Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Clerkship Applications

For complete information about application procedures please review the Judicial Clerkship Handbook.

Paper Applications:

Q: Which documents do I need to print on “resume” paper?
A: Your resume and cover letter can be printed on “resume” paper. Your transcript(s) and writing sample(s) can be printed on plain white copy paper.

Q: Should my writing sample be single- or double-spaced?
A: We recommend double-spacing your writing sample unless you’re submitting a published paper.

Q: Should I include the transcript addendum with my unofficial transcript?
A: Yes.

Q: Do I need to add my recommendation letters to my packets before mailing?
A: No. You can send your applications without recommendation letters inside. You should state in the cover letter that the recommendation letters will follow under separate cover. We will notify you when we receive your recommendation letters, and you should instruct us to mail them directly to chambers.

Q: In what order should I have my paper applications when I come to compile (stuff my recommendation letters into my applications) at JCO?
A: Your applications should be in envelopes alphabetized by judge’s last name. The recommendation letters are printed and returned to us in alphabetical order so it’s easier for you to stuff your applications if your envelopes are already in alphabetical order.

Q: In what order should my documents be when I insert them into the envelope?
A: We suggest you clip together the pieces of your application in the following order: cover letter, resume, transcript and transcript addendum (law and then undergraduate, if requested), and writing sample.

Q: For paper applications, how will we know whether the judge likes getting an undergraduate transcript or an official transcript? If the judge is not on OSCAR, we don’t know his/her preferences.
A: You should check OSCAR for this information. If the judge has not posted information on OSCAR then send a “standard” application which includes a cover letter, resume, law school transcript, 3 recommendation letters, and a writing sample.
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Q: What do I do if I want to apply to judges who require paper applications?
A: Please send Jim Nesbitt (james.nesbitt@nyu.edu) an Excel spreadsheet with the names of the judges for whom you need paper recommendation letters. You should also prepare complete paper applications for these judges. If you need to request additional paper recommendation letters, please send Jim another Excel spreadsheet with only the names of the new judges.

OSCAR Applications:

Q: What should I put in OSCAR grade description field?
A: There is a plain text version of the Transcript Addendum on CSM under the "Clerkships" tab. You can copy and paste the document into the OSCAR law grade sheet field called "Grading System Description:". Please note that the addendum was updated and the most up-to-date version is on CSM.

Q: Should I create an OSCAR grade sheet for my undergraduate transcript and include it in my applications?
A: You only need to include the undergraduate grade sheet if a judge requests it. Many judges require an undergraduate grade sheet, so it makes sense to create on in case you need it.

Q: What is the purpose of the “other grade sheet” on OSCAR?
A: The "other grade sheet" is used for graduate school (non-law school) transcripts.

Q: I uploaded a resume and created an application (by attaching my resume and selecting my recommenders) for all of the judges on my list who are accepting online applications. Is this all I need to do in order to allow my recommenders to post their letters?
A: Yes. Your recommenders’ assistants can now post the recommendation letter to the applications you created.

Q: Do I have to finalize the applications I created before recommenders can attach their letters?
A: No. Simply creating an application in draft format (resume and recommenders’ names is all you need) allows the recommenders’ assistants to post the recommendation letters. Finalizing your application releases it to the judge. **Make sure all your documents are in final form before finalizing an application.**

Q: Some judges have multiple positions listed on OSCAR. Should I apply to each position or just to one?
A: If you are not approaching your limit of 100 online applications then we recommend that you apply to all positions listed for the term you are interested in. It is possible that a judge might download only the applications submitted to one of the positions listed. If you are close to your limit of 100 online applications then we recommend you apply to only one of the positions posted for the judge.
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Q: Some judges list the positions as filled that were open when I was creating my list of judges. Should I still send paper applications to these judges and hope that they are hiring for future terms?
A: Yes, you may send paper to these judge. It’s likely the judges have filled their positions, but it is possible one position is still available or they may hire for the following term.

Q: Some judges have no information listed on OSCAR. Can I still send them paper applications?
A: Yes. It’s possible the judge is not hiring, but you can send a paper application.

Q: Some judges do not use OSCAR at all (judges whose names appear in gray because they do not have an OSCAR profile). What is the best way to find out whether those judges are accepting law clerks?
A: You can call chambers directly and ask if the judge is accepting applications.

Q: If a judge accepts online and paper applications should we plan to apply to those judges on paper or should we just apply to them online?
A: You can select the application method that you prefer.

Q: I looked at the completed application on OSCAR just now, and it looks like the cover sheet already includes the phone numbers/email addresses of the recommenders. Is it necessary/helpful to include them again on the cover letter -- which appears on the following page?
A: Yes. Not all recommenders have the phone number listed in the database of recommenders on OSCAR. To be sure that judges have the information, it’s best to include it in your cover letter.