
Legal Resumes & Cover Letters for Students

Resumes and cover letters are the two most-requested documents by potential employers. A resume sets the first impression an employer will have of you; therefore, both the format and content of your resume should be clear, concise and easy to read. When creating your resume format, choose simple, clean fonts and an organized, consistent design, because employers typically spend only 10-30 seconds reviewing your resume. When drafting your resume content, use discretion and market only your *most relevant* skills, experiences, and accomplishments. Finally, make sure to carefully prepare, review, proofread and edit your resume to ensure that it is free from typos or careless errors.

A resume is a marketing tool that serves as an introduction to a potential employer. In contrast, a cover letter allows students to elaborate and further explain certain accomplishments or skills, and includes information explaining your interests in and reasons for applying to a particular employer. However, a cover letter should still be concise and demonstrate your ability to outline pertinent information clearly and succinctly, especially because it is the first piece of writing that you provide to a potential employer. Whether your resume is mailed, faxed or sent electronically, a cover letter should always accompany your resume. Information regarding cover letters is included later in this handout.

Resumes

Resumes are necessary when applying for volunteer and paid law clerk positions as well as attorney positions. Your resume should highlight your strengths and background in a way that will convince a prospective employer to take a closer look at you. For this reason, you must **draft a resume early** in your law school career and **update it** as you establish additional academic credentials and relevant legal or professional experience.

LEGAL RESUMES: TOP FIVE TIPS

1. **Be concise.** Your student resume should be one (1) page unless you have extensive or unusual education and experience. Legal employers prefer brevity; attorneys who have been practicing for many years still have one (1) page resumes.
2. **Market yourself using a professional, personal “letterhead.”** Create a “heading” or “letterhead” at the top of your resume, including your name and pertinent contact information. Use this heading on the top of your resume and on all career-related documents, such as your cover letter, list of references and unofficial transcript.
3. **Show a legal employer that you are enrolled in law school.** Include your education, in reverse chronological order (with Chicago-Kent first), at the top of your resume.
4. **Be clear.** Use active verbs to describe your work experiences and/or community involvement, and use bullet points to highlight your skills and credentials.
5. **Be correct.** You may NOT falsify, embellish, or misrepresent details about your experiences on your resume. You may NOT round your GPA up. Finally, be sure to proofread and spell check your resume, and read it backwards to catch any and all mistakes.

RESUME ETHICS

In a competitive market, the temptation to exaggerate one's credentials can occur; *don't* fall prey to this temptation. All information with respect to a candidate's academic record, school activities, employment history, or other biographical data *must* be strictly accurate. **(See Section 18.2 in the Student Handbook for the rules governing accuracy of credentials.)** Anyone known to be deliberately providing false information about credentials will be identified to the academic dean for possible disciplinary action.

RESUME FORMAT & STYLE

There is no single way to set up a resume. Of the many acceptable resume formats, you will need to determine which format best represents you and your experience. If you are seeking a position in an alternative career in another industry (i.e. not actively practicing law), you must research to determine the correct format and style of typical resumes in that industry. Unlike the legal profession, some professions encourage resumes that are more than one (1) page, while other industries typically include an "objective" section at the beginning of a resume. Be sure to research different resume formats or ask your career advisor for suggestions regarding how to draft a functional resume that will highlight your transferrable skills for an alternative position.

There are some general rules you should keep in mind regarding *legal* resumes:

1. Remember, the visual aesthetics of your resume are important. Prospective employers typically spend **10-30 seconds** to initially review your resume. Make sure your resume is arranged so that a good impression can be gained by a quick glance. Judicious use of white space will allow the reader's eyes to be drawn to key words; do not try to fit so much on a page that it becomes difficult to read.
 - Use **bullet points** to draw attention to various accomplishments
2. Because prospective employers spend a short amount of time on an initial review of your resume, limit your resume to **one (1) page** unless you have extensive or unusual education or more than 5-10 years relevant experience.
3. Use phrases to describe your work or experiences instead of complete sentences. Avoid the use of personal pronouns.
4. Use **active verbs** to highlight your transferable skills (e.g. edited, researched, analyzed, drafted, managed, organized, led, persuaded, counseled, taught, advised, tutored, etc.).
5. Stick with an **easy-to-read font**, such as Times New Roman, Arial, Garamond or Verdana. Avoid small font size; 11 pt. font is the minimum recommended font size.
6. Be sure to **spell check** your resume and read it backwards to catch any and all mistakes.
7. Test-market your resume before printing it. Ask others to read it (attorneys if possible) and get feedback on the impression it makes. It is extremely helpful to have someone who does not know you well read it.
8. When submitting a paper resume, print your resume on good quality, neutral color resume paper.
9. When submitting a resume electronically, include your name in the file name (e.g. "John Smith Resume" or "JSmith Resume").
10. When submitting a resume electronically, send it in PDF format (unless an employer specifically requests Word format). Submitting your resume as a PDF ensures that the resume will be a high quality, uneditable file with original formatting.

RESUME CONTENT

1. **Contact Information** – This information should be placed **prominently at the top of your resume** in a “heading” (like a company letterhead). This information should include your current home address, your current (professional) e-mail address, and a telephone contact number. If you include your cell phone number as a method of contact, make sure you are in a quiet place when answering calls from unknown numbers. Make sure your e-mail address is professional and one that you check often.
 - a. **Chicago (Local) Address or Permanent Address?** If you are seeking a job in the Chicagoland area, you should use only your local address. However, if you are from another area of the country, plan to return there for work, and have a “permanent address” in that area, you should list both your local address and your permanent address on the resume you use for your job search in that area. It is perfectly acceptable to create two versions of your resume—one with both addresses and the other with the local address only—to use with concurrent job searches.
2. **Objective** – No statement of objective is necessary. Remove any “Objective” or “Purpose” sections from your resume. You should address your objectives in a cover letter or during an interview.
3. **Education** – Your educational history should be the first substantive section of your resume. This is true even if you have had post-undergrad professional work experience. This shows a legal employer right away that you are enrolled in law school and likely seeking legal work. List the schools you attended in **reverse chronological order** with **Chicago-Kent College of Law** (or **IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law**) first.
 - a. **Law School** – For law school, list the degree you are pursuing (e.g. Juris Doctor; Juris Doctor/Master’s in Business Administration; LL.M. in Tax) and your expected date of graduation. Juris Doctor should be written as “Juris Doctor” – **not** “Juris Doctorate” or “J.D.” Do not list the time period you have been enrolled in law school; only list your expected graduation date. Students enrolled in a certificate program can note that information immediately following the “Juris Doctor” line. (E.g. *Candidate for Business Law Certificate; Labor and Employment Law Certificate Candidate*)
 - b. **Undergraduate/Graduate Work** – Make sure you include the full, correct names of the undergraduate and/or graduate schools you attended. For undergraduate and other graduate schools and corresponding degrees, be sure to include the month and year the degrees were conferred (graduation date) and the specific degree received. Be precise regarding your degree and major: do not merely write “Bachelor of Arts” or “Bachelor of Science.” Instead, write “Bachelor of Arts in History” or “Bachelor of Science in Biology.” Italicize, but do not capitalize, (magna/summa) cum laude.
 - c. **Study Abroad** – If you studied abroad for one semester or one year, include that information.
 - d. **High School** – In general, do **not** include high school education information on your resume.

4. **Grades** – Whether or not you report your grades on your resume is strictly up to you. However, class rank and GPA can be selling points and are an important “criteria” for some employers. If you rank in the upper half of the class, it is generally recommended that you include your GPA on your resume.

a. **GPA** – If you decide to include your GPA, it *must* be the GPA provided to you by the Registrar’s Office. You may not calculate your GPA on your own before receiving all your semester grades. Also, **rounding up your GPA is NOT allowed**. For example, a 3.28 cannot be rounded to 3.30; and a 3.147 is a 3.14 or 3.147, not 3.15.

b. **Class Rank** – If you decide to list the percentage of the class within which you rank (e.g. Top 15%), you calculate the percentile by dividing your rank by the number of students in the class (the number of students in your class must be the official number provided by the Registrar). Carry the division out **four decimal places** and convert to a percentile. For example: 54/266 or 54 divided by 266 = .2030 or 20.3% or Top 20%; rank 63/266 or 63 divided by 266 = .2368 or 23.68% or Top 24%. When determining how to list class rank, anything between the whole number and .4999 should be rounded down (e.g. 25 - 25.4999 = Top 25%); anything above .4999 should be rounded up (e.g. 25.5 and above to 26.4999 = Top 26%).

c. If your rank is below the 50% mark and your cumulative GPA is below a B average (3.0/4.0), it is recommended that you leave your rank and GPA off your resume. You can talk about your grades and your skills in an interview. If your grades in a few specific courses are high, consider listing them in a separate bullet point, especially if they are courses extremely relevant to your career goals (e.g. if you want to be a litigator and you earned an A in Trial Advocacy). If your Legal Research and Writing grades have been consistently high, list them as well.

5. **Honors and Activities** – If you have honors and activities related to your legal and undergraduate education, list them immediately below each school, degree, and grade information. Academic honors, such as *cum laude*, should follow the degree and be italicized. When listing information about law school, list all honors and activities of importance such as a Law Review, participation on other journals, Moot Court, Dean’s List, fellowships, scholarships, committees, student organization memberships and offices, and awards.

a. **Dean’s List** (or Dean’s Honor List) – Both “Dean’s List” and “Dean’s Honor List” are acceptable. If you have been on Dean’s List some, but not all of the semesters you have been in law school, you make that clear on your resume. Each semester that you achieved Dean’s List status should be listed *unless* you have made Dean’s List all semesters. (If you have achieved Dean’s List all semesters you may use the general statement “Dean’s List” without any qualifiers.) For example if you made Dean’s List three out of the four past semesters, you should list it as:

Dean’s List: Fall 2011, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013; *or*
Dean’s List: three of four semesters

- b. Law Review and Moot Court** – If you have just accepted membership on Law Review or in Moot Court or have served less than two academic terms, you must qualify the membership statement as follows:

Chicago-Kent Law Review, member as of August 2013

Moot Court Honor Society, member as of August 2013

- i. If you served on Law Review or Moot Court but are not enrolled this semester, you must qualify your membership with the period served (e.g. Moot Court Honor Society: August 2011 – May 2012).
 - ii. If you were invited to join Law Review or Moot Court but declined, you must list it as: “Invited to Moot Court Society membership; respectfully declined.”
- 6. Legal Publications** – If you have written a law-related article that has been or is about to be published, list it immediately after the education section. Be sure to use the correct citation. If the articles are not law-related, list them under a “Publications” heading toward the end of your resume, after work experience (see Other Categories section).
- 7. Experience** – There are various types of “experience” you should include on your resume. These experiences may be legal work, past employment, or any other relevant activity which may not be employment per se, such as volunteer internships and other positions of responsibility. In general, list your jobs in reverse chronological order, but consider organizing your experiences into one or more of the following categories: Legal Experience; Professional Experience (or Related Experience or Work Experience); Volunteer Experience (or Community Involvement); and Leadership Experience.

Make sure to include your employer’s (or volunteer organization’s) name, city, state, your dates (months and years) of employment, your job title and your responsibilities. Use **bullet points** and **active verbs** to set forth and highlight your various responsibilities and skills for each job, internship, legal clinic position, volunteer experience, etc. Describe a **current job in present tense**, and describe all past positions in past tense. If you have secured a future position, just as a law clerk position or judicial externship that will begin soon (in a few months), you may add that employer and your job title to your resume, noting the month and year when the job will begin. (E.g. *Judicial Extern*, Beginning August 2013)

- a. Legal Experience** – It is helpful to set apart your law-related jobs, internships, externships and volunteer work in a separate “Legal Experience” section in order to highlight the legal work and practical experience you have obtained. This section should include all relevant full-time and part-time legal jobs, work in the law school’s in-house clinics, judicial and legal externships, internships, research assistantships and volunteer legal work. List the substantive areas of law in which you dealt, the types of legal documents which you drafted, and the responsibilities which you were given. Use **active verbs** to describe your responsibilities and tasks. (There is a long list of sample active verbs on page 9 of this guide.) Avoid the phrase “responsibilities included...” and the word “duties.”
- i. **Law Related Experience:** You may title your section “Legal and Law Related Experience” or create a separate “Law Related Experience” section to list jobs that

may be relevant or related to the legal field, such as work for a congressman, city council, insurance company, policy organization or legal publisher.

- b. Professional Experience** – If you have substantive pre-law experience, include this under a separate heading, such as “Professional Experience,” “Related Experience” or “Work Experience.” List any special responsibilities or achievements you had using **bullet points**, and show promotions and increased responsibility, if applicable. If you supported yourself throughout your education, you can state this as well (e.g. “Financed 75% of education through summer and part-time employment”). Describe your work responsibilities using **active verbs** that show **transferrable skills**. If applicable, you may use verbs such as drafted, wrote, analyzed, organized, advised, coordinated, managed, edited, planned, motivated, and supervised.
 - c. Community Involvement** – Use this category to describe volunteer work, community service, involvement in clubs or charitable organizations, involvement with religious groups, involvement with fraternities or sororities or other extracurricular activities that is not legal work (e.g. “Volunteer canvasser for Senator Mark Kirk,” “Fund-raising Aide for Community Theatre Projects,” or “Literacy Volunteer at Uptown Center”). Include these activities to show your interests, talents or personality traits which may not be apparent in your other resume information. This may be especially important when applying for jobs in the public sector, such as government or public service jobs.
 - d. Leadership Experience** – You may select a few volunteer or community-related experiences and highlight them in a separate section to emphasize your leadership skills. Make sure your experiences listed under “Leadership Experience” are leadership positions and not merely membership positions.
- 8. Interests** – Whether to list interests or not is up to you. If you choose to list some interests, be aware that your interests are conveying an image to an employer. Do not feign an interest. If you indicate you are interested in Sub-Saharan cultures, spelunking, and spin-art, make sure you can keep up an erudite conversation on these subjects. Also, describe your interests in a detailed and specific manner. For example, instead of “Basketball,” consider writing “Chicago Bulls basketball.” Instead of “Cooking,” consider using “Cooking French cuisine.” Instead of “Running,” consider writing “Running marathons.” This kind of specific information can be helpful to spark conversation in an interview, and it also tells the resume reviewer something about you as an individual.
- 9. Other Categories (Languages, Professional Licenses, Publications, etc.)** – You may also have special qualifications that you would like to call to the attention of employers. Knowledge of foreign languages, extensive travel, publications, professional affiliations, professional licenses (CPA, pilot’s, real estate) and organizations to which you belong are elements you might want to include in a resume. If any of these tie in with your overall career goal, you should list them. If you have extensive publications from your previous career, you might want to leave them off your resume (so your resume does not exceed one page) but attach a separate addendum listing them.
- 10. References** – It is **not necessary** to say “References Available Upon Request” on your legal resume because that is assumed by employers. If an employer requests references with an application, include a separate sheet which lists two to three references (the “heading” on your reference list should be the same as your resume heading). Never list a reference unless you asked

that individual to be your reference in advance. Law faculty and legal employers (someone who can speak to your potential as an attorney) are the best references. Undergraduate faculty and former employers are also appropriate references. **Do not use relatives, friends, or other personal references.** Be sure to include the reference's name, title, affiliation, address and phone number. You may also consider identifying how your reference knows you (e.g. "Professor Smith was my undergraduate professor for Constitutional Law and Legal History" or "Mr. Jones was my direct supervisor at Macy's Department Store").

- 11. Request for Confidentiality – If you are employed and are seeking a job change**, you likely do not want your current employer to know that you are job hunting. It is appropriate to include a statement, at the very bottom of the resume, requesting that a prospective employer not contact a current employer: "It is requested that current employer not be contacted." or "This resume is submitted in confidence." or "Confidentiality with regard to present employer is requested." **This message must also be included in the cover letter which is sent with the resume.**

COMMONLY MISSPELLED OR MISUSED WORDS ON LEGAL RESUMES

Misspelled

accommodate
appellate
comparative
Dean's List or Dean's Honor List (not "Deans' List")
competitive
government
Juris Doctor (not "Juris Doctorate")
judgment
LexisNexis (not "Lexus Nexus")
liaison
manager
memoranda or memorandums (plural)
memorandum (singular) (not "memo")
oriented (not "orientated")
permanent
personnel
preparatory
reference

Misused

Chicago-Kent College of Law (not "Chicago Kent College of Law"; not "Chicago Kent Law School")
accept/except
advise/advice
affect/effect
capital/capitol
complement/compliment
counsel/council
criteria/criterion
ensure/insure
perspective/prospective

A WORD ABOUT SCANNABLE RESUMES

An increasing number of legal employers—particularly large firms, large corporations, and headhunters—now scan resumes from job applicants into a database. A scannable resume is one that can be read by an optical scanner, run through an optical character reader program (OCR), converted to text, and saved as a computer file and/or in a database. Once scanned into a computer, employers typically use keywords to identify qualified candidates.

In searching their candidate database, employers may look for potential employees either by name, title, or specific skills and experience. Employers may use **keywords** such as lawyer, attorney, manager, law, writer, insurance, claims, negotiations, litigation, commercial, counselor, transaction, research, Illinois Bar, outside counsel, trial etc. to identify a potential candidate. The keywords they use in this type of search tend to be nouns rather than verbs, so use nouns to describe your qualifications. Also, describe your work experience with concrete words rather than vague descriptions. Increase your list of keywords by including specifics from each job description in your scannable resume.

When creating a scannable resume, the following tips will help you to create the ideal resume which can be read by a computer:

- Identify relevant keywords related to the job description, and incorporate those keywords in your resume
- Use white 8 1/2 x 11 paper, black ink
- Provide a laser printed, clean original
- Do not fold, staple or paperclip
- Use standard typefaces such as Times New Roman, Arial or Verdana
- Use a font size of 12 to 14 points
- Do not condense spacing between letters
- Use boldface type and/or all capital letters for section headings.
- Be sure that letters do not touch each other
- Avoid fancy treatments such as italics, underline, shadows, and reverses
- No pictures/graphics
- Avoid vertical and horizontal lines, graphics and boxes
- Avoid two column format or resumes that look like newspaper columns
- Place your name at the top of each page
- Use standard address format below your name
- List each phone number on its own line

You can find more information on electronic resumes in books like *CareerXRoads: The Directory to Jobs, Resume and Career Management Sites on the Web* by Gerry Crispin and Mark Mehler.

ACTION VERB LIST

accelerate	clarify	edit	increase	perform	revamp
accomplish	close	effect	incur	pinpoint	review
achieve	co-author	elect	inform	pioneer	revise
acquire	collaborate	eliminate	initiate	plan	revitalize
activate	collect	employ	innovate	prepare	salvage
actuate	combine	encourage	inspect	present	save
adapt	communicate	enforce	inspire	preserve	schedule
address	compile	engineer	instigate	preside	segment
administer	compose	enhance	instruct	prevent	select
advise	compute	enlarge	insure	process	sell
affect	conceive	enrich	install	procure	serve
allocate	conceptualize	establish	instill	produce	service
amend	conclude	estimate	institute	program	settle
amplify	condense	evaluate	interface	promote	shape
analyze	conduct	examine	interpret	prompt	simplify
anticipate	consolidate	exceed	interview	propose	solve
appoint	construct	execute	introduce	prove	specify
appraise	contact	expand	invent	provide	stage
approve	contribute	expedite	investigate	publicize	standardize
arbitrate	contrive	explain	isolate	publish	stimulate
arrange	control	expose	issue	purchase	streamline
assemble	convert	extend	launch	react	strengthen
assess	coordinate	extract	lead	recommend	structure
assist	correct	facilitate	lighten	reconcile	study
assume	counsel	forecast	liquidate	record	suggest
attain	create	form	localize	recruit	summarize
attract	cultivate	formalize	locate	rectify	supersede
audit	decentralize	formulate	maintain	redesign	supervise
augment	decrease	fortify	manage	reduce	supply
author	define	find	market	refine	support
authorize	delegate	frame	minimize	regain	surpass
automate	demonstrate	fulfill	moderate	regulate	survey
avail	design	gain	modernize	reinforce	systematize
award	determine	gather	modify	reject	teach
balance	develop	generate	motivate	relate	terminate
broaden	devise	govern	negotiate	re-negotiate	test
budget	devote	guide	nurture	reorganize	tighten
build	diagram	handle	obtain	replace	trace
buy	direct	hire	offer	report	trade
calculate	discover	identify	operate	represent	train
capture	distribute	illuminate	organize	research	translate
centralize	document	implement	orient	resolve	utilize
challenge	double	improve	originate	restore	write

12 COMMON RESUME ERRORS

1. **Two Page Resume (or longer).**
2. **Using the wrong paper.** For printed versions, use high quality, neutral paper
3. **Misstating your school/employer's name.** Write "Chicago-Kent College of Law," not "School of Law"
4. **Misstating your degree.** Write "Juris Doctor" not "Doctorate" or "Jurist"
5. **Including commas between month and year.** Do not add commas between the month and year: it should be "May 2011" not "May, 2011"
6. **Too much formatting.** Avoid tables, they can be very hard to edit
7. **Rounding GPA.** You may remove the 3rd digit after the decimal, but no rounding
8. **Including the range of dates when you studied at a school, instead of your graduation date.** For dates in the Education section, only include the month and year you received your degree, not the range of dates you were there (exceptions, study abroad, transferring or not completing degree)
9. **Using multiple size fonts or color font.** For fonts, use one size throughout (with the exception of your name, which may be in a larger font), and limit your use of effects (bold, italics, etc.). Equivalent information should use same font size and style (be consistent)
10. **Including Objective, References Available or personal information.** Keep these sections off your legal resume
11. **Using personal pronouns.** Instead, begin descriptions with action words
12. **Using the wrong verb tense.** Use past tense if the job is completed; present if you are still working there and the task is on-going

Sample Resumes Appear Below

RUSTY SABICH

123 North Clark Street • Chicago, IL 60600
312/555-0001 • rsabich@kentlaw.iit.edu

EDUCATION

Chicago-Kent College of Law, Chicago, IL

Juris Doctor, Expected May 2014

Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Program

Rank: Top 6% GPA: 3.72/4.0

- **Chicago-Kent Law Review, Editor-in-Chief (2013-2014)**
- Semifinalist, Charles Evans Hughes Moot Court Competition
- Kent Justice Foundation
- Dean's List

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, May 2011

GPA: 3.4/4.0

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Jenner & Block, Chicago, IL

Summer Associate, May 2013 - August 2013 (*extended offer for Associate position*)

- Researched state and federal case law and drafted memoranda in several practice areas including corporate, litigation, bankruptcy, and estate planning.
- Responded to and initiated discovery, and attended hearings, depositions, contract negotiations, and arbitrations.
- Prepared exhibits and jury instructions for federal trial and assisted in contacting witnesses.
- Participated in firm's trial advocacy program.

Cook County State's Attorney's Office, Chicago, IL

Law Clerk, Felony Trial Division, May 2012 - August 2012

- Interviewed witnesses and analyzed evidence to assess strength of case.
- Drafted various motions, pleadings, and stipulations, and prepared memorandum regarding DNA evidence.
- Observed pre-trial conferences, trials, sidebars, in-chamber conferences, and settlement negotiations.
- Organized and maintained daily trial docket and case files.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

U.S. Congressman Martin Allen, Washington, D.C.

Intern, May – August, 2010 & 2011

- Drafted responses to constituent inquiries.
- Attended and maintained records of hearings for presentation to Congressman.
- Contacted key state officials to testify at committee meetings.

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

Student Worker, Alumni Office, May 2008 – August 2008

- Assisted administrators with alumni outreach activities including letter writing, event planning, and web site development.
- Performed general office duties including purchase ordering, organizing files, and answering telephones.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Madison Cares, *Volunteer Tutor*, June 2008 – August 2009

ELINOR FRUTT

978 West South Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

312/555-1000
efrutt@kentlaw.iit.edu

EDUCATION

Chicago-Kent College of Law, Chicago, Illinois

Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2014

GPA: 3.42/4.0 Top 20%

- **Moot Court Honor Society**, Member as of August 2012
- Lowell J. Thomas Academic Scholarship Recipient
- Women in Law Member

Stuart School of Business, Chicago, Illinois

Candidate for Master of Business Administration, December 2014

DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, *magna cum laude*, May 2001

GPA: 3.9/4.0

- Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society
- Recipient of Presidential Scholarship for 4 years

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Honorable Arlander Keys, U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois

Judicial Extern, May 2012 to August 2012

- Researched and helped draft two judicial opinions and three legal memoranda
- Verified case law and statutes cited in briefs filed in court
- Observed hearings, oral arguments regarding discovery disputes, pre-trial conferences, and trials

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Hesson International, Chicago, Illinois

Senior Staff Associate, February 2004 to July 2011

- Researched and analyzed client contracts to determine transfer pricing trends resulting from inter-company transactions
- Recommended research strategies to other offices conducting due diligence investigations
- Trained and supervised all staff associates and interns
- Oversaw departmental project evaluating legal documents used for tax litigation

Staff Associate, June 2001 to January 2004

- Created and maintained proprietary license agreement library containing 5000+ contracts
- Exposed to issues concerning international taxation and public filings at the Securities and Exchange Commission

PUBLICATION

- “How to Survive a Bear Market With Your Bare Assets,” *Fortune Magazine*, May 15, 2006

INTERESTS

- European travel, gourmet cooking, financial markets

Perry Mason

999 E. Lake Shore Drive • Chicago, IL 60600 • 312/555-1212 • pmason@kentlaw.iit.edu

EDUCATION

CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW, Chicago, IL

Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2013

Intellectual Property Law Certificate Program

Honors and Activities:

- Intellectual Property Law Moot Court
- Dean's Advisory Council Member
- **Intellectual Property Summer Institute, Franklin Pierce Law Center, Concord, NH, 2011**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, Chicago, IL

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, May 2005

Honors and Activities:

- PI TAU SIGMA National Mechanical Engineering Honor Fraternity
- College of Engineering Student Council Chairperson

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

BURKE, RUSH, OPPENHEIMER & CAIN, Chicago, IL

Law Clerk, May 2011 – Present

- Draft patent specifications and claims, patent information disclosure statements and other intellectual property related documents
- Conduct extensive legal research on intellectual property issues

PROFESSOR LORI ANDREWS, CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW, Chicago, IL

Research Assistant, Institute of Science, Law and Technology, November 2011 – April 2012

- Researched case law and wrote memoranda on reproductive and genetic technology
- Proofed, edited, and cite checked materials for publication

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, ANTITRUST DIVISION, Chicago, IL

Legal Intern, Antitrust Division, May 2010 – July 2010

- Assisted regional attorneys by conducting legal research regarding the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act and drafting memoranda
- Prepared, filed, and followed up on subpoenas
- Observed government interviews, hearings, and pre-trial conferences

ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE

GENERAL MOTORS, Warren, MI

Project Engineer of Technical Center, June 2005 – August 2010

- Developed advanced safety systems utilizing finite element modeling and computer-simulated crash tests
- Designed, built, and tested advanced seat and belt systems
- Received General Motors Recognition Award

GENERAL MOTORS SCHOLAR, FISHER GUIDE DIVISION, Troy, MI

Intern, May – August 2004, 2003

- Assisted engineers with a variety of design projects

INTERESTS

- Cross-country running, squash, classical music

ROBERT CLAYTON DEAN

200 Justin Court #10

Naperville, IL 60500 630-555-1212

rdean@kentlaw.iit.edu

EDUCATION

CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, IL
Juris Doctor, Expected December 2012

- CALI Award for highest grade in Computers and Legal Reasoning, Spring 2010
- Evening Law Student Society Member

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, Normal, IL
Bachelor of Science in Accounting, May 1995

- Minor: Business Data Processing

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

GRANT, FARRELL & WATERFORD, INC., Wheaton, IL
Information Systems Manager, 2004 to Present

- Manage all in-house network computer operations and determine hardware and software acquisitions
- Direct client financial statement and income tax processing and provide client support and consulting in computers and computerized accounting systems
- Supervise ten data entry/bookkeeping clerks

INDEPENDENT BUSINESS OWNER, Naperville, IL
Computer Consultant, 2000 to 2004

- Assisted clients with the selection of microcomputer systems and software installation
- Trained clients' personnel on systems and software programs
- Wrote custom programs for use in Lotus 1-2-3 and Paradox

HAMPTON SERVICES, Oakbrook, IL
Corporate Controller, 1997 to 2000

- Supervised all accounting functions and \$2,500,000 budget for corporation and Texas subsidiary
- Prepared monthly consolidated financial statements
- Initiated and implemented computerized accounting and inventory systems

BERG GOLDMAN & CO., Bloomington, IL
Staff Accountant, 1995 to 1997

- Prepared all financial statements, payrolls, payroll tax returns, bank reconciliations, and miscellaneous reports for small business clients

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Chicago Bar Association
- Illinois State Bar Association
- Information and Technology Association of America

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Public Radio and Television Fundraiser
- Little League Baseball Coach

GRACE VAN OWEN

Current Address:

555 West Madison, Apt. H
Chicago, IL 60661
312.555.1212
gvanowen@kentlaw.iit.edu

Permanent Address:

424 Sunset Blvd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
213.555.6543
lalaw@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Chicago-Kent College of Law, Chicago, IL

Juris Doctor, Expected May 2013

Labor and Employment Law Certificate Program

GPA: 3.23/4.0 Top 35%

- Labor and Employment Law Society Member
- Society of Women in Law

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

Bachelor of Arts in English, May 2007

Concentration in Early 18th Century Italian Literature

GPA: 3.6/4.0

- Associated Student Government, Academic Affairs Staff
- **Scuola Leonardo da Vinci**, Florence, Italy, January - July 2006

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Law Offices of Chicago-Kent, Employment and Civil Rights Clinic, Chicago, IL

Richard J. Gonzalez, Supervising Attorney

Legal Intern, May 2012 - Present

- Research federal case law and write legal memoranda regarding employment discrimination claims
- Interview clients and witnesses to gather facts and prepare for depositions
- Draft motions for summary judgment, motions to compel, requests for production, request for admissions, and pleadings
- Review and analyze discovery documents for relevance and privilege

McKenzie Brackman, Los Angeles, CA

Law Clerk, May 2011 - August 2011

- Researched relevant state and federal case law on issues pertaining to commercial contracts, securities fraud, and California insurance law
- Filed motions and pleadings
- Maintained and organized law library

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Joan & David, Los Angeles, CA

Assistant Buyer, Shoes, May 2006 - January 2008

- Handled annual sales volume in excess of \$2.5 million
- Negotiated with vendors to determine payment terms, advertising co-ops, and markdown allowances
- Analyzed business reports, identifying trends and forecasting top-selling merchandise
- Established sales goals, markdown objectives, and advertising strategies

Held seasonal and part-time positions to finance education:

Sushi on Sunset, Los Angeles, CA, *Waitress*, October 2004 - April 2007

Saks, Los Angeles, CA, *Seasonal Salesperson*, 2004 and 2005

Four Seasons Hotel, Los Angeles, CA, *Reservations Clerk*, June 2003 - May 2004

ATTICUS FINCH

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afinch@kentlaw.iit.edu

EDUCATION

Chicago-Kent College of Law, Chicago, IL

Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2013

Public Interest Law Certificate

- Dean's List, Fall 2010
- Kent Justice Foundation, Auction Co-Chair 2012
- National Lawyers Guild

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science and Spanish, May 2010

- National Immigration Project, Volunteer 2008 - 2009
- Boston College Advocates for the Community, Treasurer 2007 - 2008
- Marquette University Study Abroad Program at University of Madrid, Summer 2008

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Intern, May 2012 – Present

- Assist in representing low-income clients in landlord-tenant disputes
- Perform client interviews
- Draft pleadings and discovery requests
- Create brochures for local community on their rights under Section VIII
- Research numerous issues related to the American Disabilities Act

Macomb County Public Defender's Office, Macomb, GA

Summer Intern, May 2011 – August 2011

- Researched criminal procedure and wrote legal memoranda for state criminal law cases
- Interviewed clients and witnesses to obtain and verify case facts
- Assisted attorneys in the preparation for sexual assault trial

Legal Services Center, Boston, MA

Legal Intern, January 2010 – July 2010

- Assisted low-income Spanish-speaking clients with legal immigration matters
- Prepared legal documents for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Haitian Refugee Project, Miami, FL

Interviewer, May 2009 – September 2009

- Interviewed and prepared applications of persons seeking political asylum

LANGUAGES

- Fluent in Spanish; Proficient in French

ALLY McBEAL
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Chicago, Illinois 60600
312.555.1212
amcbeal@kentlaw.iit.edu

EDUCATION

IIT CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW, Chicago, IL
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2015

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA, Urbana, IL
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, May 2012

GPA: 3.26/4.0

- Future Attorneys of America, 2008 – 2010
- Illini Marching Band, 2008 – 2012
- Kappa Kappa Gamma, 2009 – 2010

EXPERIENCE

BENNIGAN'S RESTAURANT, Chicago, IL
Server, May 2012 – August 2012

- Increased sales by aggressively promoting specials
- Assisted management with training and supervision of new employees

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA, Urbana, IL
Cafeteria Worker, 2009 – 2012

- Helped finance undergraduate education with employment
- Trained new workers and assisted customers

MARIMETA CAMP FOR GIRLS, Eagle River, WI
Camp Supervisor, May – August 2009, 2010

- Supervised four counselors and evaluated their performance
- Assisted camp director with parent conferences
- Coordinated overnight camping trips for 50 girls

Camp Counselor, May 2008 – August 2008

- Responsible for welfare of ten adolescent girls
- Wrote and edited weekly newsletter

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Habitat for Humanity, Fundraiser and House Builder, 2010 – 2011

Ronald McDonald House, “Big Sister” and Fundraiser, 2009 – 2011

Volunteer Illini Projects, Worked for a variety of children's organizations, 2008 – 2010

INTERESTS

- Triathlon training, French cuisine, Motown music, photography

Cover Letters

A cover letter, the complement to your resume, serves multiple purposes. Cover letters introduce you to employers, provide employers with a means of evaluating your written communication skills, function as an instrument for you to expound on information included on your resume (and to discuss experience and/or background that does not appear on your resume), and allow you to request interviews with potential employers.

The ideal cover letter is **no longer than one (1) page** and consists of 3-4 paragraphs: introduction, body, and closing. It should be formatted like a standard business letter and printed on the same high-quality paper you use for your resume. You should also include the same “heading” or “letterhead” from your resume (including your name and personal contact information) at the top of your cover letter.

For your cover letter to be effective, you need three key ingredients: investigation, individuality, and impeccable writing.

- **Investigation.** Research the firm or organization. The Career Services Office can provide you with a wealth of resources to conduct research on various employers. Part of your investigation will be to determine to whom you should address your cover letter. If a job posting does not specify a contact at a firm/organization, call that firm/organization and ask for a contact name to ensure that your cover letter is sent to the correct person.
- **Individuality.** Use the information you find about the firm or organization to tailor your background and interests to the employer’s needs and specific law practice. Explain to the employer why s/he should consider you for a position in the firm or organization. Avoid the pitfalls of sharing what you hope to personally gain from working at the firm or of telling the firm contact why that firm is a great place to work. Instead, put yourself in the place of the employer and ask the pertinent question: “What do I have to offer that would be of benefit to the firm or organization?”
- **Impeccable writing.** Demonstrate your strong writing skills by conveying your thoughts in concise, comprehensible sentences, written with correct grammar and spelling. Make sure to proofread your cover letter several times before submitting it.

DATE, ADDRESS BLOCK AND SALUTATION

Include the date at the **top left** of your cover letter, under your “heading” (name and contact information). Address your letter to the person in charge of hiring or to the name included in the job posting. Include that person’s name, job title, and contact information (address) in an “address block” at the **top left** of your cover letter. As noted above, if you do not know who the contact person is, call the firm or organization and ask for his/her name. Make sure that the spelling of the individual’s name, firm or organization, and job title are correct. The salutation of your cover letter should not include a first name, and it should end in a **colon, not a comma**.

For example, if the hiring partner's name on the job posting is "Rebecca Smith," your salutation should be "Dear Ms. Smith:" not "Dear Ms. Rebecca Smith,".

FIRST PARAGRAPH: *THE INTRODUCTION*

The goal of the first paragraph of the cover letter is to capture the employer's attention, giving him/her reason to continue reading the remainder of your letter. Think of your first paragraph as an opening statement that should hook the reader into reading more.

Within this paragraph, first state **who you are** (state your year/position in law school, but do not write "Hello, my name is..."). Next, write **your purpose for writing to the employer**. Generally, there are three situations that would prompt you to send a resume and a cover letter to an employer:

- **Referral.** If you obtained the employer's name through a contact who is well known to the employer or to the organization, mention his/her name in the first paragraph. "Mr. John Smith recommended that I contact you about an associate position in the litigation department of your firm." Make sure, however, that your contact gives you permission to use his/her name in your letter before sending it to the prospective employer.
- **Job Posting/Advertisement.** When responding to a job posting or advertisement, indicate what position you are seeking and from where you found out about the opening. "I am a second-year student at Chicago-Kent College of Law and I am very interested in the Law Clerk position that was posted on the Career Services Office website."
- **Targeted Mailing.** If you were not recommended by a contact, and you did not find out about a position through a posting, then you are sending an unsolicited resume and cover letter to an employer for whom you would like to work. Perhaps this employer is an alumnus from Chicago-Kent. (For more information on how to contact or target alumni, please see the CSO "Networking" and "Informational Interviews" guides.) In this first paragraph, you should introduce yourself as a Chicago-Kent law student and indicate the type of position for which you are applying. Most often, the best opening statement for a cover letter of this sort mentions your strongest qualification or the one most related to the prospective employer. Here, research plays an even greater role in the effectiveness of the cover letter than in the previous two situations. "I am a second-year student at Chicago-Kent College of Law with a strong interest and extensive academic training in labor law. I am eager to put my skills to work and I would like to pursue a law clerk position at your firm." - or, better yet - "After reading the July issue of the *ABA Journal* I was very intrigued by your recent work with the Teamsters Union Local 705. I am a second year law student at Chicago-Kent College of Law and I am currently pursuing a Certificate in the Labor and Employment Program. I have a strong interest in labor issues and I would welcome the opportunity to work with you as a law clerk."

Finally, at the end of your first paragraph, include a **“hook” sentence** that will captivate the employer and make the employer want to read more about you. This sentence should summarize the key skills and experiences you have to offer the employer.

BODY PARAGRAPH(S): *THE MEAT AND POTATOES*

The second paragraph (and third, if necessary) reveals information about yourself and how it relates to the needs of the employer. Your research of the firm or organization is significant at this point for it provides you with a means to link your background to the law practice. You can highlight and elaborate on things mentioned in your resume, or discuss experiences that are more suitable for a cover letter than a resume, such as your plans to move to the city in which the employer is located or high grades in a particular course. You should also discuss your key skills you may offer the employer, such as strong legal research and writing skills, your previous experiences with client contact or your knowledge of a particular practice area.

Keep in mind that employers are looking for the quality, not necessarily the quantity, of your background, so choose the skills, experience and background you will discuss with care. Remember to keep your cover letter concise, and draft a cover letter as you would draft a piece of legal writing: use topic sentences, transitions and concluding sentences to create a clear flow in your letter. Also, vary sentence construction and length to keep the reader engaged in your message.

While writing the body paragraphs of the cover letter, it is important to ***present supporting evidence***. If you state in your cover letter, “I have extensive experience working with public interest organizations” or “I have strong legal research skills,” make sure that you support the statement with specific examples. Anyone can profess, “I have excellent communication skills.” However, not everyone can continue by stating, “As a manager for ABC Ltd., I prepared instructional materials and facilitated 3-day training workshops for groups of 5 to 50 supervisors.” Provide enough evidence to illustrate your statement, but avoid the temptation to reiterate every entry on your resume. Remember the key ingredient of individuality; make the cover letter your own.

LAST PARAGRAPH: *THE CLOSING*

The last paragraph is a direct request for a personal interview. “I would be pleased to discuss further details of my legal background in a personal interview.” - or - “I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss how my background might fit your needs.” Make it easy for the employer to schedule a meeting, and thank the employer contact for his/her time.

FOLLOW UP

If you have not heard from the employer after waiting 10-14 days for a response, you may write to him/her again and repeat your interest, asking if you can provide additional information. Sometimes, following up with a phone call is more successful. Call the person to whom you wrote and ask him/her if you can meet and talk about your qualifications and how they might contribute to the firm or organization. If you are asked to submit a writing sample, offer to drop it off so that you have an opportunity to meet the prospective employer in person. Do not wait for the firm to come to you: ***Be assertive!***

10 COMMON COVER LETTER ERRORS

1. **Addressing the cover letter to “Dear Sir or Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern.”** You should address your cover letter to a specific person at the hiring firm or organization. Make every attempt to research and obtain the name and spelling of the hiring partner, recruiting manager or human resources manager.
2. **Using an incorrect firm name or contact name.** Double check that you are addressing a cover letter to the correct employer. Make sure employer name is correct in the address block and in the text of the letter.
3. **Sending a generic cover letter to several firms or companies.** Make sure to address the firm or organization and its needs specifically. Tailor each cover letter to the specific job description.
4. **Writing “My name is” at the beginning of your cover letter.** Your name will appear in your heading at the top of the page, on your resume, and under your signature. There is no need to introduce yourself by name in the text of the letter as well.
5. **Saying “I believe” or “I feel.”** Do not tell the employer that you *believe* or *feel* that you would be a perfect fit for the job. Instead, show the employer that you are a perfect fit by explaining your relevant skills and experiences, and let the employer conclude that you would be a good candidate for the job.
6. **Beginning all sentences with *I*.** Avoid overuse of personal pronouns. Do not use *I* at the beginning of every sentence.
7. **Telling the employer what the employer can do for you.** You should instead explain what you can do for the employer.
8. **Rambling on.** Use clear, concise language to engage the reader and to briefly communicate your skills and experiences.
9. **Not paying attention to details and spelling.** Make sure to proofread your cover letter to catch all typos and misspellings. Remember, spell check is not enough.
10. **Forgetting to sign your cover letter.** If submitting your cover letter in paper format (via regular mail), make sure to sign the letter to show that you pay attention to detail.

Sample Cover Letter Format Appears Below

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your Name Here

Your Address Here • Chicago, IL 60601 • 312/555-5555 • youremailhere@kentlaw.iit.edu

Date

Contact Name
Contact Title
Organization Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name of Contact:

Opening Paragraph: Introduce yourself with your law school and class year. State why you are writing/what position you want. Mention your specific interest in and/or experience that relates to the employer and/or position. If in a different city than you currently live in, mention your connection to the city.

Qualifications and Statement of Interest Paragraph: Statement of your qualifications and why you are interested in this organization. Tell the employer about you, how you will meet the employer's needs; describe your skills, experience and strengths. Don't focus on why the organization would be a great place to work—they already know that.

Additional Statement of Interest/Qualifications Paragraph: If warranted by your experience or education, qualifications.

Closing Paragraph: Closing statement. State the action you plan to take (e.g., that you welcome the opportunity to discuss your qualifications in further detail; that you look forward to hearing from them; or, that you will be in the area on particular dates and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with someone from the organization at that time, etc.). Finally, thank them for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature

Your Name

Enclosure(s)

SAMPLE REFERENCE LIST FORMAT

ALLY McBEAL
1545 Scarlett Street
Chicago, Illinois 60600
312.555.1212
amcbeal@kentlaw.iit.edu

References

Professor Marcia L. McCormick
Visiting Assistant Professor of Law
Chicago-Kent College of Law
Illinois Institute of Technology
565 West Adams, Room 717
Chicago, IL 60661
(312) 906-5000
mmccormi@kentlaw.iit.edu

*Earned an “A” in Professor McCormick’s Legal Writing I course.

Ms. Samantha Jones
Director
Marimeta Camp for Girls
1500 Rural Road
Eagle River, WI 54521
(715) 555-0000

*Ms. Jones was my direct supervisor at Marimeta Camp for Girls during Summers 2006 – 2007.

Dr. Carl Jung
Professor of Psychology
University of Illinois
603 East Daniel Street
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 333-0631
cjung@uiuc.edu

*Professor Jung was my undergraduate advisor and my supervisor for the Department Honors Thesis program.

SAMPLE UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT FORMAT

JOHN DOE

123 Main St. • Chicago, IL 60601 • 312/555-5555 • jdoe123@kentlaw.iit.edu

John Doe
Unofficial Transcript
Chicago-Kent College of Law
Class Year: 2L
Graduation Date: May 2015

Fall 2012:

Course:	Credits:	Grade
Contracts	5	B+
Torts	5	B
Criminal Law	3	B+
Legal Writing I	3	A

Fall 2012 GPA: **3.411/4.0**

Spring 2013:

Course:	Credits:	Grade
Civil Procedure	5	A
Property	4	A-
Legislative Process	3	B+
Legal Writing II	2	A

Spring 2013 GPA: **3.29/4.0**

Cumulative GPA as of Spring 2013: **3.373/4.0**

Class Rank: 74/296, Top 25%