

## **Career Planning and Job Search Timeline**

This Career Planning and Job Search Timeline is an introductory tool for Akron Law students to help plan your career development, and to help determine how to meet your post-law school professional aspirations.

This timeline is a road map to follow through each semester of your law school career. While it may seem early to begin planning your career in the very first year of a three-year or four-year degree program, many important milestones happen almost immediately, and you need to be ready. The experience of hundreds of law students has taught us the secret to obtaining post-graduation employment is to start early and to take responsibility for your career development from the first months of law school. The following timeline will give you some guidelines to follow.

Many additional resources and individualized counseling appointments are available through the Career Services Office (“CSO”), as well as on our web page: <http://www.uakron.edu/law/career-services/>.

<p><b>THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON SCHOOL OF LAW CAREER SERVICES OFFICE</b> <b>PROFESSIONAL STAFF</b></p>
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### First Year, First Semester

- **July (December for Spring Start)**
  - Complete your self-assessment for Get to Know the CSO
- **August (January for Spring Start)**
  - Submit your resume to Director Bencze for a mandatory resume review.
  - Attend first-year orientation session (includes part-time and full-time students)
    - Identifies and explains resources available through CSO.
    - Helps plan steps to prepare you for law school and professional development.
  - Consider specialization vs. general practice: start thinking about what kind of law you are interested in pursuing and what courses excite you.
    - Specialization: will want to build up documented record of interest and experience in that specialty (e.g., civil rights law, labor law, health care law, international law, public interest, intellectual property, etc.).
    - General Practice: will want to build up a record of well-rounded experience in traditional areas of law (e.g., business, transactional, litigation, criminal, estate planning, etc.).
    - Consider which law school and community organizations share your interests or will expose you to areas of law within your interests so you can learn more about those areas and future career opportunities within those areas. This is also a good way to start building relationships for future networking opportunities.
- **September (February for Spring Start)**
  - Concentrate on studying to get the best grades possible and adjust to law school.
  - Attend CSO workshops/information sessions to learn about practice areas, gain tips on job searching, and obtain other information not available elsewhere. Calendar of events is in the Career Connection and on our webpage.
  - Start your class-specific Pathway on Symplicity.
  - Build or update your LinkedIn profile.
  - Attend Career Kick-Off Event at Akron Law with local and state bar associations.
  - Join other local bar associations – you will be automatically enrolled as a member in the Akron Bar Association, Ohio Bar Association, and the American Bar Association.
- **October (March for Spring Start)**
  - Attend CSO workshops.
  - Attend First Year CSO Orientation:
    - CSO access for 1L students is restricted until **October 1** for Fall/Summer Start Students and **February 1** for Spring Start students. Soon thereafter, CSO will host mandatory 1L Orientation sessions at varying times. Students must attend one session.
      - These sessions will be tailored based on the information provided during your self-assessment.
    - These mandatory orientation sessions provide information that is critical to your second semester and first summer. For example:
      - How to start (applying, networking, etc.) on job search strategies, etc.
      - An individualized career plan for your area of interest
    - Log on to Symplicity/AkronLawJobs upon receiving email notification from our office. Create your individual profile.

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- Study. Also get plenty of rest, exercise, and a healthy diet. This will help with stress, which will help with exams, which will help you get interviews!
- Socialize with your law school classmates – they will be your future colleagues. You never know when a law school classmate will be in a position to pass on your resume, act as a reference, or even hire you.
- **November (March/April for Spring Start)**
  - Continue to attend CSO workshops/presentations.
  - Review the CSO handbook, as well as resources available on the CSO Resource Library, specifically resume and cover letter handouts.
  - Prepare a draft cover letter and schedule an appointment with Director Bencze to review.
    - Day and evening appointments are available.
    - Virtual appointments are available on Teams.
    - 1L Part-time students can make appointments as early as August or January if Spring Start.
  - Identify opportunities for first-year summer positions, including internships with large, medium and small firms, both local and non-local, public interest opportunities, and judicial clerking.
  - Special note to Spring Start students: consider taking summer courses, participating in clinics, or volunteer work.
- **December**
  - Begin applying for first year summer associate programs: Large-firm employers associated with the National Association of Legal Professionals (NALP) start accepting applications on December 1 annually.
    - Large firms require students with excellent grades, generally top 10-15%.
    - It is likely that first-year grades and/or class rank will not be released before submitting applications.
    - Important: update applications once you have your grades/rank.
  - Begin applying for diversity fellowships, as applicable.
  - Participate in the Minority Clerkship Program through the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBA) if applicable. Check the Career Connection for application guidelines.
  - Review the governmental summer internships requirements and submission timelines.
    - Hot tip: Arizona Law Government Honors and Internship Program Handbook is available on the CSO Resource Library. See us for the password.
  - Start sending out resumes and making contact with small and medium sized law firms.
  - Utilize online legal directories such as Martindale.com or local bar directories, and LinkedIn to locate firms in your area.
  - Attend holiday networking receptions.

### **Semester Break (Spring Break for Spring Start)**

- Have a plan to make your break productive
  - Contact local attorneys and schedule time to meet with them for coffee or lunch.
    - Do not make it all about resumes and interviews and jobs. Going in with this attitude will only turn off potential employers.
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- Remember, your goal is to get substantive legal work, not necessarily a job. Establish networks, make contacts, create relationships. Those will hopefully turn into a job, an internship, or even just a “shadowing” experience at a later time.
- Submit applications and schedule interviews over the semester break where opportunities are available.
- Call or visit hometown attorneys over the break and follow up with a resume and cover letter.
  - Include in your cover letter information learned during your discussions and include information that shows you have local connections.
  - Start networking for summer clerkships.
- Take advantage of every opportunity presented to you.
  - If an attorney offers you coffee – take it.
  - If the county prosecutor offers for you to observe a trial – go.
  - If a partner offers you the chance to shadow him /her/them – do it.

### First year, Spring Semester

- Fall Start Students: prepare application materials, resume and writing samples after first semester exams.
  - Have final resume reviewed by CSO in January – do not wait!
- **January**
  - Large firms will continue to accept applications.
  - Attend all CSO workshops and presentations.
  - Discuss research assistant positions with professors for summer and the next academic year.
  - Apply to smaller-sized law firms for summer jobs.
  - Meet with Assistant Dean O’Brien to discuss summer externship opportunities.
- **February**
  - Spring On-Campus Interview (OCI) and Resume Collection. Spring Starts: view and apply for all participating employers on Symplicity.
- **February/March/April**
  - Apply to smaller-sized law firms for summer jobs.
  - Spring OCI Program continues.
  - Register for the Loyola Patent Law Interview Program (PLIP) if pursuing a career in IP.
  - Attend CSO Workshops and presentations.
  - Join student organizations.
    - Great opportunity for current and future networking.
    - Shared activities are fun and often benefit the local community.
- **March**
  - Set up an appointment for a mock interview with Director Bencze or Dean O’Brien.
  - Attend the Government and Public Interest information fair – dress appropriately and bring your resume.
    - Many students obtain summer internships by attending the fair and making good impressions.
  - Inquire with CSO about externships and the Public Interest Law Fellowship Program.
    - Externships: legal placement for credit
    - Fellowships: obtain volunteer public interest job and apply for a monetary award
      - Deadline for PIL Fellowships is customarily mid-April. Pay attention to the Career Connection for actual date and time. Also, look out for other

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fellowships beyond the PIL Fellowship. Check Equal Justice Works and PSJD.

- **April**
  - Register for national job fairs held during the summer.
  - Try out for Moot Court and Trial Teams.
  - Attend info session for Fall OCI Recruitment Programs. Note: 2 Year JD students are welcome to attend!
  - Attend “How to Succeed in Your Summer Job.”

### First Year Summer

- Apply for Law Review and/or related, e.g., Tax Journal, IP Journal, etc.
  - Grade on or Write on
- Work part-time or full-time in law-related position.
- Take summer classes.
- Consider studying abroad, internships, and externships. *Note: if you have fewer than 28 credits at the conclusion of your 1L year, you will need written permission from Dean O’Brien to enroll in an externship.*
- Update resume and cover letter.
- Identify and prepare writing sample.
- Keep in touch with CSO to learn about opportunities.
- Watch your e-mail for information from CSO regarding the Fall OCI Program.
- If eligible, prepare to participate in the Law School’s Fall OCI Program.
  - CSO will send, via email, a packet of Fall OCI participating employers.
  - Respond to the opportunities where you **meet the employer’s stated criteria.**
  - **Rising 2Ls, including part-time, full-time, and 2 YR JD students are eligible for fall OCIs.**
  - **Participating Employers are also listed on Symplicity, with application details.**
- No later than **June**, consider direct outreach and applications to firms not participating in Fall OCI.
  - Research employers on-line. Some examples include:
    - Martindale Hubbell -- <http://www.martindale.com/>
    - National Association of Legal Professionals (NALP) Directory of Legal Employers -- <http://www.nalpdirectory.com/>
    - PSJD (NALP’s Public Service network) -- <http://www.psjd.org/>
    - Job Bank through Brigham Young University Law: [https://www.law2.byu.edu/Career\\_Services/jobbank/](https://www.law2.byu.edu/Career_Services/jobbank/). Contact the CSO for username and password.
    - LinkedIn.
  - Contact CSO for more information and assistance.
- **June/July**
  - Review CSO Fall OCI Program package and instructions sent via email.
  - Make an appointment with Dean O’Brien to discuss employer research as necessary.
  - Note: CSO **is open** during the summer. Update resume, writing sample and order new transcripts.
  - Request resume / cover letter review from CSO.
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- Review CSO interview resources posted online and participate in the Mock Interview program with local attorneys held in July (or anytime by arrangement throughout the school year).
  - Remember to get resumes and tailored cover letters **out by the deadlines** to large-firm employers participating in the Fall OCI Program (using Symplicity/AkronLawJobs).
    - **Must** follow the CSO OCI packet schedule for application deadlines and requirements.
  - Send your resume, cover letter, etc. to firms who are not participating in the Fall OCI Program. Visit firm websites for specific instructions.
- **August**
    - **Important: Many law firms, including most small law firms, do not participate in on-campus recruiting. Firms that are unable to participate in the OCI Program often request the CSO to collect designated application materials and forward them to the respective employer for consideration.** The Fall list of employers requesting resume collects is included in the Master Fall OCI Program and on Symplicity.
    - Participate in Fall OCI Program. Fall OCI is traditionally a second year program, so 2FT/3PT students who meet an employer's criteria are more in demand for the OCI Program (including 2 YR JDs.)
      - OCI is an outstanding opportunity to jump start your legal career early. If you meet an employer's stated criteria, **do not miss out.**
    - If you are not eligible for Fall OCI, or are a 3FT / 4PT student, do not sit on your hands!
      - Make an appointment to meet with Dean O'Brien.
      - Pay attention to CSO workshops targeted to help your specific situation or seek out assistance from CSO!
      - CSO has effective strategies and ideas for job searching for the vast majority of students who do not qualify for OCI.
    - If you have not already, engage with bar associations (remember, you have student memberships!) and participate in committees as a way to both network and to learn about legal practice areas and opportunities in your area.

<b>Second Year, Fall Semester</b>
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- **Throughout Second Year**
  - Attend CSO workshops and presentations.
  - Review 2L Pathway on Symplicity, including 2L Handbook.
  - Participate in Bar Association Committees, Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses and other mentoring/networking opportunities.
  - Start developing your contact and networking list! Make sure you are making yourself a known member of the legal community.
  - Contact alumni in the area you would like to practice in after graduation, and set-up informal meetings, informational interviews, lunches, etc.
- **September/October**
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien to discuss 2L summer positions and judicial clerkships. Applying for clerkships can be difficult and complicated.
  - Attend CSO workshops and information sessions.
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- Update your resume to include your 1L summer experiences, leadership/volunteer activities, grades/Rank, honors, and activities.
- Update your LinkedIn.
- Meet with Dean O'Brien to discuss externship opportunities for spring semester.
- Attend the Career Kick-Off and Bar Association Meet and Greet in late September.
- **October**
  - Fall OCI continues. Apply to job postings as well.
  - Attend Equal Justice Works Fair in D.C. (or virtually).
- **October-December**
  - **STUDY and WORK HARD.** The second year in law school is, for most students, the most difficult and demanding. Your time will be stretched, and much will be expected of you. Learn to multi-task and work hard; it is a precursor to your life as an attorney.

### Winter Break

- Rest.
- Continue to fine tune your resume and cover letter – continual updating is essential.
- Continue networking and maintaining your web of contacts. This includes: follow up emails/calls with those you have already met, sending out new resumes, and requesting informational interviews.
- Investigate volunteer opportunities to gain additional experience in desired field and to accumulate Pro Bono hours toward your graduation requirement.

### Second Year, Spring Semester

- **January**
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien (designated 2L/3L professional) to review current version of resume and cover letter.
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien to discuss externship opportunities for summer.
  - Create OSCAR account if interested in federal clerkships. Prepare materials and seek letters of recommendation for federal clerkships. Start learning the in's and out's of OSCAR and clerkship applications.
- **January/February/March**
  - Apply for summer jobs with medium and small firms -- the earlier the better.
  - Some jobs will be available later than this, especially in smaller firms, so stay in touch with CSO.
  - Attend Career Workshops and presentations and continue reading the Career Connection and checking AkronLawJobs/Symlicity.
  - Contact Dean O'Brien regarding out-of-state job searching tools, including Reciprocity.
- **February**
  - Spring OCI begins.
- **February/March**
  - Spring OCI Program continues.
  - Government and Public Interest Information Fair.
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- Start preparing judicial clerkship application materials (federal and those state courts who you have not already applied to).
  - Note: state level judicial clerkships tend to vary more in their deadlines. Contact courts and/or CSO for assistance determining hiring cycles for state courts.
  - You will need multiple letters of recommendation, writing samples, etc.
    - Contact your recommenders early because it often takes a long time to get a recommender to actually get the letter to you.
  - Investigate application timelines and application means.
    - OSCAR for federal clerkships has very defined timelines. CSO can help.
    - OSCAR access is available: <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/>

### Summer

- Work. Your goal should be to have a paid legal job for the summer. If you are public interest minded, a full-time job at a public interest organization (which may be paid or not).
  - Participate in the Externship Program / Public Interest Law Fellowship Program.
    - I.e., prosecutor/public defender offices, court and other opportunities.
  - Work at the Akron Law Clinics.
- Apply for Law Review or other Law Journals – editorial staff.
- Apply for federal and state government post-graduate positions and state clerkships. Many deadlines pop up prior to 3L year.
- **July**
  - Attend Department of Justice online webinars for Honors Program information.
  - Participate in Mock Interview Program.
- **August**
  - Update resume, writing sample, and cover letters.
  - Continue to meet with Dean O'Brien to review your resume, cover letter, and practice interviewing.
  - Start 3L Pathway on Symplicity.
  - By August, remember to directly apply to as many legal employers as possible, including large-firm employers not participating in the Fall OCI Program and out-of-state employers.
  - Identify employers specifically interviewing 3Ls and 4Ls during Fall OCI and prepare resumes and tailored cover letters. Participate in Fall OCI Program for 3Ls.
  - Network!
- **NOTE: If you have been working at a law firm as a summer associate, most firms will want you to continue working throughout your third year. THIS IS A GOOD THING and should be done. At this point in your career, you will need to learn how to balance your job with your classes. Quitting your job despite the employer's continued interest in you to make time for school is not a good idea. You will have to learn how to make time for both!**

### Third Year, Fall

- **September**
  - Apply for Federal Honors programs
    - Presidential Management Fellowship.



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- Honors programs (i.e., Department of Justice, Department of Housing and Urban Development, etc.) are typically due around Labor Day.
  - Details are available in the Career Connection and via emails.
  - Follow federal law clerk hiring process for applying to particular federal courts.
  - Apply to state court clerkships and public interest post-graduate fellowships.
- **October**
  - Meet with Dean O'Brien and work your 3L job search plan.
- **November**
  - Note to December Grads: complete your exit interview with the CSO. Information packet will be emailed to you in September.
  - Contact CSO to develop job strategies to target small to mid-size firms that do not participate in the OCI Program.
  - Continue to network through law school, alumni, and Bar Association events, as well as reaching out to the legal community for mentoring.
    - Most lawyers will respond positively, but **you** have to reach out to **them**.
- **December**
  - Continue to update resume and cover letters.
  - Continue to build your professional network - send out resumes and request informational interviews over the break.
  - Investigate volunteer opportunities to gain additional experience in desired field.

### Third Year, Spring Semester

- **January**
  - May Grads: You will receive your CSO graduation requirements:
    - Exit interview, Employment survey, Directory information, Job seeker resources.
- **February**
  - Make an appointment with CSO to tailor your employment searches.
  - Participate in Spring OCI Program where applicable.
  - Schedule your exit interview with the CSO.
  - Network – time to reconnect and make new connections with members of the legal community!
- **March**
  - Continue participating in CSO workshops and programs.
  - Government and Public Interest Information Fair (some participants may interview that day).
  - Consider setting up informational interviews and conducting outreach to attorneys in your desired field/practice area. Keep an updated spreadsheet of your contacts/follow-up items. The CSO can help you with this!
- **April**
  - Deadline for submitting completed graduation interview, employment survey and directory information to CSO.
- **May**
  - Graduation!
  - Stay in touch with CSO for continued opportunities and alumni counseling.

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- **June - December**

- Many opportunities **for graduates come up from June to December**, particularly after Bar passage. Continue to check your Akron email!
- Apply to posted positions on AkronLawJobs, the blog, and the Career Connection. Cast a wide net!
- Join the Law School Alumni Association.
- Continue clerking for your current employer while awaiting bar results if offered this opportunity.
- Keep developing and working on your career and networking plan.

*Prepared by the University of Akron School of Law Career Services Office, June 2023*