

THE JOHN MARSHALL LAW SCHOOL CAREER SERVICES JOB SEARCH GUIDE

OTHER APPLICATION MATERIALS

REFERENCES

Create a separate reference sheet with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of 3 - 4 references. The reference sheet should have the same heading (name, address and phone number) as your resume and be on the same paper stock. Bring the reference sheet to your interviews.

Choose references that can speak to your ability to perform well in a legal job. Professors, former employers, and supervisors are good people to ask for references. If you are in your first year, undergraduate professors are acceptable references.

Personal references, such as family friends or relatives, are not appropriate references

SAMPLE

Ima Student
315 S. Plymouth Court, Apt. 222
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 987-1402

REFERENCES

Professor Abraham Lincoln
(Legal Writing Professor)
The John Marshall Law School
315 South Plymouth Court
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 427-2737

The Honorable Ben Franklin
Cook County Circuit Court
Daley Center, Room 1107
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 123-4567

Ms. Outta Paper
Burrie Them & Paper
77 West Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 411-0999

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TRANSCRIPTS

At some point before you are hired, an employer will probably ask for a law school transcript. A photocopy of an unofficial transcript is fine unless the employer specifically asks for an official transcript. Patent law students should also expect to be asked for their undergraduate transcripts.

An unofficial John Marshall transcript costs \$5.00. To get a copy, fill out a transcript request form available in the Records Office (3rd floor). Allow 72 hours at the beginning and end of a semester and 48 hours during other times.

You may also obtain copies of your transcript in the Career Services Office during the fall semester free of charge. Once you have an unofficial copy, you may make as many photocopies as you wish.

WRITING SAMPLES

Similar to being asked for a transcript, it is likely that during the interview process an employer will ask you for a writing sample. A writing sample should highlight your legal reasoning and analytical skills. Keep in mind these points when choosing a writing sample:

- ❖ A Writing Sample should highlight your legal reasoning and analytical skills. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your legal abilities. In the end, your goal is to provide the best evidence of the skills you possess.
- ❖ Unless an employer indicates otherwise, a Writing Sample should be 5-12 pages long. Often first year students use a memorandum from their legal writing class which is usually longer than 12 pages. Employers understand that first year students may not have shorter writing samples available yet.
- ❖ You may include a Cover Sheet that provides to the reader context regarding the sample. Matters to address on the Cover Sheet include:
 - Original purpose of the Writing Sample
 - When and for whom the sample was originally written
 - If the Writing Sample is an excerpt, the nature of the larger document and the context of the excerpt
- If confidential information has been redacted, explain the nature of what was redacted (*e.g.*, all party names have been redacted)
- ❖ You may want to use a recent Lawyering Skills memo/brief or a moot court brief; current works will most likely reflect your best legal analysis and writing skills. Ideally, your Writing Sample will be less than *two* years old.
- ❖ Typos, poor grammar, incorrect citation form, and inaccurate citations can and will be used against you. Your Writing Sample should reflect your best writing ability in all ways. Use the law school's excellent Writing Resource Center for any assistance you seek regarding writing issues.
- ❖ You may find that to best demonstrate your legal writing and analytical skills, you need to excerpt the legal analysis section of a larger sample. When doing so, remember to describe the nature of the larger document on the Cover Sheet, as well as the context of the analysis.
- ❖ If you use a brief or other writing taken from a job or externship, you must obtain permission from your supervisor and redact any confidential information (including blacking out party names). The Cover Sheet should note that information has been redacted.
- ❖ If using a Writing Sample from Lawyering Skills or from any other source where comments may have been added, *do not submit a copy with comments on it.* Rather, make revisions, proofread, and then submit.
- ❖ When possible, provide to the employer a Writing Sample that demonstrates your ability to practice law in an area of interest to the employer. For example, if you are applying to work for the Environmental Protection Agency, a Writing Sample concerning environmental law may be useful.
- ❖ Some employers have specific Writing Sample guidelines, either described in their job posting or on their website. Make sure the Writing Sample you submit adheres to such guidelines (*e.g.*, The City of Chicago Department of Law has its own specific guidelines).
- ❖ Do not use a Writing Sample that was co-authored

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Remember: Your Writing Sample is an employer's first impression of the work product.

WRITING SAMPLE COVER SHEET

Sally Student

123 W. Generic Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640, 773.555.5555, 5student@stu.jmls.edu

The attached writing sample was originally written as the final appellate brief for Lawyering Skills II. The argument presented was in support of *Senior* (the appellee) that summary judgment was proper when it is clear and free from doubt that *Junior* (the appellant) failed to satisfy his unconditional obligation to pay a demand note to *Senior*.

Senior and *Junior* entered into a lease agreement for an auto body shop that *Senior* owned and operated. The lease further provided that *Senior* would loan \$500,000 to *Junior* without interest for a five-year term. The lease was amended to indicate that *Senior* loaned an additional \$250,000 to *Junior* for a total amount of \$750,000 and to be payable on demand. Disputes arose between *Senior* and *Junior* as to the lease agreement. *Senior* made written demand for the payment of the \$750,000. *Junior's* failure to make that payment was the subject of this lawsuit.

The attached excerpt of the appellate brief addresses the following positions:

- Summary judgment is proper where it is clear and free from doubt that the demand note was an unconditional obligation that *Junior* failed to satisfy;
- There was no genuine issue of material fact that the demand note and lease agreement were separate obligations; and
- *Junior's* affidavit in response to summary judgment was improper under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 191.

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THANK YOU LETTERS

A short thank you letter should be mailed within 24 hours of an interview to every person with whom you interviewed. If this is not practical (if you interviewed with 10 people) at least send a letter to the contact person, the hiring attorney, the partner you would be reporting to if hired, and any other person who made a special effort to help you secure an interview (e.g., a John Marshall alumnus).

Vary the wording if you interviewed with several people since they will all end up in your file. Also, be sure to personalize the letter and try to mention topics you discussed with the person during your interview. The thank you letter is a final way to sell yourself to a future employer and to confirm your continued interest in the position.

Thank you letters can be typed or handwritten (provided you have good, legible handwriting, and it is put on a simple, professional card). Do not send your thank you letter via e-mail.

And don't forget to proofread, proofread, proofread.

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SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

315 S. Plymouth Court, #405
Chicago, Illinois 60604

September 14, 2004

Ms. Hope Keeler
Keeler & Waite
Sears Tower, Suite 1213
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Ms. Keeler:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you concerning your employment needs. I enjoyed learning the facets of your firm's services and functions. I think that my knowledge and understanding of the many areas of taxation and interest in the market economy would enable me to contribute substantially to your firm's service to its clients.

If you need transcripts, a fall class schedule, more writing samples, or recommendations, please feel free to contact me. I remain very interested in the position and would be able to begin as soon as October 1st. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ima Student