level of Proficiency; **Language** – Level of Proficiency

INTERESTS

Interest; Interest; Interest

NICOLE JOHNSON

125 East 25th Street
New York, NY 21010

(574) 555-1234 • njohnson12@nd.edu

10 Holmes Hall
Notre Dame, IN 46556

EDUCATION

University of Notre Dame Law School

Juris Doctor Candidate

GPA: TBD

- Women's Law Forum, Member
- Legal Voices for Children & Youth, Member
- Black Law Student Association, First-Year Representative

Notre Dame, Indiana
May 2019

University of Wisconsin

B.A. in Sociology and Economics, cum laude

GPA: 3.50

- Bradford Scholar for Outstanding Senior Thesis Research
- *Wisconsin Herald*, Guest Columnist
- Student Senate, Senior Class Representative
- Women's Center, Community Outreach Chair
- Varsity Swim Team, Co-Captain
- Senior Thesis: *AIDS and Health in the Third World: A Case Study of the Spread of AIDS in Kenya*

Madison, Wisconsin
June 2016

EXPERIENCE

National Association for Women

Staff Assistant

- Staffed an information referral service for women dealing with various legal issues, including domestic violence, rape, divorce, custody, health care, and employment
- Wrote press releases, drafted correspondence and tracked pending legislation

New York, New York
June 2016 – August 2016

University of Wisconsin, Department of Sociology

Teaching Assistant to Professor Mick Dugan

- Graded exams and essay papers for Sociology of Modern Europe section
- Held weekly office hours for sixty students

Madison, Wisconsin
August 2014 – May 2016

Wisconsin State Assembly, Senator Desiree Gould

Legislative Intern

- Researched and analyzed state legislative issues regarding eminent domain
- Contacted key state officials and citizens to testify at committee hearings

Madison, Wisconsin
May 2014 – August 2014

VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY WORK

- **Volunteer Fundraiser, End Poverty Now Concert Series** (*July 2012 – August 2012*) New York, New York
- **Tutor, Sin Guerra** (*January 2011*) Mexico City, Mexico

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Spanish – Limited Working Proficiency

INTERESTS

Telenovelas, Surfing, and Baking Pies

Nicole L. Johnson

(574) 555-1234 ♦ *njohnson12@nd.edu*

125 East 25th Street ♦ New York, NY 21010

10 Holmes Hall ♦ Notre Dame, IN 46556

EDUCATION

The University of Notre Dame Law School, Notre Dame, Indiana

Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2019

GPA: TBD

ACTIVITIES: Women's Law Forum, Member; Legal Voices for Children & Youth, Member;
Black Law Students Association, First-Year Representative

University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Economics, cum laude, June 2016

GPA: 3.5

HONORS: Bradford Scholar for Outstanding Senior Thesis Research; Senior Thesis:
AIDS and Health in the Third World: A Case Study of the Spread of AIDS in Kenya

ACTIVITIES: *Wisconsin Herald*, Guest Columnist; Student Senate, Senior Class
Representative; Women's Center, Community Outreach Chair; Varsity Swim
Team, Co-Captain

EXPERIENCE

National Association for Women, New York, New York

Staff Assistant, June 2016 – August 2016

- Staffed an information referral service for women dealing with various legal issues, including domestic violence, rape, divorce, custody, health care, and employment
- Wrote press releases, drafted correspondence and tracked pending legislation

University of Wisconsin, Department of Sociology, Madison, Wisconsin

Teaching Assistant to Professor Mick Dugan, August 2014 – May 2016

- Graded exams and essay papers for Sociology of Modern Europe section
- Held weekly office hours for sixty students

Wisconsin State Assembly, Senator Desiree Gould, Madison, Wisconsin

Legislative Intern, May 2014 – August 2014

- Researched and analyzed state legislative issues regarding eminent domain
- Contacted key state officials and citizens to testify at committee hearings

VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY WORK

Volunteer Fundraiser, End Poverty Now Concert Series, New York, New York

Organizer, July 2012-August 2012

Sin Guerra, Mexico City, Mexico

Tutor, January 2011

LANGUAGES

Spanish – Limited Working Proficiency

INTERESTS

Telenovelas; Surfing; Baking Pies

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter should accompany your resume whenever you submit it, unless an employer specifically states that it is unwanted. Your cover letter is the first writing sample a potential employer will ever see. Therefore, it should be concise, persuasive, personal and error-free.

A cover letter will serve as an introduction, indicate your reasons for pursuing a certain position, set forth your relevant experiences or skills and indicate your availability for an interview. A cover letter allows for flexibility, tailoring and amplification – not always possible in the resume.

Perhaps most importantly, your cover letter should describe what you have to offer a potential employer. Focus on yourself – this is not the time to be modest or shy – and how the employer would directly benefit from hiring you. Your goal should be to complement your resume, not restate it. You should demonstrate traits which an employer expects, such as excellent writing skills, and set forth something about you which might distinguish you from other applicants in a positive way, making you memorable.

Personalizing each cover letter and making reference to the recipient's practice lends credibility to your request for consideration, reflects the time you have spent in analyzing the firm's practice and states how your skills fit into that practice. The letter itself should be no longer than one page and no more than three to four paragraphs.

Whenever possible, avoid mass-producing your cover letters. A letter that reflects careful research on an individual employer will convey your interest much better than a generic letter. Your prospects for employment will vastly improve if you selectively choose prospective employers to contact and tailor your letters appropriately. Let the letter reflect your individuality by describing what is particularly appealing to you about an employer.

Be sure to include any specific information requested by the employer if responding to a job posting, such as ties to a particular geographic location.

Always address each cover letter to a specific person – ideally to the individual who has the power to hire, to your contact or to a Notre Dame (or college *alma mater*) graduate. If you are responding to a notice for an advertised opening, write to the person designated. When you are targeting your search to a specific geographic or practice area, consult directories or websites that list the appropriate contact name. NALP's directory of legal employers, together with other directory resources, can be found on the CDO website in the Resource Center.

A sample template and examples of letters follow to serve as guidelines. For a more thorough discussion of cover letters, please see our Cover Letter Guide, located in the Resource Center on our website.

OUTLINE OF A COVER LETTER

Your Address
City, State Zip
Your Phone Number
Your Email Address

Date

Name of Contact Person
Title of Contact Person
Employer Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. (Ms.) last name of contact person:

First Paragraph: Tell why you are writing – name the position for which you are applying. If you have a personal referral or connection, mention it here. Identify your career goals and indicate why you are interested in working for *this* employer. If you have ties to or lived in the area, mention it. Specify your interests in the type of work the employer does. Describe what is particularly appealing to you about the employer.

Second Paragraph: Show how your background qualifies you for the position. Point out the experience and coursework you have that relates to the employer's field or type of work. Focus on what skills or experiences you would bring to the employer. Emphasize pertinent items on your resume and supplement with other details. Tie experience to tangible, transferrable skills. Convince the employer that you would be an asset.

Third Paragraph: Restate your interest in working for the employer. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for an interview. Indicate your willingness to interview personally by stating when you will be in the area or by offering to make yourself available at the employer's convenience. Thank the employer for his/her consideration.

Sincerely,

(leave 4 blank lines for signature)

Your full typed name

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR
FIRST-YEAR STUDENT APPLYING FOR A
SUMMER ASSOCIATE POSITION**

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
ssmith34@nd.edu
574-123-4567

December 1, 2016

Ms. Zoe S. Employer
Baker, Cook & Bottlewasher P.C.
123 "I" Street
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Dear Ms. Employer:

I am a first-year student at Notre Dame Law School, and I am interested in a summer associate position with Baker, Cook & Bottlewasher P.C. As an alumna of DePaul, I intend to return to Chicago to practice upon my graduation in May 2019. I am particularly interested in your firm's labor law practice, given my previous experience as a manager at United States Steel.

My background has prepared me to be a successful summer associate at your firm. Every summer throughout college, I worked in the offices of United States Steel and was promoted to a management position before my junior year. This experience allowed me to observe the interplay between management and employees from the corporate viewpoint. At Notre Dame Law School, I have cultivated strong research and writing skills while preparing memoranda, complaints and an appellate brief in the law school's first-year legal writing program. I look forward to applying these skills and experiences as a summer associate at Baker, Cook & Bottlewasher P.C.

I am very interested in serving as a summer associate with Baker, Cook & Bottlewasher P.C. and would be pleased to discuss my qualifications in an interview scheduled at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sylvia A. Smith

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR
FIRST-YEAR STUDENT APPLYING FOR A
JUDICIAL INTERNSHIP**

1234 Eddy Street
South Bend, IN 12345
mjones15@nd.edu
123-456-7890

December 1, 2016

The Honorable John Smith
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
Theodore Levin U.S. District Courthouse
231 West Lafayette Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Judge Smith:

I wish to apply for a judicial internship in your chambers for the summer of 2017. I am a first-year student at Notre Dame Law School and a native of the Detroit area. I am particularly interested in pursuing a career in litigation, and I plan to return to Detroit to practice after my graduation in May 2018. Jim Jones, your former clerk, suggested that I contact you regarding a possible summer internship.

My background has prepared me to contribute meaningfully to your chambers. As an intern for the Washtenaw County Public Defender's Office, I observed courtroom proceedings on a daily basis and prepared clients extensively before they pled their cases. The experience piqued my interest in the inner workings of the judicial system and in a career as a litigator. In addition, I have refined my research and writing skills immensely through my senior thesis coursework at the University of Michigan and through Notre Dame's comprehensive first-year legal research and writing program. I am eager to use these varied experiences to assist your court.

I would be honored to serve as a 2016 judicial intern in your chambers and would be pleased to discuss my qualifications in an interview. I will be home in the Detroit area from December 22 through January 12 and can be available at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully,

Mary K. Jones

EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR
SECOND-YEAR STUDENT APPLYING FOR A
SUMMER ASSOCIATE POSITION

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
mayajones@nd.edu
123-456-7890

August 15, 2016

Ms. Erin C. Contact
Smith & Moore LLP
1987 Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90071

Dear Ms. Contact:

A mutual friend, John Thompson, suggested I contact you regarding a summer associate position at Smith & Moore LLP. I am a second-year student at Notre Dame Law School and a lifelong resident of Los Angeles. Your firm is of particular interest to me because of its commercial litigation practice, as I am committed to becoming a litigator.

During law school, I have pursued opportunities to develop practical litigation skills. I am a member of the Moot Court trial team and have taken both Trial Advocacy and Deposition Skills classes. Last summer, I worked for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office where I interviewed witnesses, assisted with depositions, researched legal issues, and drafted briefs. Given my background and experience, I am confident I can make an immediate and substantive contribution to Smith & Moore LLP.

I travel to Los Angeles on a regular basis and would be pleased to schedule an interview at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Maya Z. Jones

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR THIRD YEAR
ASSOCIATE POSITION APPLICATION**

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
leighwilson@nd.edu
574-123-4789

February 19, 2016

Mr. Richard A. Mortar
Wood, Brick and Mortar
923 Market Street
New York, New York 10001

Dear Mr. Mortar:

I am a third-year student at Notre Dame Law School, and I wish to apply for an associate position with Wood, Brick and Mortar. I am committed to building a career in products liability, and I am drawn to your firm because of its significant practice in that area. I will be relocating to Manhattan upon my graduation, and I am registered to sit for the New York bar exam in July.

Throughout law school, I have pursued opportunities to prepare myself for a career in products liability. Last summer, I worked for a boutique firm in Brooklyn specializing in products liability defense. There, I participated in depositions and conducted extensive research on negligent design and negligent failure to warn. This spring, I am writing my third-year seminar paper on the products liability system and have represented clients through the law school clinic. Through the clinic, I have managed my own caseload, prepared complaints and argued motions. In addition, I have completed coursework in complex civil litigation, torts, medical malpractice and trial advocacy.

I am very interested in an associate position with Wood, Brick and Mortar and would welcome an opportunity to interview with you. I will be in New York over spring break, March 7-14, and can be available to meet then or any other time that may be convenient for you. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Leigh D. Wilson

HOW TO SELECT A WRITING SAMPLE

Employers frequently request that law students provide a writing sample. A writing sample is simply a sample of your written legal work. In preparing your materials, consider your potential options and think critically about which best represents your writing abilities.

For first-year students, a memo or brief you prepared for your legal writing class often represents the best writing sample to use. For upper classmen, a work product from your summer employment or clinic experience is ideal. PLEASE NOTE: you must obtain permission from your employer prior to using any work documents. Your employer may require you to change the names and other sensitive information included in the document, and you should indicate that you have received your employer's permission to use the sample on your cover sheet.

When submitting a writing sample, there are guidelines that you should follow. The writing sample should be:

- The BEST example of your analytical skills and writing abilities;
- Completely error-free;
- Approximately ten (10) pages in length; and
- Solely your work.

You should create a cover sheet for your writing sample explaining what the document is and any other information or context needed by the reader. The information should be presented in a manner similar to an abstract.

If your document was created with a partner, you may submit a portion of the document that is solely your work. On your cover sheet, explain that the full document was created in conjunction with a partner, the partner's portion has been excised, and the portion provided is exclusively your work. You may also provide a short synopsis of omitted, joint material that would help the reader orient him/herself to the issues (for example, a short restatement of the fact pattern).

Consider meeting with the professor or supervisor who assigned you the project. Let them know that you are thinking about using your work as a writing sample. Ask them if they feel this is your best piece and indicative of your abilities. If applicable, ask permission to use the piece. Solicit any advice they may have for improving the document.

For a more thorough discussion of writing samples, please see the Writing Sample Guide located in the Resource Center on our website.

REFERENCES AND LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

REFERENCES

Generally, students should have three references whose information they can pass along to potential employers who wish to verify academic ability, work ethic and/or character. At the beginning of your law school career, it will be difficult to have a full slate of law professors as references. In lieu of a law professor, previous employers or undergraduate/graduate professors, especially those who may have a connection to the law, can be used. During your second year, it is ideal to have at least two law professors and your summer employer available as references.

Talk with your references before you give out their information to accomplish the following:

- (a) Make sure they are comfortable providing you with a reference;
- (b) Ascertain how beneficial their referral may be with a particular employer;
- (c) Ask your reference how they prefer to be contacted; and
- (d) Provide each reference a copy of your resume.

As you progress through your law school career, you will come to know your professors on a more personal basis. Letters of recommendation from professors with whom you have a close relationship are very beneficial, as the recommender is able to provide insight on your demeanor outside the classroom or work environment. A third reference could be another professor, a previous employer or a contact within the legal profession. Developing your ties within the Notre Dame Alumni Network will help you broaden your list of potential references.

Unless instructed otherwise by your reference, provide employers with the following information for each reference: name, title and employing organization, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address. Copy the header from your resume, paste it on a new page, and list the information for your references. Print this document on high-quality paper that matches your resume, and take copies along with you to any interviews you have scheduled. A template for your list of references can be found in the Resource Center on the CDO website.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

If an employer requests a letter of recommendation, approach your references to ask if they are willing to write a letter to the employer recommending you for the position. Provide them with all the pertinent information, including name of employer, contact individual, type of position and mailing address. Many recommenders feel that these letters should remain confidential and thus will prefer to send them directly to the employer. If this is the case, let the employer know that your letters of recommendation will arrive “under separate cover.” If the recommender and employer are not concerned with confidentiality, you can submit the letter with your other materials.

Letters of recommendation are crucial during the judicial clerkship process, and most judges prefer to see letters from three professors who are teaching and research faculty. See the Judicial Clerkship Handbook on the CDO website for further details. In order to lay the groundwork for those letters, attend office hours regularly with questions you may have, seek out research

assistant positions and connect with professors who have interests similar to your own when writing lengthier papers. When requesting letters of recommendation, you want to be sure professors have a complete picture of who you are, what you plan to do with your legal degree and why you are requesting a letter from them. Once a professor agrees to write on your behalf, you should ask if they would be willing to have a brief meeting to discuss those topics. Also, you may want to give them an annotated resume – which may appear more like a curriculum vitae and will be longer than one page – so that they may refer to it and add nuance while writing a letter of recommendation. It can also be helpful to provide them with a copy of your cover letter to the employer for additional context regarding your interest in and qualifications for the position.

Lastly, strong letters often come from professors who

- (a) gave you a high grade in class,
- (b) served as a supervisor to a research paper you wrote, such as a student note,
- (c) taught you in a smaller setting, such as a seminar,
- (d) was a professor you assisted as a research assistant,
- (e) are former clerks, and/or
- (f) know your personal history and goals within the profession.

Ultimately, better letters of recommendation tend to come when professors have more access to your writing, legal acumen (e.g., exams) and personality. Take steps early in your law school career to ensure a set of professors will have those connections to you.

INTERVIEWING

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of an Interview

Strictly speaking, an interview is a formal meeting at which a prospective employer can assess the qualifications of an applicant. More loosely construed, an interview is your opportunity to enhance the rather two-dimensional picture an employer will have of you based on your application materials. In an interview, applicants and employers exchange information in a process that is designed to help each side determine if the other fits their needs. From the employer's perspective, the goal is to ascertain whether the candidate measures up to his/her credentials and, sometimes more importantly, whether the candidate will be a "good fit" within the work environment. Applicants are trying to determine whether the employer (and work) truly interests them and whether they will fit and thrive in the position.

Even if you already feel comfortable in an interview setting, preparation and repeated practice are crucial to effective interviewing. Many law students have never interviewed for a professional position. Others may have experienced interviewing but in other professions. This section will help you familiarize yourself with professional level interviews in general and, more specifically, prepare you for some of the quirks of the legal interview.

Screening Interviews vs. Callback Interviews

Screening interviews are frequently the first step in the formal interview process. Generally, employers decide who will be interviewed based on submitted application materials. Most often, these materials are resumes and cover letters that a student has sent to the employer (either in response to a posted opening, in a directed mailing campaign or in a resume collection coordinated through the CDO). Screening interviews may take place at the employer's office, at a job fair, via teleconference or videoconference or at the law school through an interview program. Through this process, the employer aims to identify candidates who possess the necessary qualifications and who exhibit enthusiasm and potential for success with the employer. Screening interviews usually last 20-30 minutes.

If an employer responds favorably to a candidate, they will offer a callback interview. These interviews are lengthier and are usually held at the employer's office. The callback interview allows a greater number of attorneys and staff members to participate in the interview process. While each employer may follow a slightly different process for callbacks, a student can expect to meet with approximately four attorneys for at least 30 minutes each and with a different set of attorneys over a meal.

Quite frequently, the callback interview focuses more on personality, work ethic and professional objectives than credentials. If the employer has determined in the screening interview that the candidate can "do the work," the callback interview is frequently used to determine whether the candidate will be someone with whom they wish to work.

Some employers do not follow a two-step interview process and simply invite a candidate, based on his or her resume, for a one-time, in-office interview.

PREPARATION

It is absolutely essential that you know as much as possible about the employer with whom you are going to interview. Spending five minutes reading the employer's website immediately prior to an interview is not effective preparation. You should never use a screening interview to find out the "basics" about an employer, such as what type of law they practice, how many attorneys are in the firm and where the employer is located. You want to save your precious interview time for insightful questions that convey your interest and not waste time gathering basic information that can easily be accessed prior to the interview. You also do not want to demonstrate to the interviewer that you did not bother taking the time to conduct elementary research.

While you need to know about the employer, it is also extremely important for you to know yourself – meaning how you will market yourself, what skills you have to highlight and how to discuss both your previous accomplishments and future goals. This can be very difficult for students, especially those who are not yet sure what type of law is of interest to them. Take heart: no one is asking you to commit to a practice area for the rest of your life, but you do need to be able to articulate to the employer what makes you interested in them and why you would be an asset. Also, make logical connections before and during your interview. For example, if you know you are deeply interested in criminal law, then do not interview with a firm that (a) never goes to court or (b) has absolutely no criminal law practice.

If you do not know what practice areas interest you, then be able to tell the firm what interested you enough to take time out of your schedule to interview with them. For example, you really enjoy your Torts class. You can say to the employer who has a significant medical malpractice practice, "I am only a 1L, so I am not yet sure what type of law I want to practice; however, I really enjoy my Torts class [for reasons X, Y, and Z] so I'd love to gain some experience in that area. When I was researching your firm, I noticed that 40% of your practice is devoted to medical malpractice cases. That is what piqued my interest in your firm and made me want to interview with you."

THE INTERVIEW

Dress for the occasion

Interviews for legal positions are *professional* interviews. If you dress unprofessionally, it reflects negatively on your interest level, your commitment to the interview process and your ability to represent the employer in a professional manner. You must wear a dark suit. Specifically, wear a suit that is clean, pressed, in good condition and fits you well. More information, including detailed checklists for both men and women, appears in the CDO Interview Guide.

Convey your interest

Employers frequently tell us that candidates are unable to articulate WHY they are interviewing with a particular firm. If you have done your homework, this simply becomes a matter of expressing yourself in an enthusiastic but professional manner. Make a list of accomplishments

or strengths that make you attractive to this particular employer. Evaluate your strengths and think of specific examples that will illustrate those strengths. Do not limit yourself to legal job experience. Many of the skills you have developed in non-legal jobs transfer to the legal profession. However, you must be able to articulate your qualifications in a convincing manner. For example, “I have an excellent work ethic” does not convey the point as effectively as “I am a full-time student, work part-time, finance 100% of my education, and I maintain a B average GPA.” Similarly, “I am a people person” does not speak to your rainmaking abilities as well as “I worked in public relations for three years prior to coming to law school, have been elected SBA class representative and am a student member of the American Bar Association.”

Try to connect your current interests and past experiences to the type of work done by the employer. For example, if you did a substantial amount of volunteer work in the past, talk to non-profit employers about your commitment to helping others. If you went to law school for the sole purpose of becoming a prosecutor, tell an attorney general’s office that very fact. If you worked as a file clerk in a title company and that sparked an interest in real estate law, emphasize that to the employer that specializes in real estate law.

Be professional and personable

No matter what your qualifications are, you will not interview successfully unless you establish a positive, professional rapport with the interviewer. Establishing this rapport starts the minute you walk in the door.

Arrive at least 5 to 10 minutes early for your interview. If you are more than 10 minutes early, go to a restroom and check your appearance (hair, teeth, makeup, clothing). If you are participating in an on-campus interview, you do not need to check in with the CDO. You can simply wait for your turn. If you are interviewing in the employer’s office, check in with the receptionist. Let him/her know your name, why you are there, and who you are meeting (e.g., “Hello. My name is Joe Student. I’m here for a 10:00 interview with Jane Lawyer.”). TIP: Be friendly and courteous to everyone within the office no matter what their title or position. Staff can be extremely helpful (and influential) in the interview process. Also, make mental or physical notes on every person who assisted you during your interview so that you will be able to send appropriate thank you notes after your interview.

Greet the interviewer with a smile and a firm, dry handshake. If you are nervous and your palms are sweaty, keep a handkerchief in your pocket or purse and discreetly wipe your hands before you go into the interview. Maintain good posture (no slouching, slinging an arm over the back of your chair or leaning over to rest your elbows on your knees). While the interviewer is speaking, be an active listener by maintaining eye contact and nodding occasionally when appropriate.

When the interview has concluded, thank the interviewer for their time and let them know that they should feel free to contact you if they have additional questions. Of course, you do not want to pressure them to tell you whether or not you will receive a callback interview or an offer, but it is acceptable to ask about the general time frame of the recruiting process so that you can plan accordingly.

FOLLOW UP

Send a thank you note

Take notes immediately after each interview to record your impressions of the firm and the people you met. Be sure to write down the name of everyone you met so you can remember to send them a thank you note. A thank you note reaffirms your interest in the position and expresses your appreciation to the interviewer for taking the time to consider you. Send the note promptly after the interview (the next day is ideal). Handwritten notes make a great impression and are expected in some regions (specifically southern states), but if your handwriting is horrible, a typed note is fine. Alternatively, an e-mailed thank you letter is appropriate and sufficient. Refer back to topics discussed in your interview (both position-related topics and “unrelated” topics such as a shared interest in fly fishing) and personalize the message whenever possible.

Without exception, thank you notes should be sent after every interview, even informational interviews.

Give the employer time

Hopefully, the employer has given you a general time frame for the remainder of their recruiting process. If they have not, tactfully ask where they are in the process and when they hope to conclude. Avoid asking bluntly, “So, when will I hear from you?” If the time period outlined by the interviewer has passed, give them a bit more time. If you still have yet to hear, it is acceptable to contact them. Tell them that you are still extremely interested and offer to provide any additional materials that they might need in their decision-making process. Even if you are extremely anxious to hear from an employer or are frustrated by the process, remember to maintain your professional demeanor. In the event you have not received a timeline from an employer, waiting two weeks (or ten business days) after the interview to follow up is a good rule of thumb.

GUIDELINES FOR ACCEPTING OR REJECTING OFFERS

Be professional and expect the same behavior from employers and other applicants. If an employer is pressuring you to make a quick decision, take that into consideration when evaluating whether you want to work for that employer. On the other hand, if you receive an offer from an employer for whom you would like to work, do not hesitate to accept and immediately withdraw your name from consideration by other employers. Be gracious when rejecting offers, thanking the employers for their time and the opportunity they presented to you.

If you are ever in doubt as to how to handle an acceptance or rejection of a job offer, please contact the CDO for assistance.

For a more thorough discussion of interviewing, please see the Interview Guide located in the Resource Center on our website.

NETWORKING

Networking means nothing more than building relationships. In its truest form, networking is simply when people meet to exchange ideas, information, and contacts. It can take place in a formal networking meeting, an office, an airplane, bar, holiday party—anywhere two people are talking and building a relationship. The topic of conversation is irrelevant as long as people are building a rapport, a level of trust or a bond with each other.

Networking is a vital part of a successful job search in law school and will play an ongoing and even more important role in your legal career after graduation. Networking includes contacting professionals with whom you are already acquainted, as well as making new contacts who may be able to help you secure job opportunities – either by putting in a good word for you to a potential employer or keeping you apprised of jobs that are not advertised or openings that may be about to occur. It is not simply asking someone if they are hiring or if they know of a job opening. Successful networking often results in the creation of meaningful relationships in which the contact becomes emotionally invested in your professional success and serves as a personal advocate on your behalf.

- **Networking with Notre Dame Lawyers**

NDLS students have access to one of the strongest and most loyal alumni bases in the country. Notre Dame Lawyers include NDLS graduates as well as Notre Dame undergraduates who attended law school elsewhere. They serve as an invaluable resource for NDLS students, offering them insights into the legal market in a particular city and connecting them with professionals who may be able to assist them in their job search. You can search for Notre Dame Lawyers by location and practice area using Martindale and Westlaw and by class, location and more in the Notre Dame alumni directory online. LinkedIn is also an excellent tool for identifying Notre Dame Lawyers, especially those in JD Advantage jobs.

- **Notre Dame Clubs**

Joining the Notre Dame Club in the area in which you wish to practice provides you greater access to local ND alumni and social networking events throughout the summer. You can search for your local Notre Dame Club at <http://mynotredame.nd.edu/>.

- **Local Bar Associations (Student Membership)**

Taking advantage of the bar association's student membership in the geographic area in which you wish to practice will provide you access to networking events and seminars and will connect you with individual attorneys practicing throughout the city.

Whether you use your smart phone, Access, Excel, a three-ring binder, or note cards, be sure to have thought about how you would like to keep track of important contact information. Name, address, phone numbers, email address, company, note section, follow-up action, and the date of your last contact with that person are necessary entries for your management system. You may choose to be more detailed and include additional information, but at least have the basics.

Networking Meetings

A networking meeting is a useful tool that allows you to build your knowledge about a practice area while providing an effective networking opportunity. The goal is not to ask for a job; rather, it is to make contacts and learn what it means to practice in a particular field or geographic area. This is an opportunity to ask a practicing attorney questions about the day-to-day practice in a particular field, the various career paths successful attorneys have taken in that field, and the skills necessary for success. This information can be used to craft an effective cover letter and to articulate clearly your interest and applicable skills during an interview.

Individuals to Contact

- Notre Dame Lawyers or attorneys from your undergraduate institution who practice in the field of law in which you are interested.
- Attorneys you have met or have read about who have a tie to your geographic area or other areas of interest.
- Attorneys suggested to you by your professors, staff members, family and friends.

How to Contact

- Build a contact management database of people you know.
- Call or e-mail contacts to request a meeting or telephone conversation.
- Schedule a time convenient for the contact.
- Conduct a networking meeting.
- Send thank you note.
- Follow up one month later to update your contact on your progress.

For a more thorough discussion of networking, please see the Networking Guide located in the Resource Center on our website.