

The University of Mississippi School of Law Career Planning Handbook

This Handbook is designed to help you develop a successful job search plan that will lead to a gratifying career. Developing a plan is an ongoing process involving analysis, research, implementation and assessment. Specific steps include:

- Analyzing your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities in your field and Threats in your field (SWOT)
- Exploring your options and develop a list of the most feasible and accessible
- Developing a plan answering who, what, when and where
- Assessing success of your plan and re-assess, if necessary.

Planning your future is a challenging endeavor. It takes time, energy, dedication and introspection. The information in this guide will provide you with the nuts and bolts information you need to meet that challenge and to develop and grow your career plan.

Contents

CAREER SERVICES OFFICE STAFF	3
LOCATION	3
HOURS	3
APPOINTMENTS	3
WELCOME!	3
SERVICES	3
JOB POSTINGS	4
ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS.....	4
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS (NALP).....	4
STANDARDS FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS.....	4
CAREER PLANNING	5
Personal Assessment.....	5
Skills and Abilities Inventory	5
Innate skills	7
Transferable Skills	7
Job Specific Skills.....	8
FOUR STEP CAREER PLANNING PROCESS.....	9
SAMPLE SWOT ANALYSIS.....	10
LEGAL CAREER OPTIONS.....	12
Law Firm Practice.....	12
Government Agencies.....	13
Public Interest Practice	13
Non-traditional Careers.....	15
Academia	15
TYPICAL 1L SUMMER POSITIONS	16
FALL ON CAMPUS INTERVIEWS FOR 2Ls and 3Ls	18
SPRING ON CAMPUS INTERVIEWS FOR 1Ls.....	18
JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES: MAKING CONTACTS	19
THE RESUME.....	21
Standard Content.....	21
Optional Content.....	22
BASIC ELEMENTS OF LAYOUT	23
CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR YOUR RESUME	24
SAMPLE RESUMES	26
COVER LETTERS.....	29
Cover Letter Checklist	29
Cover Letter Outline	30
Other Materials	31
SAMPLE COVER LETTERS	33
INTERVIEWING	36
Interview Dos and Don'ts	37

Sample Questions Asked by Employers	37
How to Handle Discriminatory Questions	39
NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY	40
EXAMPLES OF DISCRIMINATORY QUESTIONS	41
QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER	42
Sample Questions.....	42
AFTER THE INTERVIEW	43
Thank You Letters	43
RECEIVING AN OFFER.....	44
Considerations in Selecting Legal Employment.....	44
Responding to an Offer.....	47
BASIC COMPETENCIES ESSENTIAL TO BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE LAWYER.....	49
JOB FAIRS	50
LL.M. PROGRAMS	50
SUGGESTED CAREER RELATED WEBSITES.....	50

CAREER SERVICES OFFICE STAFF

Kristin Flierl
Director Career Services
The University of Mississippi School of Law
Lamar Law Center
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677

Phone: (662) 915-6830
Fax: (662) 915-7025

kfflierl@olemiss.edu
www.law.olemiss.edu

Annette Covington
Staff Assistant
The University of Mississippi School of Law
Lamar Law Center
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677

Phone: (662) 915-6828
Fax: (662) 915-7025

acov@olemiss.edu
www.law.olemiss.edu

LOCATION

We are located in Room 122 on the first school of the Law School.

HOURS

Monday – Friday
8 a.m. – Noon
1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

We are frequently here both early and late; if the door is open, you are welcome to come in!

APPOINTMENTS

To schedule an advising appointment, please call or e-mail Kristin Flierl.

WELCOME!

We look forward to working with you during your law school career and beyond.

The Career Services Office (CSO) is committed to providing all students with the resources, programs, guidance and support that will enable them to conduct successful job searches. Our goal is your success. Our relationship with you is based on mutual respect and cooperation. We will use all resources and contacts available to us to keep your job search fresh and on track. You, in turn, will take the necessary steps for a successful outcome.

SERVICES

CSO provides resources, contacts, information, job listings, interview programs, mock interviews and advice on job searching, interviewing and etiquette for summer, part-time and permanent employment. Beginning in the fall of 2009, we will also be offering a year-long career planning and professional development course. The course will meet one day per week and will cover timely topics, in addition to job search fundamentals.

JOB POSTINGS

The Career Services Office utilizes, Symplicity, a web-based career services management system, which allows you to access job listings any time of day from any computer.

Instructions on accessing the system will be e-mailed to first year students the first week in November.

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

The majority of on-campus interviews (OCI) are scheduled during the fall, the traditional nationwide recruiting season. The employers that interview in the fall seek second-year law students to clerk the following summer or associates to begin shortly after graduation. The spring on-campus interview program is geared to employers who are seeking first-year law students to work during the summer following the first year of law school.

Full details on OCI program will be distributed at the beginning of the school year and after the first of the year. Because OCI draws a limited number of employers and the hiring criteria are strict, it is prudent to not count on only this program for finding a job.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS (NALP)

The University of Mississippi is a member of the National Association for Legal Professionals (NALP). NALP was organized in 1971 to promote the exchange of information and cooperation between law schools and employers. In order to advance those interests, the Association has developed "Principles and Standards for Law Placement and Recruitment Activities."

The NALP "Principles and Standards for Law Placement and Recruitment Activities" were first adopted in 1978. Part V, "Standards for the Timing of Offers and Decisions," is summarized below. These Standards apply only to NALP member firms and, therefore, do not apply to smaller, non-member employers.

STANDARDS FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Employers may consider first-year law students for summer associate positions. Those same employers may not begin recruiting or making offers until after December 1. According to the same guidelines, first-semester, first-year students shall not initiate contact with prospective employers before December 1. The CSO will begin working with 1Ls AFTER NOVEMBER 1.

CAREER PLANNING

Personal Assessment

The process of self-assessment requires the identification your strengths and interests and how those attributes fit with your future career path. According to Deborah Aaron, author of *What Can You Do with a Law Degree?*, the process of self-assessment involves finding answers to three questions:

Who am I?

What are my skills and interests; what motivates me professionally; and what type of work environment appeals to me? What are my values? Do I value independence, creativity, security, government or public service and/or significant financial rewards?

What do I want?

What are my career plans and goals for the future? What situations give me a sense of personal accomplishment, challenge my abilities and reflect my values.

What am I willing to give up to get what I want?

What am I willing to compromise on to reach my goals? Am I willing to move to another state; take a risk?

A fourth question deserves considering, as well: **Who else is impacted by my decision?**

The exercises that follow are designed to assist you in identifying your goals, the skills that you need to achieve those goals and the skills that you already possess that will help you achieve your goals. These three factors are an important part of a successful job search plan. The transferrable skills exercise that follows can be directly translated into your resume and cover letters. Your previous experiences and your goals and interests are also relevant to your job search. All experience is important, not just legal or obviously related positions.

Once you have completed the self-assessment exercises, evaluate your results using the Four Step Career Planning process form. Look for themes that tie your results together, then look for contradictions. Determine how well your interests and skills fit with your career path. Do your interests and your core values coincide with your current job or future job goals. During your years in law school, take advantage of the many opportunities to test your skills and interests and find a job that fits your personality, abilities and interests through summer and school year positions, internships, externships and mentoring and shadow programs.

Skills and Abilities Inventory

(adapted from www.career-intelligence.com)

Recognizing your skills is an essential part of every job search. Being able to effectively communicate these skills to a potential employer is equally important. Yet, many people have difficulty with both and often underestimate their skills. This leads to undervaluing themselves in the job market and failing to sell themselves in a job interview.

What is a skill? A skill is anything you can do. Most career resources divide skills into three different types. Different sources use different name; however, here we will call them: Innate, Transferable and Job-Specific.

Innate skills are the characteristics we often think of as personality traits. They are the skills we use to in every area of our life. They are the words our friends would probably use to describe us. Some examples are: punctual, conscientious, organized, honest, friendly, etc. While anyone can learn to be punctual, for those who hit the snooze alarm three times before getting up it's not so easy.

While many job-seekers discount these skills, employers consider them very important. A high percentage of people do not lose their jobs because of their inability to do the work, according to a survey of personnel directors conducted by Robert Half & Associates, cited in *The Very Quick Job Search* by J. Michael Farr. "The most frequently noted problems were; lying and dishonesty (14%), absenteeism and tardiness (12%), arrogance and overconfidence (12%), and lack of dedication (6%)."

Transferable skills are those that transfer readily from one job to another. Many of these skills, like effective communication, come more naturally to some than to others. Generally, these skills are learned and developed over time. Some examples are: written and verbal communication, managing, negotiating, solving problems, and meeting deadlines.

Recognizing, and promoting, these skills can enhance your marketability for several reasons. While each employer conducts business its own way, being able to motivate employees, for example, translates to any setting. These skills can be particularly valuable to those transitioning to a new career. Good communication skills, for example, are valued in every industry.

Job-specific skills generally are those considered specific to an occupation. When asked to name their skills, these often are the abilities people think of first. They include things like computer programming, flying a plane, using industry-specific software applications, operating a video camera, conducting research, oral advocacy, etc. While these skills are valuable, many do not transfer to other positions or industries. A retail salesperson interviewing for a summer associate position, for example, will want to focus on her Innate and Transferable skills. The interviewer will be more interested in hearing about her communication and problem-solving skills than her knowledge of store inventory.

It is essential to take stock of your skills before beginning a job search. You will need this information to prepare your marketing materials - a cover letter and resume. This knowledge also will be important during the interview process. Before an interview, for example, it is prudent to choose three to five of your strongest skills and be prepared with examples of when and how you used each skill on-the-job. For example, don't just say you are a team player, give an example that illustrates working with others to complete a project.

Ok, you are ready to start your skills assessment. Begin by making a list of your skills and abilities. Write down everything you are good at. Use this list to decide which skills you are best at and which you want to use in your next position. These are the skills and abilities you should highlight on your resume. Select three to five of these skills to emphasize during any job interviews. Have a concrete example of each prepared.

Use the following lists to help generate ideas. Add any skills you have that are not listed here. Many skills fall into more than one category. Organizing, for example, can be considered an Innate and transferable skill. The category is less important than the skill, however, so focus on the skill.

Innate skills

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accept criticism | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable | <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive | <input type="checkbox"/> Competent | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conscientious | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy-going | <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligent | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open-minded | <input type="checkbox"/> Organized | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem-solver | <input type="checkbox"/> Productive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual | <input type="checkbox"/> Quick learner | <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely absent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take direction | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenacious | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding | <input type="checkbox"/> Versatile | <input type="checkbox"/> Intuitive |

Transferable Skills

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accept responsibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze data | <input type="checkbox"/> Articulate speaker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assessing others | <input type="checkbox"/> Compile information | <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer/client service | <input type="checkbox"/> Delegate duties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop goals | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> Edit materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Get results |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good listener | <input type="checkbox"/> Instruct others | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview/hire people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Logical thinker | <input type="checkbox"/> Manage a budget | <input type="checkbox"/> Manage projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mediate | <input type="checkbox"/> Meet deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motivate others | <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate agreements | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing data |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plan events | <input type="checkbox"/> Public speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Research information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Run meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Sell ideas/products | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear writer |

Job Specific Skills

Research

- Identify areas of law you researched
- Distinguish among research in federal, state or local laws

Writing

- Drafted legal memoranda
- Drafted pleadings, motions, complaints, answers
- Prepared summaries of testimony
- Drafted client correspondence
- Drafted legal opinions, bench memos
- Summarized depositions

Trial Preparation and Participation

- Assisted and prepared attorneys for trial
- Assisted with discovery
- Assisted with document production
- Participated in hearings, trials or depositions

Analytical Skills

- Identified pertinent facts, issues
- Analyzed case facts
- Analyzed and summarized evidence
- Analyzed, explored and researched all pertinent issues and prepared a comprehensive report.

Consultation

- Consulted with attorneys
- Suggested courses of legal actions under supervision of attorney
- Briefed attorneys on case issues
- Met with attorneys to obtain or exchange factual information concerning cases.

Interviewing

- Interviewed potential witnesses
- Conducted client intake interviews

Trial Experience

- Observed motions and oral arguments
- Assisted in witness preparation

Case Management

- Briefed clients on case status
- Handled cases from initial interview through settlement negotiations.

FOUR-STEP CAREER PLANNING PROCESS

- Analyze your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in your field (SWOT)
- Explore your options and develop a list of the most realistic and accessible
- Develop a plan answering who, what, when and where
- Assess success of your plan and re-assess, as necessary.

STEP 1. SWOT analysis (see sample on Page 8)

I N T E R N A L	Your Strengths	Your Weaknesses
E X T E R N A L	Opportunities in Your Career Field	Threats in Your Career Field

SAMPLE SWOT ANALYSIS

I N T E R N A L	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Work Experience • -Education, including value-added features • -Strong technical knowledge within your field (e.g. hardware, software, programming languages) • -Specific transferable skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, leadership skills) • -Personal characteristics (e.g., strong work ethic, self-discipline, ability to work under pressure, creativity, optimism, or a high level of energy) • -Good contacts/successful networking • -Interaction with professional organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Lack of Work Experience • -Low GPA, wrong major • -Lack of goals, lack of self-knowledge, lack of specific job knowledge • -Weak technical knowledge • -Weak skills (leadership, interpersonal, communication, teamwork) • -Weak job-hunting skills • -Negative personal characteristics (e.g., poor work ethic, lack of discipline, lack of motivation, indecisiveness, shyness, too emotional)
E X T E R N A L	Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Positive trends in your field that will create more jobs (e.g., growth, globalization, technological advances) • -Opportunities you could have in the field by enhancing your education • -Field is particularly in need of your set of skills • -Opportunities you could have through greater self-knowledge, more specific job goals • -Opportunities for advancement in your field • -Opportunities for professional development in your field • -Career path you've chosen provides unique opportunities • -Geography • -Strong network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Negative trends in your field that diminish jobs (downsizing, obsolescence) • -Competition from your cohort of college graduates • -Competitors with superior skills, experience, knowledge • -Competitors with better job-hunting skills than you • -Competitors who went to schools with better reputations. • -Obstacles in your way (e.g., lack of the advanced education/training you need to take advantage of opportunities) • -Limited advancement in your field, advancement is cut-throat and competitive • -Limited professional development in your field, so it's hard to stay marketable • - Companies are not hiring people with your major/degree

STEP 2. Explore your options

Based on the above analysis, list at least five jobs/careers that are realistic and accessible.

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.

STEP 3. Focus on best available option for you

What is the specific career goal or job you have selected?

Why is this the best possible goal?

STEP 4. Develop a plan to get you to your goal

HOW will I get to the goal? List specific actions.	WHEN will each step occur?	WHO else should be involved in my plan?

LEGAL CAREER OPTIONS

Law Firm Practice

A law firm is a for-profit business with partners or shareholders as co-owners and associates and staff as employees. Firms generate income by initiating and maintaining good client relations and providing excellent service.

General practice firms handle client needs in all fields from mergers and acquisitions to bankruptcy to real estate to divorce. Specialty, or “boutique” firms are experts in a certain practice area, such as criminal defense, oil and gas rights, family law, etc.

Large and Medium Sized Firms: Most large and medium sized firms (generally classified as having between 26 and 500+ attorneys) practice a variety of specialties in the framework of general commercial law, although some also handle criminal defense (usually white collar), labor law, estate planning and tax law. Employers in this category offer relatively formalized training in research and writing and in a particular specialty; the scope of lawyering and litigation experiences vary widely from firm to firm.

Possible advantages to working for a large or mid-sized firm include a stable income, exposure to different specialties without changing employers, being able to pursue legal work without extensive involvement in the business aspects of practice (although more and more firms are calling on their associates to develop and bring in new business), and being able to specialize in complex legal issues. Many firms also afford associates opportunities to work on *pro bono* cases; some “lend” attorneys to local district attorney offices for a specified period of time.

Possible disadvantages of working for this type of employer are a function of the individual employer and your personal value system. Many associates find the pressure of making partner, rainmaking and the lack of control over the work product frustrating; others thrive in that type of environment. Most firms make partnership decisions after associates have been with the firm for 5-8 years. Since few firms retain associates who do not make partner within the expected time, the pressure to work long hours and to perform up to the firm’s standards is very real. Additionally, as a new associate, you will not have control over decisions regarding client representation and lawyering strategy.

Small Firms: Many small firms and solo practitioners have a general practice. Others specialize in areas, such as wills and trusts, estate planning, small business practice, civil rights, family and juvenile law, immigration law, criminal law, labor and employment law. Some firms are structured around political or social issues and may be referred to as “alternative” law firms.

Possible advantages to working with a small firm include more intimate working conditions, potentially more control over work conditions and policy-making within the firm and a greater diversity of practice outside of traditional commercial law practice. The opportunity to develop client relationships and see a case or issue develop from beginning to end is also seen as an advantage. On the other hand, some general practitioners feel that they are spread too thin. Lawyers in small practices must generally tend to the business side of a law firm, which includes accounting, billing, collections and employee hiring and supervision. Small firms usually offer little formal training, although one can expect to gain a great deal of hands-on experience in a short period of time.

Solo Practice: Approximately 40% of practicing lawyers are solo practitioners. Attorneys who select this path must develop their practice from scratch. Another option is to enter into an office sharing arrangement with another attorney who agrees to be a mentor/advisor (usually for a portion of your client’s fees) and/or to subcontract work to you.

Most state and county bar associations have a small firm/solo practice section. The State Bar of Georgia, for example, has information on their website about solo practice titled, "Some Thoughts on Hanging Out a Shingle."

Government Agencies

Numerous opportunities for attorneys exist within the government at the federal, state and local levels.

Federal: Attorneys who work for the federal government work in a broad range of legal and policy positions in the Executive (e.g., the Department of Justice, Department of Labor, the Environmental Protection Agency) and Legislative (e.g., Capitol Hill) branches of the government. Federal government attorneys are involved in administrative, regulatory and advisory processes, legislative drafting, policy drafting and review, and trial practice at the administrative, trial and appellate levels. In addition, federal government attorneys are involved in civil and criminal law matters. Most entry level attorneys are hired through the Department of Justice (DOJ) Honors Program. A list of summer and entry level attorney programs may be found in the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law Government Honors & Internship Handbook, available at <http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm>. The 2009-2010 user name and password will be available in fall 2009.

State and Local: Like their federal counterparts, attorneys who work at the state and local levels work in a broad range of legal and policy positions in the Executive and Legislative branches of the government. For example, the Mississippi Attorney General's Office (<http://www.ago.state.ms.us/>) represents state agencies and departments and handles civil and criminal matters.

On the local, level, township/city, county attorneys handle day-to-day legal matters, such as contractual and land use matters. Local prosecutors represent the county/city/state in criminal prosecutions, while public defenders represent criminal defendants in such prosecutions. Most state and local positions are unadvertised, although these agencies occasionally post openings for positions online. Interested students should apply directly to these agencies.

Judicial Clerkships: Judicial clerkships are one to two year positions following graduation. For a detailed explanation of this option, please see the *Judicial Clerkship Handbook*, available in the office and online.

Other Government Opportunities: A number of opportunities exist for attorneys in legal and legal-related positions at the federal and local government levels. Examples include: lobbyist, political analyst, investigator, court services supervisor, ethics officer, and permanent (or career) law clerk. Most of these specialties have websites that you can easily find by doing a Google search.

The advantages of government work include a regular work schedule (except during trials, of course), secure employment and regular salary increases. A disadvantage to some may be navigating a cumbersome bureaucracy.

Public Interest Practice

Most public interest work is performed in either non-profit, small public interest law firms, or government settings. However, many private sector attorneys undertake public interest work through *pro bono* representations. Substantively, most public interest lawyering is characterized as either direct representation (litigation) or policy/advisory. Typical litigation practice areas include family law, public benefits, consumer law, civil rights, environmental law, housing, asylum and refugee law, homelessness and criminal defense. Policy-oriented organizations focus primarily on strategies other than litigation. Those organizations may utilize community

education, lobbying, policy analysis or amicus brief writing to meet their objectives. Public interest organizations look for a commitment to public interest or a particular cause or concern in their applicants. Students who are interesting in public interest work are strongly urged to participate in the law school's Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF). Following is a general overview of the settings in which to practice public interest law. Other opportunities exist with citizens' groups, community and social action organizations and other institutions that emphasize the non-litigation aspects of lawyering.

The advantages of this type of practice include being able to express one's political and social interests through work, opportunities for creative approaches to problem-solving, working in an intellectually stimulating environment, opportunities for client contact, Some disadvantages can include comparatively low salaries and lack of support staff and research facilities.

Legal Services Offices are community and neighborhood-based non-profit organizations that provide free or reduced fee civil legal assistance to low-income persons. Typical cases include: income tax issues; domestic violence; landlord/tenant disputes; housing and government benefits; and family, consumer or employment. Legal services programs nationwide receive funding from either federal funds, such as the Legal Services Corporation, or from monies from state IOLTA (Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts) funds and local bar associations.

Legal Aid Offices generally do the same type of work as Legal Services Offices but receive their funding from private charities and individual contributions. Legal Aid programs sometimes handle criminal as well as civil matters.

Private, Progressive Law Firms specialize in criminal defense, employment, landlord/tenant, or immigration law and often devote a portion of their practice to plaintiff's personal injury or family law to help pay the bills. These firms offer lower rates to their clients but are still profit oriented. Unlike public interest litigation firms (see below), which handle primarily class action impact or test cases, these firms tend to represent individuals. Attorneys with these firms are often members of the National Lawyers Guild; therefore, involvement in the Guild as a law student provides a good source of networking. Progressive firms rarely recruit at law schools, hire only when a position is immediately available, and rarely list openings.

Public Interest Litigation Firms specialize in class action and impact litigation; most are non-profit organizations. Examples of public interest litigation firms include Public Advocates, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, ACLU, Natural Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Defense Fund. Some of these employers routinely list jobs with law school career services offices and may recruit on campus. Openings for permanent positions are rare, but when they do become available, those who have already worked for the organization usually receive preference. Post-graduate fellowships provide a means of gaining a foothold in these organizations.

Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) are public interest advocacy organizations in which the majority of the work involves lobbying, research and legislative analysis. Court appearances are rare; direct impact policy is the goal. Most PIRG attorneys must have a strong community base in order to function successfully, and much of an attorney's effort goes into coordinating campaigns to develop community support for particular issues of concern and relevance in that community. Like public interest litigation firms, a common way to enter these organizations is a one or two-year fellowship upon graduation. Some PIRGs have summer graduate internships for law students. A sample description of an internship is available at.

<http://pirg.org/jobs/positions/show/67>.

Non-traditional Careers

Many job opportunities exist for law students and graduates outside of the legal field. These are jobs that may not require a law degree but can be enhanced because of skills learned in law school. These skills (analysis, advocacy, communication, research and the ability to break down a problem into its component parts) are directly transferable to other professions, such as law librarian, human resources manager, investigator, criminologist, court administrator, legislative assistant, lobbyist, ethics officer, compliance specialist, contract administrator or career counselor. Law students are trained to assess risk, and risk management is what business is all about. In addition to the *Alternative Careers* handbook in the CSO, other resources for exploring options include:

Guerrilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams by Kimm Walton (Chapter 2 “Deciding What the Heck the Job of Your Dreams Is Anyway”)

The Lawyer’s Career Change Handbook by Hindi Greenberg. HarperCollins, 2002 (“Taking Stock” Part One)

Nonlegal Careers for Lawyers, 5th Edition, by Gary A. Munneke , William D. Hensley, and Ellen Wayne ABA, 2006

Should You Really Be A Lawyer?: The Guide to Smart Career Choices Before, During & After Law School by Deborah Schneider (Self Assessment: Chapter 2)

What Can You Do with a Law Degree? A Lawyer’s Guide to Career Alternatives by Deborah Arron, Niche Press, 2004. (“Self Assessment” Part C)

Academia

Opportunities in academia provide attorneys with unique career choices. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* website <http://chronicle.com/>, is an excellent source for teaching, research, administrative and other types of jobs, as are websites of individual universities or community colleges.

TYPICAL 1L SUMMER POSITIONS

Judicial Internship. Students who are interested in litigation should consider volunteering full time or part-time for a state or federal judge. This is a great opportunity to learn about the inner workings of the court system and to observe trials first-hand. Interns write memos to the judge and the judge's clerk and will have an opportunity to observe good and bad briefs and good and bad oral arguments. Applying can be as simple as mailing your resume and cover letter to the chambers of the judge where you would like to work. These positions are usually volunteer positions.

<http://www.judicialclerkships.com/links.htm>

www.whohascourtjobs.com

www.uscourts.gov – US Courts

Prosecutor, District Attorney, US Attorney and Public Defender. These offices are responsible for prosecuting and defending persons accused of crimes at the municipal, state and federal level. First year interns assist attorneys in preparing for trial, which may include interviewing, or preparing witnesses or defendants, writing and researching memos, sitting “second chair” at trials, preparing paperwork for court, and discussing cases with attorneys and detectives. Larger offices usually have a formal application procedure, which may be found on the agency's website. Applying to smaller, local offices generally involves e-mailing, calling or stopping in at the office of your choice. The quickest way to find a list of these offices is a Google search. Other resources include:

<http://www.ndaa.org/> - National District Attorneys Association

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/offices/index.html> - US Attorney Offices

<http://www.nlada.org/Jobs> - National Legal Aid & Defender Association

Public Interest Legal Organization. These non-profit organizations are generally involved in advocating for a specific cause or population through legislation, lobbying or directly assisting individual clients or groups. Legal Services, ACLU, Women's Law Project, North Mississippi Legal Rural Services, Mississippi Legal Services, and the Mississippi Delta Council for Farm Worker Opportunities, Inc. are some of the organizations involved in public interest law. Summer interns may be trained to conduct intake interviews with clients, perform legal research and write on specific issues, attend hearings or trials with attorneys, complete paperwork for cases, and assist attorneys in preparing for trials. Job listing sites include

<http://www.nlada.org/Jobs> - National Legal Aid & Defender Association

<http://www.idealists.org/> - Idealist.org

<http://www.webdirectory.com/Employment/> - Environment Web Directory

http://www.civilrights.org/career_center/ - Civil Rights Coalition

<http://www.ecojobs.com/> - Environmental Career Opportunities

<http://www.pslawnet.org/jobseekers-accountmanagement> - PS Law Net (must register to view job listings).

<http://pirg.org/jobs/positions/> - US Public Interest Research Groups

Attorney General, US Attorney, City Solicitor, County Counsel and other federal, state, county or local government agencies with attorneys. These offices handle civil cases for governments. Cases may include employment, environmental, insurance, personal injury, tax equity, school funding, labor, community development, regulatory and business issues, to name a few. Summer interns generally handle research and writing assignments. They may also attend hearings or trials, sit in on discovery or interviews, or go to meetings with their supervising attorneys. Students who are interested in specific agencies should contact the branch or main office for application procedures.

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/offices/index.html> - US Attorney Offices

Research Assistant. Many professors hire research assistants to help them with legal research for conferences, legal publications or books they are writing. This is a great opportunity to get to know a professor on a personal level, which may come in handy for recommendations in the future. Although some professors list their research positions with this office, you may want to consider approaching a professor and inquire about any opportunities he/she may have.

Medium-sized & Small Law Firms. Jobs in these firms offer hands-on experience and an opportunity to develop lawyering skills. 1L clerks generally are assigned research and writing projects and may have an opportunity to attend hearings, client meetings or trials. Most firms will hire in early spring and on into the summer for summer positions. Some list positions when they have a need; some hire only people they know. Students may also apply through targeted mailings, informational interviews, or local bar associations.

Large Law Firm. These firms have the greatest visibility and receive the majority of attention; however, opportunities for 1Ls are limited. They tend to pay well but may not allow students to have client contact. 1Ls typically handle research and writing assignments for different departments. Large firms have strict hiring criteria; grades are very important.

Corporate Legal Departments. Some businesses, hospitals, non-profits and small businesses have legal departments or general counsel offices. Although opportunities are limited, 1L interns may be hired to handle research and writing assignments. Few of these opportunities are advertised, except on the corporation's website.

Students may find information on law firms and employers in Martindale-Hubbell (www.martindale.com) and Lexis-Nexis (www.lexisnexis.com)

Summer Study Abroad. Many students choose to study abroad after their first year of law school in order to travel, meet other law students and add value to their resumes. This option is expensive and may require private loans. Resources and directories are available online. Please remember to check with the registrar to ensure that credits you take in a study abroad program are transferable to the University of Mississippi.

Non Legal Position. It is not crucial that you have a legal job during the summer after your first year. Nevertheless, if you have no prior law-related experience, you will want to consider at least a part-time legal position. Not working in the law will not severely restrict future options; however, finding a legal job during your first summer will add value to your resume for your second summer search.

FALL ON CAMPUS INTERVIEWS FOR 2Ls and 3Ls

Each year, law firms nationwide conduct on-campus interviews. The timing of these interviews varies; some firms start interviewing as early as July. The University of Mississippi interview season usually begins with two days of interviews in mid August and continues in early September through mid-October.

Resume submission and interview signup process is done online via Symplicity

SPRING ON CAMPUS INTERVIEWS FOR 1Ls

On campus interviews for first year students will take place in February. Details will be available in early January.

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES: MAKING CONTACTS

(With attribution to www.networktogetwork.biz)

"He or she who gets hired is not necessarily the one who can do that job best, but the one who knows the most about how to get hired."

Richard Bolles

Is this any way to get a job? There are times in our lives when we need to look for a new job. You may have been told, "Go out and network", but not been told why, when, where or how to do it. Networking is one of the most important parts of an effective employment strategy.

What is networking? Networking is a process of interacting with people who usually share similar interests to your. The interactions are usually the sharing of information about those interests, and the passing on of names of others who also share those interests. It should benefit both parties. With respect to finding work, it is a way of getting new contacts and information. Some people love to network; others find it really hard, especially as a way to find work.

Why network? The value of networking is not so much about the quality of the people you meet, but the quality and quantity of the people they know. The connections and introductions people can make are more important than the wealth or expertise of the person himself. Professor Wayne Baker, of the University of Michigan, looked at the findings from research into networking, and found three key benefits:

1. Finding a job. More people find jobs through personal contact and by any other means.
2. Pay and promotion. People with rich social networks are paid better and promoted faster at younger ages.
3. Influence and effectiveness. People who are central in an organization's networks are more influential than others.

It is claimed that up 80% of all jobs are never advertised. They are filled through referrals and recommendations, direct approaches by candidates and by using agencies. For arguments sake, let us imagine the figure is half that; there are still a huge amount of job opportunities that you'll miss if you don't network.

According to a study by Drake Beam Morin, a strategic human resources company, 64% of the people surveyed said they found their new jobs through networking. More likely than not, the best jobs are likely to be those that aren't advertised, because they will have been filled before the organization needs to pay for advertising.

Networking is not a bad thing. Most of us believe in a meritocratic society. The most able and hard working people are rewarded the most, and you may feel uncomfortable with the idea of gaining benefits because of whom we know.

You can use networking to get an introduction, to get a warm referral. You can also use networking to build up your expertise and create a team that you can use as a support team: sub contractors, mentors, master mind groups and so on. After that, it's up to you. Relationships need to be nurtured. They grow over time, and from that you develop trust and credibility. They can't be faked.

Networking is NOT selling. What is your image of networking? Is it of events where people move from one person to the next pitching their wares? No one likes to be sold to, and networking is not selling.

Networking is not about meeting as many people as you can with the intent of presenting a pitch about what you need. Don't practice "drive-by" networking – saying hello to many people and passing out business cards without any long-term interest in the other person. There will come a point where networking ends and selling begins, but that will be by mutual agreement of both parties.

Networking is not a process of making cold-calls to people you do not know. It is talking to people you do know or asking them to introduce you to others. It must benefit both parties in order to be most effective. If you ask for help, you should be prepared to give a favor in return.

When do I do it? Networking is a process that continues throughout your career. Everyone you met is a potential job lead. Let people know your career goals, collect business cards, take notes on people you meet, attend speaker presentations; write to individuals mentioned in articles. A job search can be a lonely activity but you do not have to do it alone.

Where do I do it? Networking can be accomplished anywhere...on the tennis court, at the supermarket, in your classes. You never know who knows whom. If you wish to do targeted networking (by geographical area or specialty) consider using University of Mississippi law alumni.

How do I do it?

- Recognize and address the aspects of networking with which you are uncomfortable. For example, if you are uncomfortable cold calling, use e-mail instead. Remember this should be a fun, learning experience, not a dreaded one.
- If you are speaking to someone on the phone or in person, schedule that time when your energy is highest.
- Know what you want to say – you are asking for a contact or advice, not a job.
- Conduct informational interviews – ask for advice, not a job.
- Develop a mentor relationship. Law professors, adjunct faculty, alumni, former employers and members of professional associations can all be good sources.
- Join professional, community service and bar associations.

THE RESUME

A resume:

- Is your unique marketing and sales tool
- Summarizes who you are and what you have done
- Communicates strengths and distinguishes you from other applicants
- Is a sample work product characterized by quality and clarity.

Standard Content

(Sample resumes begin on page 41)

Identifying Information: Include name, current address, e-mail address and a telephone number where a caller may reach you or leave a message. A permanent address may be included along with your current address if you wish to show ties to the geographic area of an employer to which you are applying.

Note: Make sure the greeting on your phone is professional and does not include inappropriate music, lyrics or messages.

Education: Include law school, graduate and undergraduate schools in reverse chronological order. List name of school, city and state; degree(s) earned and date(s) received.

Note: Your degree is a Juris Doctor, not a Juris Doctorate.

Include grades, academic honors and activities in this section, under the school to which they relate.

Grades: For many employers, law school grades are a major hiring criterion. Generally, employers assume you are in the lower half of your class if grades are omitted from the resume. Because each law school follows different grading curves and standards, and because the relationship between class rank and GPA changes each year, academic performance is most easily understood by employers when stated in terms of class rank or standing.

Note: Do not round off your GPA. Rounding is a violation of the Law School Honor Code. A 3.36 is a 3.36, is not a 3.40.

Honors: Honors include academic achievements, such as graduating *cum laude*, scholarships, moot court or journal participation. Honors are listed under the schools to which they relate – this makes it easier for employers to see what you have accomplished at each institution.

Activities: Extracurricular activities may be listed in this section or, if they indicate significant skills or interests, in the Employment/Experience section. Some activities demonstrate leadership, initiative, responsibility and energy level. Activities often give an employer a sense of your potential, as well as your personality.

Employment/Experience: In this section, summarize your work history...both employment (paid positions) and experience (volunteer work, internships or other non-paid positions). Include employer, city and state, your title, dates of involvement and a brief description of duties and responsibilities. Non-law related work experience is significant when it demonstrates transferable skills, such as written and oral communication, problem solving, research, etc.

Suggestions:

- *Use action words (page 38) to describe work accomplished*
- *Describe current work in the present tense; prior work the past tense*
- *Emphasize transferable skills*

Organizing your information: You want to attract attention by first listing positions that will be most meaningful to a prospective employer. For example, your volunteer positions may make you more marketable to a certain employer than your paid positions. Or, your most recent legal positions may be more important. Tailor your resume to fit your audience.

Suggestions:

- *Organize information into categories (i.e., employment, experience, business employment, legal experience, etc.)*
- *List positions in reverse chronological order within the categories.*
- *Summarize relevant employment/experience into a single sentence if you wish to include information that does not warrant separate listings. Example: "Additional part-time and summer employment from 2000-2006 includes positions as camp counselor, lifeguard and sales associate."*

Optional Content

Special Skills/Languages: Include skills that may be of interest to a potential employer, such as proficiency in languages, computer skills (if relevant), etc.

Community Service: Demonstrated commitment to public service is important to public sector employers and a plus to many law firms. List organization, title, duties and tenure. Extensive volunteer work that demonstrates transferable skills may be described under Experience, if appropriate.

Personal Information: If something is important to you, you have probably taken some action or joined a group. This can be indicated under categories, such as Activities or Community Service. **Do not** include a section that indicates marital status, health, number of children, religion, sex, age or other personal data that lawfully has no relevance to your employment qualifications.

Publications: List legal and non-legal work that has been published.

Licenses and Professional Affiliations: List relevant professional licenses and certificates, such as CPA or Real Estate Broker. List affiliations, including name of organization, title and tenure.

Military Service: Many employers give preference to veterans, so listing service involvement is recommended. If military experience includes transferable skills, such as research, writing, supervision, organizational skills or management, you may want to list it under Employment or Experience.

Interests: Including this category is a personal choice. If your interests involve something out-of-the ordinary or are considered an asset in networking or business development, such as golf, team softball, etc.), include them on your resume.

References: The preferred method is to list your references on a separate sheet that carries the same identifying information as your resume. Provide full name, title, address and contact information for two to three references. Always ask permission before listing someone as a reference and always ask if the person will give you a positive reference.

Include references on your resume only if the information may generate an interview. When references are not included, it is understood that they are available. Do not include the statement, "References available upon request," on your resume.

Current and former employers are the most effective references. They are familiar with your work product and performance in a work environment. Faculty may be used if they can speak to the quality of your work and are always used when applying for judicial clerkships.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF LAYOUT

The legal community is conservative and expects a traditional resume.

Format: Most employers prefer outline form (headings and brief phrases) as opposed to narrative (full sentences in paragraph form.) The outline form is shorter and easier to read.

Length: A two-page resume is acceptable if your experience warrants it. Do not sacrifice content for the sake of producing a one-page resume. Remember, however, that when employers copy your resume for distribution to their hiring committee, they sometimes miss the second page. If you do have a two page resume, make sure your identifying information is on the second page and that you include the most important information on the first page – just in case.

Typeface/Fonts: Select an easy-to-read typeface. Avoid ornate or decorate styles and do not use multiple fonts and type sizes. Use bold typefaces for emphasis and be consistent. If one position title is in bold, put all position titles in bold. Consistency in abbreviations is also important. If you use JD instead of Juris Doctor, use BA, MBA or PhD.

Paper: Use white or ivory paper; pastels or bright colors are not acceptable. Resume and cover letter paper should match.

REMINDERS

- Do not use personal pronouns.
- Do not use ampersands or abbreviations, other than for states.
- Use an outline form.
- Be concise.
- Stress your positive points.
- Always include a date of graduation; do not say "first year student."
- Keep personal data pertinent and to a minimum.
- **Do not round off your GPA.**
- Include any honors/activities/scholarships that will add value to resume.
- Make your resume easy to read.
- If you have to have a two-page resume, make sure your name is on the second page
- **MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE THERE ARE NO TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS OR MISSPELLED WORDS!**

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR YOUR RESUME

Research

- Identify areas of law you researched
- Distinguish among research in federal, state or local laws

Writing

- Drafted legal memoranda
- Drafted pleadings, motions, complaints, answers
- Prepared summaries of testimony
- Drafted client correspondence
- Drafted legal opinions, bench memos
- Summarized depositions

Trial Preparation and Participation

- Assisted and prepared attorneys for trial
- Assisted with discovery
- Assisted with document production
- Participated in hearings, trials or depositions

Analytical Skills

- Identified pertinent facts, issues
- Analyzed case facts
- Analyzed and summarized evidence
- Analyzed, explored and researched all pertinent issues and prepared a comprehensive report.

Consultation

- Consulted with attorneys
- Suggested courses of legal actions under supervision of attorney
- Briefed attorneys on case issues
- Met with attorneys to obtain or exchange factual information concerning cases.

Interviewing

- Interviewed potential witnesses
- Conducted client intake interviews

Trial Experience

- Observed motions and oral arguments
- Assisted in witness preparation

Case Management

- Briefed clients on case status
- Handled cases from initial interview through settlement negotiations.

Words often misspelled:

appellate
 committed/commitment
 constitutional
 criterion (pl. criteria)
 alumnus (pl. alumni)
 alumna (pl. alumnae)
cum laude
 memorandum (pl. –dums or –da)
 precede/proceed

Words often misused:

affect/effect
 capital/capitol
 complement/compliment
 council/counsel
 Juris Doctor (not Doctorate)
 oriented (not orientated)
 perspective/prospective
 regardless/irregardless
 advice/advise

Action Words

achieved	defined	improved	provided
adapted	delegated	increased	
administered	demonstrated	indexed	
advised	designed	initiated	recommended
advocated	determined	inspected	recruited
allocated	developed	installed	reorganized
analyzed	devised	instituted	reported
approved	disseminated	instructed	represented
arbitrate	directed	integrated	researched
argued	drafted	interviewed	resolved
arranged		invented	revised
assessed		investigated	
assisted	edited	led	
	effected	licensed	settled
	enforced	litigated	scheduled
calculated	enlarged		solved
catalogued	established		strengthened
chaired	evaluated	maintained	summarized
challenged	examined	managed	supervised
communicated	executed	mobilized	
compiled	expanded	moderated	trained
completed	expedited	motivated	translated
complied	exposed	negotiated	
conceived		operated	unified
conducted	facilitated	organized	
constructed	financed	originated	verified
consulted	formed		
contracted	formulated		won
controlled	founded	participated	wrote
converted		performed	
convicted	generated	planned	
coordinated	grouped	predicted	
counseled	guided	prepared	
created	headed	presented	
		produced	
		proposed	
defended	implemented	prosecuted	

SAMPLE RESUMES

*Sample 1L resume, No GPA
Some experience*

LOUISE GOLDEN

762 White Ash
Oxford, MS 38655
(601) 234-5555
golden@netdoor.com

EDUCATION

The University of Mississippi School of Law, Oxford, MS

Juris Doctor expected May 2011

Women's Law Association, Member

Gorove Society of International Law, Member

The University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

Bachelor of Arts, Finance, May 2002

GPA: 3.5

Honors: President's Honor Roll; Phi Kappa Phi and Delta Chi honoraries

Activities: Vice President, Sport Marketing Association; Campus Ambassador

EMPLOYMENT

Owner, The Bike Shop, Memphis, TN

July 2002 - August 2008

- Established and operated independent bicycle shop
- Sold and repaired all types bicycles
- Organized bike races for charity events

Library Clerk - Bruce Wayne Memorial Library

June 1998 – May 2002

- Conducted tours for incoming freshmen
- Oriented students to network information systems
- Accumulated statistical information on library usage

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Additional part-time and summer employment from 1998-2002 includes daycare provider and waitress

LANGUAGES

Fluent Farsi, conversational French

INTERESTS

Team Tennis, Golf, Creative Writing

JOHN Q. LAWSTUDENT

email: jqlaw@yahoo.com

School Address:
37 County Road 2
Oxford, MS 38655
(662) 236-5481

Permanent Address:
800 Country Club Lane
Alexandria, VA 77054
Telephone: (703) 329-1111

EDUCATION

The University of Mississippi School of Law, Oxford, MS

Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2010
Top 33%
Member: Moot Court Board
Vice President: Public Interest Law Foundation

George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

Bachelor of Science, Biology, June 2007
Honors: Phi Beta Kappa
Dean's List, 2 semesters
Activities: Kappa Alpha Fraternity, President
Varsity Basketball
Student Senator, Junior Year

EMPLOYMENT

Bryson & Edmonds, Richmond, VA

Law Clerk Summer 2008

Prepared memoranda and briefs for this insurance defense firm. Submitted persuasive arguments actually presented at trial. Provided attorney support at trial and during trial preparation. Prepared deposition questions. Attended and summarized depositions. Researched legal issues and prepared complaints.

Senator Edward Kennedy, Washington, DC

Intern Summers 2007

Analyzed pending environmental legislation with particular focus on budget implications. Collaborated with other staff members, committee members, staff of other government agencies and constituent representatives to prepare written assessment of legislative alternatives. Participated in Committee and agency hearings. Wrote evaluations of legislation.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Hands Across America, Volunteer (2005-2007)
Big Brothers of Alexandria, Mentor (2005)

Daniel D. Dunnaway

Email: ddd@aol.com

Cell: (601) 436-1212

5232 Jackson Street
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
(601) 436-2281

EDUCATION

The University of Mississippi School of Law, Oxford, MS

Juris Doctor expected, May 2009

GPA: 3.28 (top x%)

Mississippi Law Journal, Member

Outstanding Student Award Contracts, Spring 2006

University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Bachelor of Arts, Economics, May 2004, 3.62 GPA

University of Southern Mississippi Scholar; Honor Roll, 4 semesters;

Member, Pre-Law Society.

EMPLOYMENT

US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Jackson, MS

Law Clerk

Summer 2008

Prepared various pleadings, including motions to compel discovery, demurrers, complaints, motions to strike, requests for temporary restraining orders and temporary protective orders, motions to dismiss and motions for summary judgment. Drafted final accusations and discovery request for administrative hearings. Wrote deposition summaries, jury instructions, witness lists, motions *in limine* and exhibit lists. Reviewed case files, researched legal issues and prepared opinions.

Office of the Attorney General, Jackson, MS

Law Clerk – Vulnerable Adults Unit

Summer 2007

Assisted prosecutors with investigating cases involving abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult residing in a private home. Interviewed victims, obtained case facts, analyzed evidence, drafted memoranda, participated in trials and hearings.

Matias & Madsen, Hattiesburg, MS.

May 2002 – May 2003

Accounting Clerk - part time

Researched a variety of foreign and domestic tax issues. Participated in and conducted audit tests. Prepared corporate, partnership and individual tax returns.

COVER LETTERS

(Sample cover letters being on page 31)

A cover letter can be more important than your resume, because it is the first thing on which an employer may judge you. Your cover letter should be brief, concise and professional. It should persuade the reader to pay attention to the attached resume. Try to individualize your cover letter by emphasizing your strengths and highlighting your unique abilities as they relate to the position for which you are applying.

Before you write your cover letter, review the following checklist:

Cover Letter Checklist

1. Did you thoroughly research and analyze the skills and abilities necessary to do the job you seek? An informational interview by phone with an equivalent employer, department, agency or lawyer will do the trick, as will a thorough review of the job listing.
2. Did you research the agenda, attitudes and values of the employer? Insight into the corporate culture and client base will help you compose a targeted letter.
3. Have you identified and articulated the transferable skills, abilities and work experience you possess that corresponds to the job you seek? Do not elaborate on accomplishments that may be of little interest to the employer.
4. Did you create a cover letter that represents you and not someone you believe the employer may like?
5. Have you positioned yourself as a solution to the employer's needs. Tell employers what you offer rather than what you want from them.
6. Have you addressed the letter to the correct decision maker? Have you spelled the name correctly and did you include the correct title? Some quick online research will provide this information.
7. Did you close with a plan of action, i.e. when you will be in town and/or when you will follow-up?
8. Have you eliminated passive introductory phrases? For example:

Replace: *Although I received a C in criminal law, I know that...*

With: *As a law clerk in a criminal defense firm, I handled investigations, client interviews and summarized depositions.*

Replace: *I believe I can be an asset to your firm...*

With: *I know I can add value to your litigation section...*

Cover Letter Outline

Introductory Paragraph: Introduce yourself and state the position for which you are applying. If someone has referred you, include that person's name in your first sentence.

Examples:

Gail Newman of the Cincinnati Bar Association suggested I write to you. I worked with Ms. Newman during the summer of 2008, following my first year at the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Or

I am a third year law student at the University of Mississippi School of Law and am writing to express my interest in an associate position with your firm's New Orleans office.

Next, establish a connection, i.e., mention your ties to the area or plans to relocate.

Example:

As a life-long resident and community activist in Tennessee, my goal is to return to Nashville to start my law career.

Or

After graduation, I will be returning to Chicago to be closer to my family.

Or

I worked in Atlanta during the summer and plan to return following graduation.

Market Yourself: Review your accomplishments before and during law school. Select at least three of your most relevant skills or attributes and write concise statements that communicate those skills and the unique nature of your experiences, etc.

Example:

My work with Georgia's Office of the Child Advocate provided the foundation for my interviewing, listening counseling and teaching skills. Our client base consisted of individuals of varied ages, disabilities and cultural backgrounds. Client intake was a challenge, but I met that challenge and perfected my Spanish and Japanese language skills, as well.

Or

As a law student member of the American Association for Justice (AAJ) and through the AAJ's mock trial competitions, I developed excellent advocacy skills. I successfully argued in six separate rounds of competition and was named the McGlinchey Stafford PLLC Oral Advocacy Competition winner. Recently, I advanced to the semi final round in the Ole Miss – Mississippi College Trial Competition.

Close the Deal: Express your thanks.

I hope to be able to meet with you in December during my visit to Charlotte. Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to hearing from you.

Or

Thank you for taking time to review my resume and writing sample. I look forward to hearing from you soon and to the possibility of an interview.

Suggested Phrases for Your Cover Letters

- Extensive experience in all aspects of
 - Substantive understanding of
 - Trained and experienced in
 - Thorough grounding in
 - Recognized as/for
 - Familiar with
 - Fluent in
 - Excellent
 - Superior

Other Materials

In contrast to the ubiquitous resume and cover letter, you need only provide employers with references, a writing sample, or a transcript when you are requested to do so. (Or, if for some reason, you choose to do so.) However, it is very useful to have all three available at an interview in the event the employer asks you for one, even if the employer gave no indication s/he would do so.

1. Writing Sample

Your writing sample, like all other materials you submit to an employer, must be perfect. If you use a paper, memorandum, or motion written as a class assignment, print a clean copy free from grades or any other markings. If you use something written during an externship or previous employment, be certain to redact the names of the parties and be sure to obtain approval from your prior employer. If you have more than one possible sample, choose the one most appropriate for the position or ask the employer what they prefer (e.g., journal comment, motion, seminar paper). If the employer does not state a desired length, anything from 4 to 10 pages is appropriate. It is important to submit a cover page for your writing sample which includes your name and a brief description/explanation of the sample to give the employer some context for your sample. An example follows.

Note:

- When choosing your writing sample, keep in mind that it should be your best writing. The paper should be persuasive, argumentative, and analytical. A writing sample should be approximately 4-20 pages in length.
- You will also want to explain if the sample is your writing alone, or if it has been edited by another.
- Be sure to carefully proofread your writing sample and cover sheet.

2. References

Your references should be listed on a separate page, ideally on paper that matches your resume. Seldom will you need more than three references, but you should attempt to have references who know you from a variety of settings (i.e., school, work, extracurricular or volunteer activities). If possible, try to have a law professor as a reference. S/he should not necessarily be the professor in whose course you earned your highest grade, but the professor who knows you the best as a person and as a law student. Check with each individual and make sure they are willing to serve as a **STRONG** reference before you give their name to a prospective employer. It is also a good idea to provide your references with a current resume so that they can speak knowledgeably about you to an employer (who will most likely be looking at your resume when talking with your reference).

Reference checking is usually done by telephone, most often in the final stages of selection. Some employers check references only after hiring; some do not check at all.

Tips

- Use a multi-layered approach to the list: people you have worked for, professors, colleagues.
- Construct your list with your professional objective in mind. Highlight certain skills and projects that you want your references to talk about.
- If your name has changed for any reason, make sure your references know you by your new name.

Do:

- Ask permission to use your reference's names.
- Offer to send your references a copy of your resume.
- Coach your references on what skills to highlight when called.
- Ask them to tell you when they are called for a reference.
- Consider all references as networking contacts.

Don't:

- Attach your reference sheet to your resume—save it for the interview.
- List your references on your resume.

3. Transcript

Unless an employer specifically requests an official/certified transcript, photocopies are perfectly acceptable. You should keep numerous copies of your transcript on hand during the fall interview season. Obtain your transcript from the Registrar and make photocopies. Try to remember to give the photocopies to employers and keep the original for yourself so that future photocopies will be clean and legible.

SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

Daniel D. Dunnaway

Email: ddd@aol.com

Cell: (601) 436-1212

5000 Oak Street
Oxford, MS 38655
(601) 236-1111

5232 Jackson Street
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
(601) 436-2281

January 5, 2009

Mr. Thomas P. Spurgeon
Marshall, Davis and Spurgeon
P. O. Box 5555
Hattiesburg, MS 39201

Dear Mr. Spurgeon:

I will be completing my first year at The University of Mississippi School of Law in May 2009. Your firm's stated commitment to ensure that the rights of all individuals are upheld and to represent your clients with integrity mirrors my major reason for entering law school.

My enclosed resume indicates the resolve and commitment that I have demonstrated throughout my life. My only means of financial support derived from the various jobs I held before and during college; however, I still was able to dedicate significant time to various legal services agencies. I have carried over that commitment into my law school studies, earning a 4.0 in legal writing my first semester.

I will be in the Hattiesburg area the week of Spring Break (put date) visiting my parents, and would like to have the opportunity of talking with you. I hope to be able to meet with you then.

Sincerely,

Daniel Dunnaway

LOUISE GOLDEN
762 White Ash
Oxford, MS 38655
(601) 234-5555
golden@netdoor.com

October 12, 2008

Ms. Nancy J. Smith
Recruiting Coordinator
Smith, Haley and Jones
Suite 6000
Deposit Guaranty Plaza
Jackson, MS 39204

Dear Ms. Smith:

I will be completing my second year at the University of Mississippi School of Law and would like to be considered for a 2009 summer associate position with your firm.

Before becoming a law student, I worked with John J. Garland, Professor and Timber Harvesting Extension Specialist at Oregon State University. As a result of that experience, I am able to offer:

- substantial training in the scientific aspects of environmental management, including chemistry, soil science, watershed management and ecology.
- Familiarity with the Oregon Forest Practice Act, as well as the rationale, application and forester's approach to the Forest Research Practices and Monitoring Program
- Excellent interviewing skills and the ability to analyze and synthesize information.

My interest in cases involving legitimate and proactive action against deforestation and toxic waste management was pivotal in my desire to practice law and in applying to your firm.

I look forward to hearing from you about a possible interview.

Sincerely,

Louise Golden

Thalia Burke
490 Jackson Ave.
Oxford, MS 38655
tb@gmail.net

March 18, 2009

Mr. Marshall Gray
4595 Ninth Avenue
Memphis, TN 38104

Dear Mr. Gray:

I will graduate from The University of Mississippi School of Law in May 2009 and am planning to enter private practice in Memphis. I am taking the Tennessee Bar Examination in July and will be available for employment in August.

Since 2005, I have been employed by NBC as a business manager and was responsible for implementing new hiring practices there. I continued working with NBC in a consulting capacity during law school. My experience dealing with employees of the company, as well as federal EEOC auditors, has been especially valuable in preparing me for labor law practice.

I plan to relocate to Memphis following graduation and am available for a telephone or office interview at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

Thalia Burke

INTERVIEWING

Interviewing is a skill that can be learned and that will improve with practice. Your experience, your grades, what classes you took or your extracurricular activities are not the keys to a successful interview. Those are just the elements that got you the interview. You may assume that if you got an interview, the employer feels you are qualified to do the job. What he or she is looking for in an interview is a good “fit” with the organization.

The key to a successful interview is preparation. Know yourself, what is on your resume and know something about the organization interviewing you. Be able to articulate why you would be a good fit and what value you would add to the organization.

Prepare. Know yourself and your resume. Be prepared to discuss anything on your resume. Know your strengths and decide how to handle your “weaknesses”. Always carry a copy of your resume, transcript and references to the interview.

Do your research. Know as much as possible about the employer and with whom you are interviewing. Employers consistently rank lack of knowledge of the organization as one of the primary reasons for not extending an offer to a candidate.

Develop a strategy. The underlying question in every recruiter’s mind is, “Why should we hire this person?” Just as you tailor a resume or cover letter to a specific employer, it is important to differentiate each interview and focus on the fit between your background and that employer. Consider what skills the organization is seeking, what types of clients they have and the practice area(s) for which they are hiring. Be ready to discuss how your experience relates to these areas.

Develop your questions. Prepare a list of questions relevant to the employer, and if possible, to the interviewer. Be careful not to ask questions that can be found on their website or other easily accessible source. A list of sample interview questions begins on page 49.

Interviews give employers the opportunity to get to know you as an individual. Tips to develop an effective personal presentation include:

- Present yourself in a confident, enthusiastic and engaged manner. Make good eye contact and play an active role in the conversation. Listen attentively and show enthusiasm for the employer and for the individual with whom you are interviewing.
- Anticipate open ended questions, such as, “What can you tell me about yourself?” (This question, by the way, does not mean “tell me your life story.” Always frame an answer to this question in relation to your career and law school.) Also anticipate awkward questions, such as, “Why did your GPA drop so drastically?” or “Why aren’t you on law journal?” The answers to these questions are less important than how thoughtful and logical is your response.
- Practice is the most effective method to improve your interviewing skills. If you would like to have the CSO set up a mock interview, please let us know.

Interview Dos and Don'ts

Do your homework.

Gather as much information about the employer and the position as possible before the interview. Your questions and responses should be based on thorough research and should stem from your interests in the employer.

Do dress appropriately.

Remember, this is an interview, not a date!

Men: Choose a black, navy or charcoal business suit with a dress shirt and tie.

Women: Choose a conservative skirt or pant suit in black, navy or charcoal. If you choose a skirt, practice sitting in various chairs to make sure our skirt maintains a conservative length.

Do pay attention to footwear.

Men: Stick with well-shined black or brown lace-up shoes or dress loafers – and socks.

Women: Opt for conservative pumps. Avoid casual sandals or open-toed shoes, even in the summer. Hosiery is a must if you are wearing a skirt.

Don't smoke just prior to your interview.

The smell of smoke lingers on your clothing and can be offensive – especially in a closed interview room or office.

Don't go overboard with fragrance.

It is best to avoid wearing cologne or perfume. If you choose to wear a fragrance, make sure it is mild. Many individuals have immediate allergic reactions to any scent.

Don't bring up personal issues or crises.

Don't bring up salary.

Don't be late.

Sample Questions Asked by Employers

The questions that follow are a sampling of questions that you may be asked in an interview. Most interviews, however, do not follow a Q&A structure. An interviewer may be comfortable conducting a conversation or talking about the firm. Also, do not be surprised if the interviewer does not ask many questions about you but instead asks if you want to know anything about the organization or the position. Follow the interviewer's lead, but make sure that you demonstrate to him or her why you are a good fit for the position.

General Questions

- Tell me about yourself. What else can you tell me?
- What persuaded you to study law?
- What areas of the law are of particular interest to you?
- What law school courses interest you the most?
- What qualities do you possess that lead you to believe you will make a good lawyer?
- What is the most significant item on your resume?
- Why did you choose the University of Mississippi School of Law?
- Where do you plan to be five years after graduation? Ten years?
- With whom have you discussed your career plans?
- How much significance do you think we should attach to your relatively high (low) GPA?
- Could give us a reason for your failure to rank at the top of your class?
- Have you given any thought as to how you might pursue continuing legal education after you have been admitted to the bar?
- Do you approve or disapprove of the (case name) decision?

- What Supreme Court decision during the last year seems to you the most significant?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
- Why are you on Law Journal? Why aren't you on Law Journal?

Law Firm Questions

Large and Medium-size firms

- Is there anything in particular about our firm that interested you?
- Are there any other reasons that led you to choose us?
- Have you talked with anyone about us?
- What do you think of our firm resume?
- What part of our practice would be of special interest to you?
- Is there any particular part of your experience that you think might help you to fit with our firm?
- Do you think you have the qualities that would enable you to become a partner?
- How many hours a week would you be prepared to devote to the work of the firm?
- Would you have an interest in doing pro bono work at the same time? How many hours per week, month or year? Would you be prepared to insist upon it?
- What would your references tell me about your legal abilities and commitment to the profession?
- At what other firms have you interviewed?
- If we made you an offer, how soon would you be prepared to give us an answer?

Small law firms

- Do you have any ties to the community?
- What familiarity do you have with the way a small firm operates?
- Are you committed to work with a small firm and stay with it?
- Do you know enough about us to believe it would be a satisfactory place for you to work? Why?
- How soon would you hope to be a partner?
- Do you consider yourself an easy person to get along with? Explain.
- Do you think you will at first need a lot of supervision and general help?
- How much responsibility will you be prepared to assume right from the start? Explain.

Government and Public Interest Questions

Government employers

- Why are you interested in us?
- How much do you know about us?
- Would you be prepared to make a career in government?
- What experience have you had that you think might equip you for this job?
- Do you have a career plan?
- What are your feelings about government employees generally and the effectiveness of the bureaucracy?
- What training have you had in administrative law?
- How much courtroom experience have you had?

Legal services and public interest groups

- How committed are you to working with this population?
- Do you have a general interest in service to the public?
- Which of the following interest you: domestic relations cases, rights of consumers, landlord/tenant problems, claim collections, civil rights, anti-discrimination actions, rights to municipal services, welfare problems, housing?
- What experiences have you had in any of the above areas?

- Are you interested in environmental problems? What experience have you had in this area?
- Would you be prepared to accept employment away from your present residence?
- How important to you is the matter of compensation?
- What do you see as the rewards of working in this area of the law?
- What are your plans for your legal career?

Judicial Clerkship Questions

- Explain your interest in clerking.
- What is your specific interest in seeking a job with me?
- Do you think a one-year term is long enough to make a job worthwhile?
- What are the particular aspects of a clerkship that you would value?
- How far do you feel you have progressed in developing your writing skills?
- How valuable do you consider Law Journal experience in preparing you for a judicial clerkship? Explain.
- Have you looked into, and if so, what have you found out about the reputation of the judges to whom you are applying?
- While at law school, have you noted particular judges whose opinions you particularly admired because of style, substance or ideology?
- How important to you are the political views of the judge?
- What do you think of merit selection of the federal and state judiciary?
- How conversant are you with the significant current decisions of the US Supreme Court?
- Do you think a judge is under any obligation to help a law clerk find a job at the end of the term?

How to Handle Discriminatory Questions

Questions regarding your race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, age, sexual orientation or being a disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era that do not relate to a bona fide occupation qualification necessary to perform a job are discriminatory and, therefore, not permissible. Knowledge of this type of information about a candidate may lead to discriminatory hiring practices, and you are not required to divulge this information, unless you choose to.

Following is the University Of Mississippi Policy Statement for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action that employers who utilize the services of the Career Services Office are required to sign.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI POLICY STATEMENT FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

It is the policy of the University of Mississippi not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, age, sexual orientation or being a disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era.

Employment opportunities will not be distinguished on the basis of gender unless gender is a bona fide occupational qualification. Employment opportunities will not be distinguished on the basis of age except where age is reasonably taken into account as a factor necessary to the normal operation or the achievement of any statutory objective of a program or activity.

The University of Mississippi School of Law promotes the employment of its students and graduates in accordance with the above policy statement. The Law School's Career Services Office and facilities are available only to those employers whose practices are consistent with this policy, as well as with all applicable laws and regulations governing discrimination in employment.

The use of the Office of Career Services and its facilities constitutes a commitment by the interviewer and the employer to adhere to these policies. Complaints will be investigated and may result in denial of access to the services of the office.

If you feel an interview has been conducted improperly, you are encouraged to report the specifics to the Director of the Career Services Office.

EXAMPLES OF DISCRIMINATORY QUESTIONS

- Are you married?
- Do you have children? How old?
- What does your spouse do?
- Do you anticipate additions to your family, and if so, how soon? Who cares (will care) for your children?
- To what extent will family responsibilities interfere with you performing a normal work week?
- In emergency situations, would your job or your family take precedence?
- Does the fact that both you and your spouse work create tensions in your family?
- If one of you had to give up work, who would do so?
- If the work of either of you required a transfer to another city, how would you work it out?

Although most employers refrain from asking these questions, you may at times be confronted with them. Here are three possible ways of responding to such inquiries:

1. The most recommended response is to address the employer's underlying concern without directly answering the question. For example, if you are asked about your plans for marriage or children, the employer is usually concerned about your anticipated length of stay in the area, your ability to travel or your ability to be at work on a regular basis. Although you do not need to answer the question directly, you should affirm your understanding of the employer's concern and assure him or her that your personal life is arranged in such a way that it will not interfere with your job.
2. A more direct, although less comfortable approach is to state to the employer your concern that the issue in question has no apparent bearing on your qualifications for the job you may ask for clarification of the reasons he or she has for requesting the information. This method may cause the employer some discomfort and could affect the outcome of the interview. This direct method would be recommended only for very forward or offensive questions.
3. Based on your personal preferences, you may choose to answer these types of questions, but you must realize the possible negative consequences of your doing so. Even if you determine this is the appropriate approach in a particular situation, reveal only the information that you are comfortable discussing with this interviewer.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

An interview is an opportunity for an employer to get to know and evaluate you; however, it is also your opportunity to get to know and evaluate the employer. Asking questions of the interviewer helps you learn things that can assist you in making your decision, helps establish rapport and demonstrates your interest.

The following is designed primarily to help law students interviewing for summer associate or law clerk positions with firms, or for positions beginning after graduation. Certainly you may want to ask some of these questions in a more conversational manner appropriate to your interview, and we suggest you do not ask them exactly as they are written here.

Sample Questions

- What would a typical day or week be for me?
- How are assignments and department rotations selected (don't ask this if this information is included in the firm resume).
- What criteria are used to measure performance?
- What type of feedback will I receive?
- Who will evaluate me?
- What type of work will I do?
- I am very interested in (practice area). Would I have an opportunity to work on an assignment in that area?
- Are summer associates assigned a mentor or supervising attorney for the summer?

- What do you like about your job?
- What do you like about working here?
- What do you like about being a lawyer?
- What do you find most challenging about being a lawyer?
- What is a typical day like for you?

- I read that your firm was involved in (name the case). Does your firm plan to do a lot of that type of work?
- (So-and-so) told me that he did (this-and-that) when he clerked here. That is what I really want to do. Will I be exposed to similar work?
- Generally, ask questions seeking additional information on something you read or heard about relating to the firm. Lexis-Nexis is a great source for this.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Thank You Letters

A well written thank you letter is not a hard sell and is not meant to cover for mistakes made in the interview. It simply should serve as a reminder of your strong points while demonstrating an interest in continuing in the interview process. A thank you letter has three purposes:

- to thank the employer for the interview. Let him/her know that you appreciate the time s/he spent with you and that you enjoyed meeting him/her.
- to refresh the employer's recollection of you as a candidate. Try to mention something specific about your interview, such as his/her answer to one of your questions.
- to express your continued, or increased, desire to work for the employer. A thank you letter should reaffirm your interest, but not restate your qualifications. The letter should not exceed one page.

OCI

Thank you letters are not required for on-campus interviews. If, however, you choose to send one, you should mail it within 24 hours of your interview as call-back decisions are made very quickly following campus visits.

Call-Backs/In-Office Interviews

Thank you letters are always appropriate after you have interviewed at an employer's office, especially if you are still interested in the position. Typically, you will meet with several attorneys during an in-office interview. You do not, however, need to write to each attorney individually. Your letter will be routed within the firm to each attorney you mention in your letter. If you are not given the names of all the individuals with whom you'll be meeting, or if the original schedule is altered and you're unable to get all names, try something to the effect of, "please thank all your colleagues who took the time to meet with me as well." You may address your letter to the attorney responsible for the call-back, the attorney hosting your office visit or the recruiting coordinator who arranged your visit. Try to mail your thank you letter no more than 48 hours after your office visit.

Finally, remember, thank you letters should:

1. Be brief (merely a few paragraphs)
2. Be timely
3. Thank interviewer/recruiter for his/her time
4. Re-emphasize specific skills/abilities
5. Include any post-interview information which would be helpful

Following are some brief guidelines for a thank you letter:

Paragraph One: Thank You + Additional Point

Concise thank you and reminder. Mention a specific detail about your conversation.

Paragraph Two: Re-emphasize Relevant Attributes

Reiterate skills and abilities you have to offer.

Closing Paragraph: Reaffirm Interest; Reiterate Thanks

Reaffirm interest in position and thank you. State willingness to supply additional information.

RECEIVING AN OFFER

The recruitment committee's decision to hire an individual usually must be unanimous. While personality and fit are important considerations at a call-back interview, the attorneys interviewing a student during a call-back must be convinced of the student's legal ability just as the on-campus interviewer had to be.

The firm may make its offer by telephone followed by a confirming letter, or just by letter. Timing of offers vary, depending on the employer, when the recruiting committee meets, etc. After your interview, be sure to ask the timeline for making a hiring decision. In some instances, an employer may decide to keep you "on hold" until it determines the number of candidates who have accepted their offers. Do not assume that a rejection will follow. If an offer ultimately is extended, do not reject it assuming that you may be viewed as a second-choice. Most of the attorneys with whom you will be working will not know the circumstances of your offer and will only be interested in the quality of your work.

Considerations in Selecting Legal Employment

The following lists and questions are designed to help you identify issues you should consider before choosing a firm, corporation, government agency or public interest job.

1. Generally, consider the following

- Structure and Management (size of organization, growth history, client base, form of management, your potential involvement in decision-making)
- Training and Responsibility (assignment and distribution of work, type of supervision, degree of responsibility, evaluation of feedback, expectation of performance, promotional track, billable hour requirements)
- Work Atmosphere (attorney mentor relationships, co-worker relationships, diversity of workplace, attorney attrition, lateral hiring)
- Reputation in the Community (professional reputation, community involvement, political involvement, pro bono programs)

2. Law Firm

a. Character

- What is the firm's general character? Culture?
- What are its specialties and major areas of practice?
- What is the firm's partner to associate ratio?
- Does the firm have a friendly atmosphere? Is there a sense of camaraderie and enjoyment or stiffness and formality? Do the lawyers cooperate with one another or do they compete to the detriment of the firm and its clients?
- Is the firm diverse?
- Would you enjoy working with the firm's lawyers? Do they have sufficiently varied backgrounds to make the office interesting?
- What is the relationship between younger and older lawyers in the firm? Are the channels of communication formal or informal? What is the degree of contact and formality in the firm?
- What is the firm's reputation among its peers, clients, and the general public?
- What are the firm's prevailing attitudes and practices on such matters as ethics, pro bono work, community service, government service, diversity and continuing legal education?
- What are the firm's billable and non-billable hour requirements?
- Does the firm have other work related requirements for its lawyers?

b. Stability

- Is the firm financially and professionally stable?
- Are the firm's lawyers of a uniformly high caliber with solid and able people at all age levels and in all important legal areas?
- Do you have confidence and pride in the firm's lawyers, their legal ability, ethics, judgment and standards? Do you trust, respect and admire these individuals?
- Has the number of the firm's partners and associates grown significantly in the past 15 years?
- Have they suffered any major defections of partners, associates or staff?
- Has the firm gone through any significant split-ups or mergers in its history?
- Is the firm's organization and administration systems sound and running smoothly? Are there signs of cliques or dissidence?
- What is the firm's future? Is it getting and keeping new people of high caliber? Has it acquired important new clients in recent years?
- Are the firm's clients solid, varied and of different sizes? Do the clients have important and interesting concerns?
- Does the firm have an active local practice with substantial clients in its metropolitan area?
- Does the firm have an active national practice with substantial clients and offices around the United States?
- Is the firm's success tied to many clients or a few? How is the firm affected by business cycles of boom and recession

c. Professional Development

- What do new associates do? How does the firm determine and assign work to associates? How do these work assignments and responsibilities change over the years?
- How does the firm train new associates? What members of the firm are responsible for training? Does the firm have a formal training program for new associates?
- Must an associate become a specialist in a particular area of the law? When do associates specialize? Who decides on an associate's area of specialty? How do the firm and the associate resolve issues of specialization?
- What emphasis does the firm place on ability of associates to attract and retain new or existing business? Does the firm train associates in business development?

d. Evaluation

- How does the firm judge an associate's performance? What form of evaluation does the firm use? Who is responsible for evaluating associates?
- How does the firm evaluate associates?
- What are the firm's criteria for associate advancement?
- What emphasis does the firm place on associate's ability to develop new clients and business when it makes evaluation decisions?
- Who has access to an associate's evaluation? Is the evaluation put in the associate's permanent file? Does the associate get a written copy of the evaluation? Does the associate have an opportunity to discuss the evaluation?

e. Compensation

- What is the firm's policy on compensation, bonuses and raises?
- What fringe benefits does the firm offer to associates?
- Does the firm financially reward associates who generate new clients and business when it makes compensation decisions?
- When does an associate actually become a partner in the firm?
- Do business cycles significantly affect partnership opportunities in the firm? Has the firm admitted fewer associates to partnership during periods of business contraction in the local or national economy?
- What criteria does the firm use in deciding to admit associates to the partnership? Does the firm use a "competitive standard" that places a predetermined restriction on the number of partners to be admitted in a given field? Does the firm use a "meet the firm's standard of performance test" and admit all associates who meet it?
- What does partnership entail in terms of compensation, legal and financial responsibilities, monetary contribution to the firm and work load?
- What happens to associates who are not admitted to the partnership? Does the firm have opportunities for associates who are not admitted to the partnership? If there are no opportunities within the firm, does it help place associates in other jobs? Does the firm have many prominent and successful alumni?

f. Location

- Is the firm located in an area with strong and active associates, continuing legal education programs and interesting professional groups?

3. Government Agencies

- How have the government lay-offs of the past affected this agency?
- How will current budgetary concerns affect the future of the agency?
- What kinds of budget constraints does this agency have?
- Has the agency been able to replace attorneys when necessary or must it work with smaller staff than is needed?
- What is the agency's reputation in the community?
- What has happened to attorneys who have left this agency? Have they moved into private practice, corporations, lobbying, the legislative branch, or other agencies?
- Is the agency doing work of declining significance to the current administration?
- Will the agency pay, or assist in paying bar fees, advanced degrees, continuing legal education?

4. Corporations

- How many recent law school graduates work on the staff?
- Is the corporate counsel departmentalized or does each attorney handle any matter of concern?
- Is it possible for attorneys to move into management?
- How are attorneys viewed within the corporation?
- How often and for what matters does the corporation use outside counsel?

5. Public Interest Groups

- Do the matters that this organization handles interest you?
- Does the organization have severe budget constraints?
- Is the size of the legal staff adequate to handle the matters at hand?
- How much staff turnover has their organization experienced?
- What types of positions do attorneys take after leaving this organization?
- Is this a legislative, advocacy, or litigation-oriented organization?
- Will you be working with individual clients or groups?
- Are the organization's staff members dedicated to the organization's goals?

Responding to an Offer

Once the firm has made you an offer, it is important to acknowledge its receipt. Call and let the firm know of your interest and, if the offer has not included one, inquire about the firm's timetable for an answer.

All offers require a response -- whether positive or negative. Whether accepting or rejecting an offer, call the organization and speak with the individual who extended the offer. The telephone call is important even when rejecting an offer as it leaves the firm with a more positive feeling about you. It is then advisable to follow up the telephone conversation with a letter.

1. Acceptance Letters

Once an offer is extended, you will want to respond in writing. An acceptance letter serves not only to verify your acceptance of a job offer, but also to clarify any details of which you may be unsure. Your acceptance letter should thank the employer for the offer and state that you are accepting it. You should also mention the material facts surrounding your employment (e.g., start and end dates, salary) to ensure that your understanding of those facts is the same as the employer's. Finally, let the employer know that you are looking forward to working with them. In your acceptance letter, you should include:

- Confirmation of the conversation in which offer was accepted
- Your understanding of the terms of employment
- Any other arrangements
- A thank you for the offer

Following are some brief guidelines for an acceptance letter:

Paragraph One: Confirmation Acceptance

Confirm conversation and acceptance. Express enthusiasm regarding position.

Paragraph Two: Terms of Agreement

Set forth terms as you understand them (i.e., salary, start date, benefits).

Closing Paragraph: Reaffirm Interest and Reiterate Thanks

Reaffirm interest in position and express thanks for opportunity.

2. Decline Letters

When you decline an offer of employment, thank the employer for the offer and express your regret at not being able to accept. You may, if you choose, explain briefly why you are declining. If you have future interest in the employer and want to leave the door open for future possibilities, be sure to express such interest in your letter.

BASIC COMPETENCIES ESSENTIAL TO BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE LAWYER

Legal Research Skills

- Do I have knowledge of and can I use with relative ease the non-computer library research tools for finding statutory and case law in both the federal and state systems?
- Do I know the relevant secondary sources for legal research and when and how to use them?
- Do I understand the interrelationship of various reference materials?
- Am I comfortable with using computerized research tools?
- Do I know how to develop an effective and efficient research strategy?
- Do I understand when it is appropriate to expand my research and conversely, when to stop it?
- Are the results of my research practical and useful?
- Is my Shepardizing automatic and flawless?

Legal Reasoning Skills

- Do I have a solid grasp of the fundamental legal concepts presented in my core academic curriculum?
- Can I identify and distinguish between the primary and subsidiary legal issues presented in a reported case or a real life problem?
- Do I take the time to clarify my thinking process – to isolate the issues presented in a give problem and think through the results of my research to their logical conclusion?
- Do I know how to develop a cogent legal analysis or case strategy by applying legal concepts and/or theory to the facts of a case?
- Do I explore alternative legal theories or avenues of argument when appropriate?
- In areas where the law is nebulous, do I know how to pursue analogous situations and logical extensions?
- Do I attempt to think creatively and imaginatively in developing innovative legal theory?

Writing Skills

- Do I have full command of the fundamentals of good writing, e.g., correct grammar, proper punctuation, good organization and appropriate vocabulary?
- Do I formulate and express my ideas clearly and precisely?
- Do I write fluently and persuasively?
- Is my writing style appropriate to the given work product (client letter, court brief, in-house memorandum, etc.?)
- Are my citations accurate? Are they in proper *Blue Book* or acceptable office form?
- Do I critically edit and carefully proofread my work?
- Does the visual presentation of my written work (format, neatness, etc.) comport with expected office standards?

Oral Skills

- Do I speak in a clear voice and articulate well?
- Do I use language easily and fluently?
- Do I express my thoughts clearly and persuasively?
- Have I taken appropriate remedial steps to address any impediments to effective use of language?
- Am I an effective communicator in advocacy proceedings?

JOB FAIRS

The University of Mississippi School of Law participates in the following job fairs each year.

Atlanta Legal Hiring Conference	Atlanta, GA	<i>(March)</i>
Dupont Legal Minority Job Fair	Houston, LA Wilmington, DE	<i>(August)</i>
Equal Justice Works Public Interest Law Career Fair	Washington, D.C.	<i>(October)</i>
Hispanic National Bar Association Job Fair	Albuquerque, NM	<i>(September)</i>
IMPACT Career Fair	Washington, DC	<i>(August)</i>
Minnesota Minority Recruiting Conference	Minneapolis, MN	<i>(September)</i>
Patent Law Interview Program	Chicago, IL	<i>(July)</i>
Southeastern Intellectual Property Job Fair	Atlanta, GA	<i>(July)</i>
Southeastern Minority Job Fair	Atlanta, GA	<i>(August)</i>
The Tri-State Diversity Recruitment Program	Covington, KY	<i>(August)</i>

These events will be publicized by e-mail and in the Announcements section of your student home page in the Symplicity system.

LL.M. PROGRAMS

The best source of schools with LL.M. programs can be found at:

<http://www.abanet.org/legaled/postjdprograms/postjdc.html> .

SUGGESTED CAREER RELATED WEBSITES

GENERAL SITES

Association Job Boards	www.associationjobboards.com
Best Jobs USA	www.bestjobsusa.com
CareerBuilder	www.careerbuilder.com
Career Exposure	www.careerexposure.com
Career Magazine	www.careermag.com
CareerNet	www.careernet4jobs.com
CareerOneStop	www.careeronestop.org

Career Shop	www.careershop.com
FlipDog (Monster)	www.flipdog.com
HireNet Employment Systems	www.hirenet.net
HotJobs	www.hotjobs.com
HotResumes	www.hotresumes.com
JobBank USA	www.jobbankusa.com
jobfly Employment Resource	www.jobfly.com
Job Seeker	www.thejobseeker.net
JobWeb	www.jobweb.com
Law Jobs	www.lawjobs.com
Monster	www.monster.com
MonsterTRAK	www.monstertrak.monster.com
Net-Temps	www.nettemps.com
PeopleBank	www.peoplebank.com
Recruiters Online Network	www.recruiteronline.com
Relocation/Cost of Living Index Salary Information	www.homefair.com/homefair/cmr/salcalc.html www.salary.com
State Legislatures, National Conference of	www.ncsl.org/public/joblegis.htm
Thingamajob	www.thingamajob.com
Work Plaza	www.workplaza.com
Yahoo	www.yahoo.com

INTERNATIONAL JOB SITES

Global Career Center	www.globalcareercenter.com
Hobsons	www.hobsons.com
Human Rights Internet	www.hri.ca
International Job Search Page	www.overseasjobs.com and www.longbridge.com

LEGAL SITES

American Bar Association Career Counsel	www.abanet.org/careercounsel
American Lawyer Employment Center	www.lawjobs.com
Association of Corporate Counsel	www.acc.com
Attorney Opportunities	www.attorneyjobs.com
Business/Legal Site for Women	www.advancingwomen.com
EmplawyerNet:	www.emplawyernet.com
Entry Level Jobs	www.entryleveljobs.com
FindLaw	www.findlaw.com
FindLaw for Legal Professionals	www.careers.findlaw.com
Hieros Gamos Legal Directories	www.hg.org
Law & Policy Institutions Guide	www.lpig.org
Lawyers.com	www.lawlinks.com
Lawyers Weekly Jobs	www.lawyersweeklyjobs.com
Legal Employment Search Site	www.legalemploy.com
Legal Recruiter	www.legalrecruiter.com
Legal Staff	www.legalstaff.com
LexisNexis Careers	www.lexis-nexis.com/employment
Martindale-Hubbell Legal Careers	www.careers.martindale.com
National Association for Legal Professionals (NALP) Directory of Legal Employers	www.nalpdirectory.com
National Classified Ads (Law.Com)	www.lawnewsnetwork.com

GOVERNMENT SITES

The Federal Legal Employment Opportunities Guide www.nalp.org - click on "Public Service Initiatives".

Government Honors & Internship Handbook
<http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm>.

The 2008-2009 user name is graham; password is cracker

Careerlink.com (Court)	http://www.whohascourtjobs.com
Careers in Government	http://www.careersingovernment.com

Courts.net	http://www.courts.net
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	http://www.fbi.gov
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	http://www.fcc.gov/jobs
Federal Jobs Net	http://www.federaljobs.net/
LexisNexis	http://www.lexis-nexis.com
National Center for State Courts (NCSC)	http://www.ncsconline.org
National Labor Relations Board	http://www.NLRB.gov
National Legal Aid & Defender Association	http://www.nlada.org/Jobs
Roll Call <i>Classifieds</i> (Newspaper of Capitol Hill)	http://www.rollcall.com/classifieds
Student Jobs in the Government	http://www.studentjobs.gov
U.S. Courts	http://www.uscourts.gov
U.S. Department of Justice	http://www.usdoj.gov
U.S. Federal Government	http://www.usajobs.gov
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office	http://www.uspto.gov

PUBLIC INTEREST SITES

Advocates	www.just-advocates.com
Capitol Hill	www.hillzoo.com
Civil Rights Coalition	www.civilrights.org/career_center/index.html
Elfnetwork	www.elfnetwork.com
Environment Web Directory	www.webdirectory.com
Environmental Career Opportunities	www.ecojobs.com
Equal Justice Works	www.equaljusticeworks.org
Feminist Majority Foundation	www.feminist.org
Idealist	www.idealists.org
Land Trust Alliance	www.lta.org
National Fair Housing Advocate	www.fairhousing.com

National Legal Aid & Defender Association	www.nlada.org/Jobs
PSLawNet NALP's Public Service Law Network Worldwide	www.pslawnet.org
Public Citizen	www.citizen.org/jobs
Public Interest Clearinghouse	www.pic.org
Sustainable Business (Environmentally Conscious Employers)	www.sustainablebusiness.com
U.S. Public Interest Research Groups	www.pirg.org/jobs

SPECIFIC SITES

AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations)	www.aflcio.org
Chronicle of Higher Education	www.chronicle.com
Entertainment Professional's Network	www.showbizjobs.com
Environmental News Network	www.enn.com
Internet Real Estate.com (Intellectual Property)	www.patents.com
National Wildlife Federation	www.nwf.org/jobopps/index.cfm
United Nations	www.un.org
USA Today	www.usatoday.com
USA Today Job Center (CareerBuilder)	http://careers.usatoday.com
Wall Street Journal	www.careerjournal.com