

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW



CAREER SERVICES 1L HANDBOOK

Duquesne University School of Law
Career Services Office
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

Phone: (412) 396-6559

Fax: (412) 396-6598

Email: lawcareers@duq.edu

Web: law.duq.edu/career-services

DuqLawConnect: <https://law-duq.12twenty.com/>

Rev. MDC 2020

Introduction.

The Career Services Office (CSO) is excited to work with you this year as you start your legal career. This handbook is intended to answer questions that many first year students have as they contemplate their futures. When you have an individual meeting with us, we will talk about these items in greater detail as they impact your job search and careers goals. The CSO is here for all students – regardless of career interests or grades – so let us get to know you. If we don't know you, we can't help you to our greatest capacity. We look forward to meeting you and learning about your interests.

Where Can I Work as a 1L?

Each year, first year students work and intern with a variety of legal employers. Legal jobs give students an opportunity to enhance their resumes while learning about different practice areas. Some students work at private law firms and corporations, while others intern with judges, government agencies, or non-profit organizations. The CSO strongly encourages students to have some type of legal experience after their 1L year. Many students couple their legal internships with coursework and non-legal jobs during the summer months.

As you contemplate where you would like to work or intern during the summer, draw upon your past experiences, favorite classes, and advice you seek from the CSO, professors, fellow students, and alumni. The CSO hosts a number of panels and receptions throughout the year where you can meet attorneys who practice in a variety of areas. Take advantage of these opportunities!

Law firms

Most Duquesne Law graduates work at law firms immediately after graduation. Law firms vary greatly in terms of size, practice areas, salary ranges, atmosphere, type of clients, and expectations placed upon the attorneys. Law firms will hire 1L students to work with them as Law Clerks during the summer months and academic year. These are usually paid positions and may be full-time or part-time.

Law firms are generally categorized four ways: large, medium, small, and solo practices. The categorization of a firm's size will depend on its location. A firm with 40 attorneys is considered a small firm in New York City, while a firm with 10 attorneys might be the largest firm in a small town. In Pittsburgh, a large law firm has +40 attorneys, with a few having more than 150 attorneys. Large law firms tend to represent corporate clients, and they tend to have extensive support staffs. Large firms will hire 1L students on occasion; this is because they hire 2L students as "Summer Associates" during a hiring program called On-Campus Recruitment (the CSO will provide more information about this in the Spring Semester).

In Pittsburgh, a medium sized law firm has 12-40 attorneys, a small firm has 2-11 attorneys, and a solo practice consists of one attorney. 1L students tend to have more opportunities to work

in these firms than large law firms. Some firms are considered boutique firms where the attorneys specialize in a specific practice area and others may be considered a general practice firm representing the interests of clients with a variety of needs.

Most law clerks will research and draft documents. Depending on the firm, law clerks also may participate in client intake meetings, attend hearings and trials, or perform administrative duties. Some attorneys handle non-legal issues related to operating a business, so they split their time between performing the duties of a lawyer and those of an administrator. Students who demonstrate an appreciation of this and contribute to the greater good of the firm often stand out for their willingness to help where needed.

Corporations

Many law students find the possibility of in-house counsel roles very appealing. The in-house attorney's client is the corporation, and as such, the attorney may be responsible for issues relating to employment, contracts, litigation, administrative regulations, and much more. Many corporations prefer their attorneys to have at least 5 years' worth of experience before moving into a traditional in-house role. That said, some corporations have internship programs where they will hire law students to work in their legal department or with departments that are related to the law, such as compliance and contracts analysts. Corporate interns will research issues and draft documents, as well as work on projects related to their work.

Judiciary

Many 1L students secure judicial internships with the federal, state, and local judiciary during the summer. Interns generally assist the judge's full-time law clerk with research and writing and often have the opportunity to observe courtroom proceedings and to participate in discussions with the judge and the court staff. Internships are available in trial and appellate courts. Locally, they are available at the federal courthouse with the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District. Internships with the Pennsylvania judiciary include those with the Supreme Court, Superior Court, Commonwealth Court, and Courts of Common Pleas. Working as an intern for a judge is a wonderful way to learn more about the court system and various practice areas.

Judicial internships are usually unpaid. Students may receive externship credit for these experiences by contacting the Office of Clinical Education in the Tribone Center. The School of Law offers the McGinley Public Service Fellowship which provides a stipend to students who have unpaid government internships during the summer. Students must apply for the Fellowship, and the Dean's Office distributes information about the Fellowship in the Spring Semester.

Government

Legal internships are available in every branch of government and at every level of local, state, and federal government. Government internships include a wide array of substantive law

areas. Students interested in federal issues may intern at the U.S. Attorney's Office, a military JAG office, or a federal agency, such as the Environmental Protection Agency. State internships are possible with the offices such as the Attorney General's Office or the Governor's Office of General Counsel, which operates the Department of Labor, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Transportation, among others. Finally, internships at the local level are possible with the City of Pittsburgh Department of Law and Allegheny County Solicitor's Office. Students also intern with legislative offices at all levels of government.

Government internships are usually unpaid. Students may receive externship credit for these experiences by contacting the Office of Clinical Education in the Tribone Center. The School of Law offers the McGinley Public Service Fellowship which provides a stipend to students who have unpaid government internships during the summer. Students must apply for the Fellowship, and the Dean's Office distributes information about the Fellowship in the Spring Semester.

Non-profit organizations

Non-profit organizations include civil rights groups, legal services organizations, legal aid societies, social action organizations, higher education institutions, and some hospitals. Internship opportunities exist for 1L students with many of these employers. Depending on the organization, student interns may gain experience with research and writing, client interviewing, observing court proceedings, and representing clients (as Certified Legal Interns in the 2L year). Students whose long-term goal is to work in a public interest organization should get as much experience in this area as possible. All employers want to know that their employees are committed to the organization, but public interest organizations especially want to see a track-record of public interest work on an applicant's resume.

Non-profit internships are usually unpaid. Students may receive externship credit for these experiences by contacting the Office of Clinical Education in the Tribone Center. The School of Law offers the Public Interest Law Fellowship which provides a stipend to students who have unpaid public interest internships during the summer. Students must apply for the Fellowship, and the Office of Clinical Legal Education distributes information about the Fellowship in the Spring Semester.

How Do I Find a Job?

A successful job search will consist of three components: reviewing and responding to job postings, conducting a targeted mailing to prospective employers, and making professional connections – or networking. Although the statistics vary from year to year, typically 10% of jobs are found by responding to job postings, 10% are found through a targeted mailing, and 80% are found through networking. A legal job search may require more from students than they have had to do in the past. Not all legal jobs are posted on a website, so extra effort is needed to secure most legal jobs and internships. The CSO will work with you to develop a solid strategy to find your summer, academic year, and post-graduation positions.

Job postings

1L students will have access to job postings on DuqLawConnect immediately after attending the CSO Orientation in October. The CSO posts all job and internship postings of which we are aware on DuqLawConnect. (Students receive passwords to this website early in the Fall semester of their 1L year.)

Students should review postings on a regular basis and apply to any jobs of interest in a timely manner. Although a particular job may have a projected application deadline, employers will cancel postings if they receive a strong response. Don't miss out on a great opportunity because you wait until the deadline to apply! Employers appreciate thoughtful, yet quick, responses to their postings.

Students may find job postings on other websites such as a particular company's site, LinkedIn, www.psid.org (public interest), www.usajobs.org (government), or Indeed.com. Check the Career Services (Law) Blackboard site for links to popular legal job search websites.

Targeted mailings

Many legal jobs are said to be part of a "hidden job market," meaning that they are not posted on any websites. They are, instead, made known to people in one of two ways: targeted mailings or networking connections. Some employers do not have the time or inkling to review a stack of resumes that result from a job posting. If a student sends the employer a carefully drafted cover letter and resume at the time that employer is considering hiring a law clerk, the student may be interviewed and offered a job that no one else knew was available. A bit of serendipity is involved with targeted mailings, but this job search tactic can be very fruitful in some instances.

In order for this type of unsolicited contact to be productive, students must tailor their cover letters so the employer instantly knows that they are not receiving a stock letter that was sent to hundreds of employers. A targeted mailing can be effective when a student is interested in a particular type of law and sends application documents to firms that practice that type of law.

Students should demonstrate a connection or interest to a particular type of law in all of their cover letters, and this is especially important with targeted mailings.

Students may submit their application documents via U.S. Mail, email, or hand-delivery. If you email your materials to an employer, attach each document as a pdf file. Some employers have reported that they appreciate when a student hand delivers application materials to the office. This may not be feasible in all circumstances, but students who hand deliver materials should wear a suit and be prepared to be interviewed on the spot.

Networking

Many law students and lawyers consider themselves to be introverts, so the thought of networking is daunting to them. Introverted or not, some people don't know what to say when they meet someone for the first time, while others don't like to ask for help. But if you think of networking as making professional connections, your attitude towards it can change.

As a lawyer, you will be responsible for meeting with existing clients, building relationships with new clients, or being a good community partner. The goal of networking is to make positive professional connections so you can share opportunities and information with other people. Think of networking as a two-way street between you and others in your circles. You want someone to think of you when an opportunity (whether it be a job lead now or a client referral later) becomes available, and that other person wants the same thing. By making professional connections, you increase your chances of being the person recommended or referred when a "hidden" job becomes available.

The CSO provides different networking opportunities throughout the year. We consider these "low-hanging fruit" because we initiate the connections for you by offering a networking event at the Law School or by coordinating a visit to a bar association event. Events that the CSO plans for you are like the apple at the bottom of the tree – you don't have to put forth much effort to get it. In our case, you have to put on a suit, use the business cards we provide to you, and represent yourself well with our guests.

How can you network?

Attend events

The CSO organizes a variety of events during the year for the benefit of students. Whether you attend a panel presentation or a networking reception, you have the chance to meet attorneys who want to talk with law students – the low hanging fruit. Be sure to ask for someone's business card or connect with them on LinkedIn so you can follow up with them afterwards. (LinkedIn connections should be made with a personalized message instead of the automated message LinkedIn provides.)

The Career Services Office promotes events via email, signs in the Student Lounge, social media, and on the Law School website.

[Join a bar association](#)

Many bar associations and professional organizations offer student memberships at a free or discounted rate. As a student member, you may attend meetings and events just as attorney members do. Students who actively participate in bar association activities show initiative and motivation to get involved – two traits that are looked upon favorably by the attorneys you will meet. The Career Services Office lists a number of associations and organizations that accept student members on the Career Services (Law) Blackboard site.

[Meet people for coffee or lunch](#)

These meetings are known as informational interviews. An informational interview is where you ask questions focused on learning more about someone's practice area, a geographic area, or the general practice of law. By meeting someone over coffee, you get to learn more about that person's work at the same time that person gets to know you, your story and interests. Students requesting the meeting should wear a suit and be prepared to drive the conversation (even if these meetings are done virtually); research the person you are meeting so you can prepare questions in advance and show that you value that person's time. The goals of this meeting are to gather information for yourself and to make a good impression on the person you meet. You want that person to think of you if they hear of a job lead (or a client referral down the road), and vice versa as previously mentioned.

Students should request informational interviews via email or phone call (see template below). A resume should not be included with your request for a meeting. However, you may bring a copy of your resume with you and ask the attorney if he/she would mind reviewing it for you.

Use the DukesConnect and LinkedIn to identify people with whom you would like to meet. Many Duquesne Law alumni are willing to talk with students about their experiences and offer helpful advice, and they will note this on DukesConnect.

Edit this template as needed as you reach out to people for meetings:

Dear Mr./Ms./Judge ____:

I am a first-year student at Duquesne University School of Law. I am very interested in learning more about (area of law), and I am writing to ask if I can meet you for coffee or lunch sometime to learn more about your work.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

Of course, be respectful of the other person's time when you meet. If a twenty-minute meeting is scheduled, stick to that timeframe. Likewise, be responsive and as flexible as possible when someone responds to your request to meet.

When Do I Apply, What Do I Send, and To Whom Do I Write?

Law firms

- *Respond to job postings and make networking connections throughout the year.
- *Large law firms will accept applications from 1L's on December 1. It is rare for large law firm to hire a 1L student, but submit your applications as close to December 1 as possible so you are considered if the firm decides to hire a 1L.
- *Prepare targeted mailings for other firms during the semester break and Spring Semester.
- *Identify firms of interest via www.martindale.com (all firms), LinkedIn (all firms), www.nalpdirectory.org (large firms), and www.vault.com (large firms).
- *A job posting should include a contact person's name; use that person's name in your cover letter. If the CSO posts the job and the information is missing for some reason, let us know.
- *Absent a job posting, attempt to identify a hiring partner, managing partner, human resources or recruiting office at the firm, or Duquesne Law graduate to whom you can address your cover letter.
- *Submit documents as requested in a job posting or on a firm's website. Absent instructions, a cover letter and resume are sufficient to submit. Additional documents such as a writing sample, law school transcript, and reference list may be requested at a later date. Unless otherwise directed, submit each document as a separate pdf file.

Corporations

- *Respond to job postings and make networking connections throughout the year.
- *Many corporate internships or law clerk positions are posted on companies' websites.

Bookmark companies of interest and check their sites periodically.

*Submit documents as requested in a job posting or on a company's website. Unless otherwise directed, submit each document as a separate pdf file.

*Attempt to address your cover letter to someone in the human resources department. This information may be difficult to find, so you may need to use a generic salutation, such as "Dear Hiring Committee."

Judiciary

*Judicial internships are rarely posted.

*Students must do targeted mailings in most instances to secure a judicial internship. You should mail your application materials to judges in federal courts by the end of the Fall Semester (or early January at the latest), and you should mail application materials to judges in state courts by March.

*The CSO produced a spreadsheet that includes nearly all of the judges in Western Pennsylvania and some surrounding areas. The spreadsheet is located on the Career Services (Law) Blackboard site. Contact information for judges is on the courts' websites as well.

*Unless otherwise instructed, submit a cover letter, resume, and writing sample (5-12 pages) for judicial internships. You may use an excerpt from a longer document as the writing sample. Include a cover page identifying the document (see sample in the next section). Additional documents such as a law school transcript and reference list may be requested at a later date. Unless otherwise directed, submit each document as a separate pdf file.

Government

*Respond to job postings and make networking connections throughout the year.

*Check the Government Internship and Honors Attorney Handbook available on the Career Services (Law) Blackboard site for information about many internships with the federal government and some with various state governments.

*Check websites such as www.psjd.org and www.usajobs.gov.

*Some government agencies post information about their internships on their websites. Bookmark agencies of interest and check their sites periodically.

*Prepare targeted mailings by early Spring Semester.

Non-profit organizations

*Respond to job postings and make networking connections throughout the year.

*Check the Public Policy Handbook available on Career Services (Law) Blackboard site for information about internships with non-profit and public interest organizations.

*Check websites such as www.psjd.org.

*Some organizations post information about their internships on their websites. Bookmark organizations of interest and check their sites periodically.

*Prepare targeted mailings by early Spring Semester.

Application Documents

Cover letters and resumes are designed to accomplish one thing - to interest a prospective employer enough to invite you to an interview. In order to get the interview, your documents must answer one critical question for a prospective employer: "What can this candidate do for us?" When drafting your materials, never lose sight of this decisive question.

In addition to a cover letter and resume, an employer may request a writing sample, law school transcript, and reference list. Sample documents are located at the end of this section.

Resume

Your resume might be the only writing sample an employer reviews when deciding to invite you to the office for an interview. Remember to write it clearly and concisely – make it easy for an employer to know who you are, where you go to school, and what you have done. Most first year students will have a one-page resume, but in some instances a two-page resume will be necessary.

Include your name, address, email address, and phone number on the top of the page. Use that information on the top of all of your application documents to create a letterhead-like look to your materials. The first section after that should be "Education," and you should list, in reverse chronological order, the schools where you are seeking a degree (law school) and those from where you have received a degree. The second section should be "Experience," and you should list jobs and internships (post since high school) in reverse chronological order. The CSO will work with you to pare down your resume if needed.

Some students include additional sections, such as "Volunteer Experience," "Professional Affiliations" (such as bar associations), "Skills" (such as a language skill), and "Interests." The CSO will assist students in determining whether or not to include these other areas.

The resume you use to apply for legal internships and law clerk positions might be different than the one you used for other purposes, both in style and content. The legal profession is conservative by nature, and a legal resume reflects that in its format. A legal resume (and all application documents) should be written using black text and in a simple and often-use font style such as Times New Roman, Calibri, or Garamond. For emphasis, use **bold**, *italics*, and underline. Shading and colored text should not be used on a legal resume. The information on your resume should differentiate it from others, not the coloring or extra flair. 12-point font should be used when possible. However, depending on the font style used, font size may range from 10- to 12-point font (remember that the person receiving the documents must be able to easily read them and 10-point font should only be used if the document is easy to read). Use the same size font throughout the document. Applicants should include their name in the title

of each application document so the recipient can easily find it on his/her computer. Example: “Maria Comas Resume” or “Comas Cover Letter- ABC Law Firm”.

Cover letter

A cover letter allows a job applicant to write about and advocate for themselves. This is often a difficult task for most students. While a resume is factual in nature, a cover letter is more subjective and requires the writer to tell a story that distinguishes that person from other candidates. Like the resume, the cover letter is a writing sample that the employer will evaluate. The purpose of both is to get an invitation for an interview.

Cover letters must be tailored to each employer to whom you write. An employer is most concerned about your experiences/skills/abilities, why you are interested in them, and the value you can bring to their work. Sometimes students focus too much on what an employer can do for candidates in terms of providing them a solid start to their legal career. Although that is important to you, an employer is most interested in how you can help them.

A cover letter should be descriptive and include simple, concise sentences. A good cover letter will be more than a listing of the information on your resume written in sentence format. Think about highlights, successes, and challenges you have overcome while drafting your letter. Perhaps you can use one (or more) of them to highlight in your letter.

Writing sample

Some employers request a writing sample with the other application materials or after an interview. If one is requested, be prepared to answer questions about it at an interview. Unless otherwise noted, a writing sample should be 5-10 pages. An excerpt from a larger document is acceptable to submit. Many first-year students use a memo prepared during Legal Research & Writing I or the appellate brief prepared for Legal Research & Writing II as their writing samples. Choose the document that best reflects your writing ability. Unless otherwise stated, you may edit the document before you submit it as a writing sample so it is as perfect as possible before the employer reviews it. Attach a cover page to the sample including your name, contact information, and identifying the document. See the sample cover page at the end of this section.

The CSO does not review writing samples for content. You and your professor know the substance of the document better than we do. The CSO will review the writing sample for general formatting questions however.

Law School transcript

Some employers will request a transcript from applicants. Students may access their unofficial transcript on DORI and save it as a pdf file. Alternatively, students and alumni may order

transcripts from National Student Clearinghouse (see www.duq.edu/transcripts). However, the Career Services Office does not recommend that applicants order transcripts that are sent directly to an employer. Employers may have difficulty opening the pdf files and the password needed to open the file expires after 30 days. If you order a transcript from NSC for yourself, you are welcome to scan it in the CSO and use that pdf file to send to employers.

Unless you have stellar grades, you should not include your transcript with your cover letter and resume (unless it is requested). However, you should take it to interviews in the event it is requested at that time. Even if an employer does not request a transcript in advance of an interview, you may be asked about your grades during an interview. If you did not perform as well as you would have liked during law school, be prepared to answer questions about your grades by talking through your answers before the actual interview. Be sure you can describe ways in which you tried to improve your grades, such as meeting with your professors or changing your study habits, so you can turn a potential negative into a positive by showing that you took steps to better your performance and displayed qualities such as determination, resilience, and having a strong work ethic.

[Reference list](#)

You should have between three and five references that you can provide to an employer upon request. References should include at least one law school professor. You should always have permission to list someone as a reference. You should alert your references when you know that they may be contacted and send them a copy of your updated resume.

Your reference list should not be submitted with your cover letter and resume in most instances, unless it is specifically requested. Your references should be listed on a separate sheet of paper that you can take with you to an interview. In some unique instances where you know that one of your references has a connection with an employer, you may want to include your reference list with your cover letter and resume. See the sample reference list at the end of this section.

Sample Resume. Note: In the "Experience" section you may use bullet points to describe your jobs/internships. Either format is acceptable.

Jane D. Smith

300 Forbes Avenue, Apt. 200

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

(412) 555-1212 * jsmith@emailaddress.com

EDUCATION

Duquesne University School of Law, Pittsburgh, PA

Juris Doctor Candidate, Expected Graduation June 2020

Activities: Student Bar Association, First Year Class Representative

Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, PA

Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, May 2017

Major: History

Honors: Dean's List, Presidential Scholarship (2016-2017)

Activities: Student Government Association, Vice President (2016-2017); Golf Team Captain (2015-2017), Member (2014-2017); SRU Volunteers, Student Volunteer (2013-2017)

EXPERIENCE

Christian Legal Aid Clinic, Pittsburgh, PA

Volunteer, Fall 2017

Participate in client intake interviews. Discuss facts of cases and strategies with supervising attorneys. Observe court proceedings involving clients of the clinic.

Constituent Office of Senator John Dominick, Pittsburgh, PA

Intern, Summer 2017

Researched various legislative issues as well as interacted with a wide range of constituents via email, phone, or letters. Drafted correspondence that addressed constituents' concerns on issues ranging from legislation regarding national security to local issues.

Office of Admissions – Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, PA

Student Assistant, Fall 2013-Spring 2017

Guided campus tours for prospective students and their families. Organized materials for campus visits and college fairs. Answered telephones and email correspondence as needed.

West Hills Golf Course, Pittsburgh, PA

Instructor and Pro Shop Assistant, Summer 2012-Summer 2017 (Seasonal work)

Instructed students in golf fundamentals including grip, swing, and putting. Assisted customers when purchasing merchandise and setting up tee times.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Allegheny County Bar Association, Student Member

Sample Cover Letter.

Jane D. Smith
300 Forbes Avenue, Apt. 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
(412) 555-1212 * jsmith@emailaddress.com

November 11, 2017

Joseph A. Crosby, Esq.
Neighborhood Legal Services Association
100 Address Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Dear Mr. Crosby:

As a first year law student at Duquesne University School of Law with a demonstrated commitment to community service, I am concentrating my job search for the summer of 2018 to public interest organizations. Neighborhood Legal Services' commitment to providing assistance to low-income individuals in Pittsburgh drew me to your organization, and I am seeking a summer internship in your office.

Since starting law school, I have had the opportunity to learn and strengthen various legal skills. I sharpened my research and writing skills through drafting a memo related to family and landlord tenant law this fall. Through my participation in the Christian Legal Aid Clinic, I developed an understanding of the critical need for public interest work when I interviewed clients that attended the legal clinic. These experiences have allowed me to improve my analytical thinking skills as I considered the clients' issues and then discussed them with the supervising attorneys and other law student volunteers. I am committed to obtaining a summer internship where I can continue to do this type of work.

I am very interested in this opportunity, and I would welcome the chance to talk with you about this internship. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane D. Smith

Sample Cover Page for a Writing Sample.

Jane D. Smith

300 Forbes Avenue, Apt. 200

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

(412) 555-1212 * jsmith@emailaddress.com

Writing Sample

The following is an excerpt from the Appellate Brief submitted for Legal Research and Writing II (Spring 2021).

Sample Reference List.

Jane D. Smith
300 Forbes Avenue, Apt. 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
(412) 555-1212 * jsmith@emailaddress.com

References

Professor Name

Duquesne University School of Law
600 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
Email address
Phone number
(Civil Procedure Professor)

Professor Name

Slippery Rock University
Address
City, State Zip
Email address
Phone number
(Business Law Professor)

Supervisor Name

Employer Name
Address
City, State Zip
Email address
Phone number
(Supervisor)

Foundations of Professionalism

Starting on your first day of law school, you are held to a higher standard of professionalism. That certainly applies to your preparation and performance in the classroom. But it also pertains to things outside of the classroom, such as social media posts; communications with potential employers, fellow students, faculty and staff at the law school, and people you meet at networking events; and interactions you have with people at your internships and jobs this summer. Many characteristics and traits that have nothing to do with substantive law are observed and judged by the people you meet. You always want to make the best impression as possible on the people with whom you meet and who may be in a position to help you now or in the future.

Professionalism Tips:

Your professional reputation for honesty and integrity can be controlled by relatively simple things:

- Avoid gossiping.
- Be respectful of each other and everyone's ideas.
- Don't make derogatory remarks about anyone. You never know who knows that person.
- Keep promises and commitments.

While searching for a job, this means that you

- Don't misrepresent or falsify credentials on your application documents.
- Apply for jobs on time (and early if possible).
- Be mindful of your social media posts, shares, and pictures at all times.
- Use proper greetings in email messages and letters. "Hey" is not the way to greet a potential employer, a senior partner, a professor, or a client.
- Arrive on time (but no more than 10 minutes early) for interviews.
- Respond timely and appropriately to communications from employers. Read offer letters so you are aware of deadlines, responsibilities, and obligations.

In the workplace, especially, this means that you

- Guard confidentiality. Don't discuss work in public places and don't discuss it with anyone outside of your work or internship site.
- Exhibit good time management skills.
- Respond timely and appropriately to communication from your co-workers and clients.
- Be responsive and open to new opportunities. Be the person who volunteers for projects or special assignments when you learn of them.

Interview Skills

An interview is essentially a conversation during which the participants exchange information, ask and answer questions, and form opinions about each other and about whether a long-term relationship is likely to develop. And just as you would during any good conversation, you must pay attention to what the other person is saying, look at them while they are speaking, and respond appropriately. Remember, employers hire people who they like. The interview starts as soon as you enter the employer's building or join a virtual interview. Everyone you meet will give feedback about your interactions with them.

Format

Most interviews are 15-30 minutes long. The employer will probably tell you how long the interview will be when you schedule it. Some interviews will be conversational, while others will be a series of questions and answers. People have different interviewing styles, and usually there is no way to know the format in advance. Be prepared so you can handle either situation. Candidates should ask questions when they have the opportunity to do so. By not asking a question, candidates demonstrate a lack of interest.

Some employers will schedule second interviews, or callback interviews, with candidates so they can meet more attorneys and staff. Second interviews tend to be longer in duration, and they can last up to a 3-4 hours and include lunch. Remember that lunch or receptions are still part of the interview, and candidates should conduct themselves appropriately.

Preparation

Research is key. Research the employer and the person with whom you are interviewing. Know what the employer does so you are able to tell the interviewers why you want to work there with them. By being prepared, you will show your interest in the employer.

Where can you find information? The employer's website is the best place to start, but do not stop there. Websites such as www.martindale.com, Lexis, and Westlaw offer information about law firms and lawyers. Information about large law firms also can be found on www.vault.com and www.nalpdirectory.com. Talk with faculty and other students about employers. Some employers, and certainly many attorneys, post information on LinkedIn.

Review your materials. You wrote your application materials, so why should you review them before your interview? Because you do not know what the interviewer will ask you. Reflect on your resume and cover letter. Do they contain information about a great accomplishment that you want to work into your answers? Identify three traits/skills/achievements you want the interviewer to know before you leave, and carefully weave that information into your answers.

Reflect on your writing sample. The interviewer may have just finished reading it. You want it to be as fresh in your memory as the day you wrote it so you can talk about it coherently and effectively at the interview.

Review your transcript. Do you have any grades about which the employer will ask? Did you take any classes that relate to the job that you should highlight?

Dress professionally. The legal profession is conservative. Dress the part in your interviews, even if you know the employer employs a business casual dress code. After you get the job, you may relax your apparel choices, if appropriate. It is always better to be overdressed than the underdressed person.

Women and men should wear conservative suits similar to those worn for 1L Oral Arguments in Legal Research and Writing. Women should wear a black, navy, dark brown, or dark gray suit (pants or skirt) with relatively low heels. Men should wear a single-breasted black, navy, or dark gray suit with a white shirt, conservative tie, and shined shoes. Wear tasteful, toned-down jewelry. Be mindful of perfume or cologne so you don't linger in the room long after you are gone. Be memorable for positive reasons. When in doubt, ask the CSO. (Professional attire is required for both in-person and virtual interviews.)

[The Interview](#)

The most important thing to remember about an interview is that the employer is trying to determine whether you are somebody with whom they would like to work. Your application materials got you in the door, now the employer wants to know who you are as a person. If you have a virtual interview, follow the advice in this Handbook, but also refer to the Virtual Interview Guide posted on the Career Services (Law) Blackboard site.

Get off to a good start. First impressions count a great deal and that is why the first five minutes of an interview are so crucial. They set the tone for the rest of your meeting. First, greet the interviewer by name and with a warm, friendly smile. Shake the interviewer's hand firmly and make eye contact. During the first five minutes or so of the interview, the interviewer will usually engage in small talk in an attempt to break the ice and set you at ease. Go along with whatever the interviewer is talking about - be sure you are up on the current events for that week so that you can talk intelligently about whatever topic the interviewer brings up.

The Rest of the Interview. Throughout the rest of the interview, it is critical that you maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude. Convey in your tone of voice, your body language and the words you use, that you really want this job. Now is the time to use the "elevator pitch" that you have prepared about yourself. Demonstrate to the interviewer why they should be interested in you. Remember those three traits/skills/achievements that you want to convey and talk about them.

Common interview questions.

Although no one can ever predict all of the questions that will be asked at an interview, you should be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Tell me about yourself. In other words, tell me things about yourself that will make me want to hire you. Use your elevator speech here!
- Why did you go to law school?
- Why did you choose Duquesne Law School?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you think you'll be a successful lawyer?
- What have you liked most about law school? What has been your favorite law school course? Why?
- Are your grades a good indication of your academic achievement?
- Why are you interested in our firm?
- What areas of practice interest you?
- What do you know about this firm?
- What two things are most important to you in a job?
- What have you learned from your participation in Law Review?/Moot Court?/Legal Clinic?
- How do you spend your free time?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your greatest weakness? (The best way to respond is to state the negative and tell how you have taken steps to correct it.)
- What achievements do you look back on with pride and why?
- If you could do it all over, would you still choose to go to law school?
- You may also get behavioral questions that ask you to describe major challenges in your life and how you faced them, how you worked with a co-worker you didn't get along with, or how you have demonstrated leadership.
- Tell me about your memo or case note (or whatever your writing sample is).
- Tell me about ____ (fill in blank with anything on your resume or cover letter). Be prepared to talk about anything you have included on your resume or cover letter.

Questions You Should Ask. Perhaps even more important than the questions an interviewer asks you are the questions you ask the interviewer. Hiring partners consistently say that they are looking for people who are genuinely interested in their organizations and that people who are genuinely interested usually ask lots of questions. Intelligent, well thought-out questions are one more way that you can distinguish yourself from the rest of the crowd. Be careful, however, not to sound like you are quickly trying to think up a few questions to ask on the spur of the moment. This is one more area in which you should be thoroughly prepared. Kimm Walton, author of *Guerrilla Tactics*, writes that interviewees should ask interviewers questions that fall into five categories. The five categories and some sample questions from each category follow. Another great tip is to use the very questions that you find difficult, and ask

them. For example, ask the employer where they see the firm in 5 years, or "What is the most challenging aspect of this position," etc.

Category 1: Questions that show off your research about the firm and the interviewer.

- If the firm just added a department to work on a different area of the law, you may want to ask: How did the firm make the decision to add this department? Does the firm have plans to expand into other areas?

- If the firm has recently added a large number of attorneys, you may want to ask: Does the firm expect to grow more in the next five years? If so, what type of growth does the firm anticipate?

Category 2: Questions about what your own job experience at the firm would be like.

- What types of projects do law clerks/interns/summer associates work on?
- What kind of training is provided to (position)?
- What kind of responsibility will I have?
- How is work assigned?
- What is expected in terms of participation in professional activities?

Category 3: Questions that depend on the size of the employer and the age of the interviewer.

1. Questions to ask depending on the size of the employer

a. For large firms: Does your firm have a mentor program? How often are associates evaluated?

b. For smaller firms: How quickly are associates expected to take part in new business development? Will I be able to attend depositions and court hearings?

Savvy interviewees will also ask questions about the viability of the firm as a business: the impact of market changes on major clients, etc.

2. Questions to ask depending on the age of the interviewer

a. For interviewees with less legal experience (those who have been out of law school for 4 years or less): What is a typical day like for you? Were you a summer clerk with this firm? Did you work for this firm during law school?

b. For interviewees with more legal experience at this firm: How has the practice changed over the past 5 years? Where do you see the partnership heading in the next five years?

Category 4: Personalized questions designed to evoke an emotional response from the interviewer.

- What do you like about working for this firm?
- How did you choose this firm?
- What is the most interesting case you've worked on?

- What do you find most challenging about your job?

5. Questions You Should Never Ask. No matter how much you may want to know the answers to certain questions, there are some questions that you should just never ask.

Any questions that have a "What's-In It-For-Me" tone. For example:

- What are the hours?
- How much vacation time do I get?
- What is the salary?
- What type of benefits do you offer?

Questions with a Negative Tone, including:

- I read that your firm lost a big case last year. Is the firm still doing okay?

Any question that you could have answered yourself through simple research. Asking a question about the number of attorneys at the firm or the firm's practice areas shows that you have not done even basic research prior to your interview.

Qualities Interviewers Look for in a Candidate

- Appears comfortable and relaxed.
- Proper professional appearance and demeanor.
- Normal voice level and mannerisms.
- Makes eye contact.
- Responds directly to questions.
- Presents information in a logical/organized manner.
- Has defined career goals.
- Understands own strengths and weaknesses.
- Demonstrates problem solving skills.
- Can explain relevance of background to career goals.
- Demonstrates potential for professional excellence.
- Has leadership qualities.
- Specifies interest in the employer's work.
- Indicates an interest in the location/has a tie to the region.
- Gives reasons for applying to that specific employer.
- Relates experience and goals to the employer/position.

Interview Advice Wrap-Up

- Do a mock interview with the CSO before the real thing.
- Participate in the Mock Interview Program (Spring Semester).
- Be positive: focus on your accomplishments and successes.
- Be enthusiastic: show enthusiasm for the job.

- Be punctual: don't be late for your interview, but arrive no more than 10 minutes early.
- Smile: everyone wants to work with pleasant, happy people.
- Shake hands: shows you're confident in the business world.
- Make eye contact: sends the signal that you are honest.
- Be attentive: listen and respond suitably to the interviewer.
- Be yourself: don't act like someone you're not.
- Be honest: always tell the truth.
- Dress appropriately. If you can't afford interview attire, contact the Career Services Office so we can tell you about some resources.
- Bring extra copies of your resume, writing sample, transcript, and references - don't assume that the interviewer already has all of these things.
- Send a thank you note to your interviewer and anyone who assisted you (such as a recruiter). If you know that the employer will make a decision very quickly, send a thank you note via email. If you think you have time, send a thank you note via U.S. Mail or email. In either instance, make sure the thank you note is a formal communication and does not contain any mistakes or typos. That letter will be reviewed along with other application materials and your interview.

Other Considerations

Reciprocity

If you want to work in another city or state during the summer or after graduation, let us know. The CSO will request reciprocity for you at another law school that you identify so you may access their career services offices, which usually includes job postings. Every school has a specific policy, so please research the policy at the other school so you know your responsibilities and any limitations in its reciprocity policy.

Bar Examination

Be mindful of the bar examination requirements in the jurisdiction in which you want to practice. Some like New York have mandatory pro bono requirements that applicants must fulfill.

Offer Acceptance Policy and Student Recruiting Guidelines

The Career Services Office requires that a law student who has accepted an offer of employment withdraw his/her application from all others as soon as possible as a matter of professional responsibility and professional courtesy. Students who have questions about this policy or who would like assistance with contacting employers should contact Maria Comas at comas@duq.edu or 412-396-6279.

Student should be aware of the CSO's [Student Recruiting Guidelines](#).

Checklist – Use this as a reminder of important tasks to finish this year!

Take some time to think about your professional development by starting with some essential items that should not take too much of your time.

Prepare for job applications and interviews.

- Revise your resume so it is in a legal resume format.
- Schedule an initial appointment to discuss your interests and legal resume.
- Review your on-line presence.

Network! Make professional connections!

- Join and become active with a bar association.
- Attend events and programs at the Law School.
- Create or update your LinkedIn profile. Connect with Maria Comas.
- Join the [DukesConnect](#) Community.
- Practice your elevator speech. Articulate an answer to this question: What do you want to do when you graduate? Or alternatively, what do you want to do this summer? Be able to talk about your skills, strengths, and the level of client contact you want. Be able to describe, in a few sentences, what you want to do this year/summer or when you graduate. Then use this “speech” with everyone you know.

Review resources.

- Check the Career Services (Law) Blackboard site for various resources.
- Follow the Career Services Office on Twitter (DuquesneLawCSO).
- Review job postings on DuqLawConnect.

Contact Us

Maria Comas (L'00)
Director of Career Services
Room 209
comas@duq.edu
412-396-6279

Marlene Dimoff
Administrative Assistant
Room 209
dimoffm@duq.edu
412-396-6559

The Career Services Office compiled this *1L Handbook* by using original *CSO Handbook* (developed by the Career Services Office), various NALP publications and annual education conference handouts, and advice from employers and Duquesne Law alumni with whom the CSO interacts. MDC 2020