



PLAN AHEAD FOR “FALL” RECRUITING SEASON 2018 Grads/1Ls & 2017 Grads/2Ls

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWING (OCI)

Important OCI Dates (with more detail on page 2):

- OCI bidding opens Monday, July 11, 2016
- RSVP for and attend OCI Employer Reception (August 3, 5-6:30 p.m.)
- OCI bidding closes at noon on Friday, August 5, 2016
- OCI interviews begin Tuesday, August 16, 2016

What is it?

This is the process through which typically large firms who can afford this elaborate process, and can anticipate hiring needs well in advance, recruit new attorneys. There are also a handful of smaller firms and government employers through this process, so it's not *just* large firms. OCI takes place during the fall at schools nationwide, and it came about because these large employers have natural attrition each year and consequently need to keep a constant flow of new attorneys coming to the firm. Rather than have each employer work on a separate schedule, they all come to recruit at the same time at law schools nationwide to streamline the process. While a few “exception to the rule” employers may be looking for clerks to start immediately and to work throughout the school year (mainly government employers and smaller firms), most are recruiting students during the fall to work the following summer in what amounts to a try-out period; if all goes well, for those employers students generally will receive an offer shortly after the summer to join the employer the following fall (after graduation and taking the bar) as an associate attorney. While these employers will hire “lateral attorneys” to fill 2-3+ year associate positions, with a few exceptions, this is generally the **only** way these large firms fill entry-level positions.

The OCI firms are typically recruiting for the firm in general, as opposed to a specific department within the firm. (The specific department is often determined at or after the time of the ultimate offer, assuming one is made, following the summer.) While some of these employers allow students to stay on part-time as a “winter clerk” after the summer, that is not generally an expectation or guarantee. Therefore, the focus of this process for many employers is for summer, leading to post-graduate, employment. Consequently, you market yourself a little differently for these opportunities than you do for discrete law clerk job postings such as those usually found in the Symplicity job bank.

The big firm OCI opportunity essentially only comes around once in your law school career, so it's not something you can say you will put off until next year and try then; the 2L and 3L employers are entirely different.

Who is Eligible?

In these processes, the employers will often refer to 2Ls or 3Ls, but here is what they mean by that:
2L = 2018 graduate (or someone in their second-to-last year of school – August 2017, January 2018, and May 2018 grads)

3L = 2017 graduate (or someone in their last year of school; January 2017, May 2017 Grads)

Who comes on campus?

You will find out who is coming on campus as we do because we will post the specific employers in Symplicity, as they register, under the OCI tab. (For now – spring -- you must temporarily change your year in school within your Symplicity profile to see employers, since the year in school corresponds to your year in school for the 2016-17 academic year. Don't forget to change it back after you peek!) Many, and mainly the large firms, will sign up early on. Others, typically the government employers and the smaller firms, may not sign up until the fall interviewing is already underway. *Pointer: 3Ls, it is a huge mistake to check out the employers in June or July or August and never again. The employers who sign up later in the process often have less competition and offer wonderful opportunities. People who pass over those employers in the fall often regret it later in the spring when a classmate got that job and they are still looking.

Is it the same for both 2 and 3Ls?

No! 2L hiring is largely, although not exclusively, large firms or government employers. 3L hiring is normally smaller firms, often outside of the metro (Eau Claire, St. Cloud, Mankato, etc.) so it's often a very different situation. In the past, many firms would interview every 3L who applied! That's very different than the 2L process, in which it is more competitive.

What/who are they looking for?

They often list requirements in terms of class rank. While it's frustrating to the many otherwise qualified students who don't meet the rigid criteria, there's no way around the fact that these employers tend to interview (and for some, even only accept resumes from) the top students (according to rank) in the class. While there are always exceptions, the traditional OCI employers tend to interview students in the top 15-50% of the class with law review/journal and/or moot court experience.

Others, such as some of the judges, government employers, or smaller firms, may have more relaxed criteria. Intellectual Property firms will look for (and often require) certain technical degrees. Some, but not most, employers will require interest in certain substantive areas. Some will want a commitment to their geographic area (particularly if they're outside of the metro).

The criteria will vary from employer to employer, and some employers may make exceptions to their preferred criteria if you otherwise fit their needs (distinctive experience, etc.) so you should look in Symplicity to see what firms will be looking for this year (as the information comes in). **Do not rely on the rumor mill, and remember the only guarantee is that if you do not apply, you will not get the job.**

Beyond the threshold requirements, the large firms (much like most private firms) are typically looking for someone interested in working with them; in making a commitment to that particular geographic area (so they can keep that person long enough to recoup their substantial investment); someone flexible enough to work in any one of several practice areas to begin with; someone who appreciates the business of law (how a law firm operates and your place within that structure; the billable hour and rainmaking concepts); someone who is personable and therefore able to work well with others in the firm, clients, and opposing counsel or other members of the bar; and someone willing to work very hard and to be "invested" in the business.

Important upcoming dates:

If you read this handout, you have the information you need to understand the expectations, policies, and deadlines associated with OCI. You must upload an OCI Participation Agreement **at the time of bidding**, indicating that you understand and agree to abide by all said rules, procedures, and expectations.

For the first group of employers (anyone who has signed up as an employer for an interview schedule by July 8, 2016), **student bidding (applying) will open in Symplicity at 8:00am on Monday, July 11, 2016**, and application materials will need to be uploaded into Symplicity and **all bidding must be completed by 12:00 noon on Friday, August 5, 2016. * NOTE THIS DEADLINE OCCURS BEFORE FALL SEMESTER BEGINS.** After this, the employers will review the resumes and select interviewees. Applicants will be notified if they have received an interview via the OCI module in Symplicity. Some employers choose within days, some wait until just before they interview. Applicants need to be extremely flexible. Applicants may have to miss work and/or class to interview.

Other employers, who sign up after the first round of bidding starts (after July 8th) to interview this fall will have later deadlines for submitting materials, corresponding with their later interview dates. Therefore, the bulk of the deadlines are 12:00 p.m., Friday, August 5, 2016, but you want to keep monitoring offerings and deadlines throughout the fall.

We will host an **OCI Employer Happy Hour on Wednesday, August 3 from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. (RSVP in Symplicity)**. If you plan to participate in OCI, you will want to come to this **reception** to meet representatives from several of the OCI employers. Not only will this help you tweak or tailor your cover letters, it's their first chance to meet you. Each year we get phone calls following the reception saying, "Be sure to add [Jane Doe] to our interview schedule; we were very impressed by her." Even if you decide not to go through OCI right now, this reception will afford you the chance to learn about firms to which you may decide to apply as a lateral down the road, so it is open to everyone. We will update employers expected at this reception in the event listing in Symplicity on an ongoing basis.

We will provide an opportunity for you participate in OCI Mock Interviews – we strongly suggest participating to best prepare (stay tuned for further details and sign up under the Symplicity Events tab). All students should work with their Career Advisor via e-mail or in person to tailor their materials and prepare for OCI.

On-campus **interviews are currently scheduled to begin** on Tuesday, **August 16, 2016** (most will take place by the end of the following week, but others will take place throughout the fall).

(*All dates are subject to change – we'll keep you posted! Check Symplicity for event dates; check the OCI Tab in Symplicity for employers and deadlines)

After their on-campus interviews, most employers will choose to **call back** a much smaller number of students for a second interview at the firm/employer. These interviews are scheduled directly between the employer and student, take place at the employer's place of business, and typically last a half-day. Firms typically extend offers to those in whom they're interested following these callbacks.

So why do you care about all of this right now?

As you can see, everything happens *very* quickly in the "fall" (which is really summer for the rest of

the world); **the deadline to apply is before school starts!** To make your life easier, to understand who these employers are and whether they're for you, look in Symplicity throughout the summer to see what employers are coming. Then go to the employer web sites and/or the information they include in the NALP Directory (www.nalpdirectory.com), if applicable. Look at their culture, their areas of practice, their clientele, the bios of who works there, etc. Read the articles posted throughout their site. Try to ascertain what they are looking for in an attorney, and how you can best present yourself in that light.

Interesting in Moving out of Minnesota?

OCI is a very costly process for employers (think of the billable hours they're losing to go on campuses all over the place)! Therefore, they will often limit the number of schools they visit. Many firms are very open to looking at students from other schools, however. If you are interested in working in any other state, you should plan **ahead** this summer and contact those firms by **June** to see when it would be appropriate to submit your resume. East Coast schools tend to start interviewing in July or early August (long before school even starts)! If you wait until September, all their positions will be filled (or the process will at least be too far underway for you to catch up).

You can find these firms through the NALP Directory of Legal Employers www.nalpdirectory.com. As with the Minnesota firms, OCI is virtually the **only** way these firms fill entry-level positions, so if this is where you want to be you must apply through this process. Talk to us **now** or early in the summer for more information if you plan to go out of state.

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

Another consideration as you're a "rising 2L" (2018 grad) or a "rising 3L" (2017 grad) is judicial clerkships.

Federal courts and state appellate courts typically hire post-grad clerks in advance. State district courts (Hennepin County, Ramsey County, for example), on the other hand, typically hire post-grad clerks just as the clerks are ready to start work (i.e., close to or following graduation). Therefore, you start keeping an eye on this process going into your second year, and definitely going into your last year, but this could also continue following graduation, for different courts.

Federal Clerkships

If you are a 2018 grad, this summer is your time to start considering federal courts. If you are a 2017 grad, keep monitoring OSCAR for opportunities and apply as soon as positions are posted.

What you need to do if you plan to pursue a federal clerkship is research which judges are hiring when. Go to: www.oscar.uscourts.gov. "OSCAR" is a system much like Symplicity. You need to register for an account. Once in, you go to "Judges" to search judges.

You will be looking for judges hiring for the "term" in which you're available. So, if you're a 2017 grad, search or look out for judges hiring for terms such as "2017-2019." (Note most federal judges hire for 2-year terms, but they may have other arrangements, as described within the system and seen in their commentary boxes that show up when you search.)

Not all judges advertise through OSCAR. If you compare a list of judges in any given district (the

District of Minnesota, for example), from the district court's own web site, with the list of judges for that district in OSCAR, and some are not in OSCAR, then you may have to further explore the hiring practices of the missing judge or judges. Some judges have "career clerks" or have otherwise hired so far in advance they don't have a need. You should always check if it's unclear, though; nothing ventured, nothing gained. (Don't call if the judge is listed in OSCAR but simply doesn't have a current posting, however; if they're in there, they use OSCAR when they have a need. If there's no posting, they don't have a need.)

You should also know that even judges with OSCAR postings often bypass all of those applications and hire someone recommended outside of the process, or met through networking. Therefore, in addition to going through the formal channels, you should work with us to identify and pursue networking avenues and alert us to your interest in clerking.

Not all judges found in OSCAR collect application materials in the same manner. Some have you apply online through OSCAR, as you do through Symplicity for our job postings. Others advertise in OSCAR but prefer to have you send hard copies to chambers. You'll want to pay close attention to all of these details, of course. (*Pointer: Applying by hard copy can yield a job too, and it may even increase your odds.)

Judges can and do add to this system on a rolling basis. If you're interested in a federal clerkship, keep checking until graduation (or after – many positions are filled by grads). **If you so choose as you register for your account, you can have the system notify you as new postings are added.**

For any opportunities of interest to you, or as you prepare for those inevitably coming, prepare your materials early. Tailor your resume to judicial clerkships. Research judges. Most of all, **consider who you want to write letters of recommendation for you, and put those prospective recommenders on notice ASAP (now).** (You need actual letters of recommendation, not just names of references, for judicial clerkships.) Many professors are gone for the summer, or are checking their emails more sporadically when school is not in session. Many employers are busy or are on their own family vacations.

If you plan to apply for a federal judicial clerkship, connect with your professors and employers now, this spring, to give them notice that you may need to get a letter. See if they're willing to write a recommendation. Tell them the type of position you'll be looking for. Talk about your interest in a clerkship so they can write the strongest recommendation. **Find out how to best reach them this summer and how much turn-around time they'll need.**

From a timing perspective, it's important to note that for applications going through OSCAR, you must get to the stage of actually "draft" applying for a particular judge before you can even have a letter of recommendation added to that application. (In other words, it's not like in Symplicity where you upload all of your documents, attach them, and you're done.) When you first log into OSCAR you can choose recommenders, but they're essentially just going into a "favorites" list for you – nothing else happens. Then, when you build an application for particular judges and attach your cover letter, resume, etc., *at that point* you again actually select your recommender, choosing from that list of recommender names you previously created. At that point, the OSCAR system automatically emails that recommender notifying them that your application is waiting now for their letter. In other words, start early! The recommendation cannot even be attached until *after* you do your part.

It will be up to you to keep monitoring the file and communicating with your recommenders until everything is complete. With that said, if your recommender has been put on notice to anticipate this, he or she can be ready to go and can attach the letter almost immediately; hence, early contact and communication with recommenders is key! (In fact, you can have them send the letter to us, and we will hold on to it and attach it to the application when ready. We are copied on these letter of recommendation requests.) You will be able to monitor within OSCAR whether the recommendation has been attached. When it has, (or if you can no longer wait), you go back in and “finalize” your application, at which point it is ready to be released to judges. (You can make updates to finalized applications once letters come in, as well, as long as the position is still open.)

Another thing to note about the application process is you need to have a “Grade Sheet” as opposed to a transcript. And this is an interactive form you need to fill out online, not something you upload. Therefore, this can be a little time-consuming; start early with anything you can do now. Just don’t “finalize” your application until just before the deadline. That way, you can keep working on it but make changes.

Minnesota Supreme Court and Minnesota Court of Appeals

The Minnesota Supreme Court and Court of Appeals recruit students for post-grad positions in the spring and summer before the students’ last year of law school. The **application deadlines are April 1, 2016 for the Minnesota Supreme Court and August 1, 2016, for the Minnesota Court of Appeals** for positions commencing in August of 2017. See www.mncourts.gov for more information. The positions are also posted in the Symplicity job bank (Jobs 9227 and 9383).

Letters of Recommendation are optional for these courts, but basically you always want to provide everything you can. (Always remember, *literally* mandatory, and *if you want to get a job* mandatory, are two different things. Employers measure enthusiasm and hard work and aren’t particularly turned on by applicants demonstrating a preference for doing the bare minimum.) Plan to submit letters of recommendation if you plan to apply. Follow the advice above on getting recommenders on board now (before school is out), and keep in mind with these earlier deadlines, you probably want to **notify your recommenders as soon as possible** so you can finalize your applications accounting for any glitches by the deadline.

Many Justices and Judges do not take part in the group application process and instead hire on their own time frames through their own processes. Therefore, if you are interested in clerking for these courts you may also want to engage in self-initiated contact prior to, or concurrently with, the group hiring process. Contact us so we can develop a strategy with and support you.

Other States’ Courts

Different states have different judicial clerkship needs, hiring practices, and deadlines. Consult the individual state judicial sites and www.ncs.org.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HIRING FOR SUMMER & POST-GRADUATE POSITIONS

Many federal government employers hire students early in the year (i.e., at the same time as OCI, but not necessarily through OCI) for summer or post-graduate employment. A great resource for starting to navigate the largest employer in the U.S. – the federal government – is using the helpful guide we purchase for you from the University of Arizona:

Login: <http://arizonahandbooks.com/u/mitchellhamline> **Password:** Government

It will be updated over time with new deadlines, but if not presently current for any agency in which you're interested you can see the previous year's deadline; this will help you estimate the probable time frame for 2016-2017 calendar year deadlines.

You'll see application deadlines can be as early as July and August for the following summer. (Note: If you open the document and scroll down to the tables, you can sort opportunities and deadlines by your year in school.)

There's also more federal government hiring information at: <http://www.psjd.org/>.

PUBLIC INTEREST, GOVERNMENT, EDUCATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

Postgraduate fellowships are short-term opportunities (typically 1-2 years) with nonprofit organizations, government entities, and educational institutions.

These fellowships are basically funded in one of two ways: (1) an organization comes up with an idea for a project and funding and then posts – like any job – to find a “fellow” to do the work; or (2) a student or graduate comes up with an idea for a project to work on, finds an employer with which to do that work, and then the two together seek funding from foundations and other agencies.

A great resource we subscribe to that can help you learn more about fellowships is <http://www.psjd.org/>. You will see that hundreds of fellowships are posted right now. Become familiar with the concepts, opportunities, and deadlines now as you plan ahead for after graduation. Many of these deadlines fall far in advance; a 2017 grad may have to apply in the summer/fall of 2016 for a post-graduate fellowship.

If you plan to design a fellowship on your own and seek funding, you want to start even earlier! You'll not only need a fleshed-out idea, you'll need a relationship with a host organization. Sources for such funding may include places such as Equal Justice Works (EJW) at <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/> and Skadden Fellowship Foundation at <http://www.skaddenfellowships.org/>, to name a few. On the EJW site, you can see the **application period started last year in July and closed in September for post-graduate fellowships starting one year later.**

If you're at all interested in public interest, you probably already perked up when we mentioned these sites at other times. If not, you need to bookmark and become familiar with them immediately so early deadlines and opportunities don't pass you by! These are great resources.

TIME LINES

MARCH

If you expect to apply for federal or appellate clerkships, consider asking professors to be references (once you're ready to apply) and make a plan to touch base. (Don't make them actually write letters until you need them, though.)

APRIL

Minnesota Supreme Court application deadline April 1, 2016 (2017 grads)

MAY

Good luck with finals!

JUNE

Register in OSCAR to receive federal clerkship notices for your preferred term if you have not already (2017 and 2018 grads) – then, apply as opportunities come up starting now and extending to or beyond graduation.

Update your resume once class rank comes out.

Network with/research OCI employers; draft cover letters and resumes and send to your Career Advisor for review; meet with your Career Advisor to prepare for OCI; research out-of-state employers if interested and proceed according to deadlines and processes discovered

Review federal employment opportunities by using Arizona Guide; flag follow-up dates and deadlines; work with your Career Advisor to prepare application materials

Review public interest fellowship resources; if interested in pursuing fellowships, begin developing and executing plan; meet with your Career Advisor for assistance

If interested in clerking in another state, become familiar with application processes and deadlines for that state.

JULY

OCI bidding opens Monday, July 11, 2016

Public Interest Fellowship applications typically open (for summer 2017 and post-grad positions)

Federal government applications typically open or start coming due (for fall, spring, summer 2017 positions, or post-grad positions)

AUGUST

Minnesota Court of Appeals application deadline August 1, 2016 (2017 grads)

RSVP for and Attend OCI Employer Reception (August 3, 2016, 5-6:30 p.m.) (primarily for 2018 grads, but see expected employer attendees in Event posting – will be updated over time)

OCI bidding closes at noon on Friday, August 5, 2016

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