



Chicago-Kent College of Law
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Career Services Office

RESUME GUIDE

1. General resume format
2. Resume Contents
3. References
4. Sample Letterheads
5. Sample Resumes
6. Other tips

CAREER SERVICES OFFICE

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SECTION 1: RESUME FORMAT

1. **Keep it Simple.** Use simple, clean fonts like Times New Roman, Arial, Garamond, or Veranda.
2. **Be concise.** Your student resume should be only one (1) page unless you have extensive or unusual education and experience. Legal employers prefer brevity and will typically spend **10-30 seconds** initially reviewing your resume. Make sure your resume is arranged so a good impression can be gained by a quick glance.
3. **Create your personal brand.** Place 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.
4. **Show a legal employer you are enrolled in law school.** Include your education, in reverse chronological order (with Chicago-Kent first), at the top of your resume.
5. **Be clear and specific.** Use active verbs to describe your work experiences and/or community involvement, and use bullet points to highlight your skills and credentials. Be specific in your descriptions.
6. **Be correct.** You may NOT falsify, embellish, or misrepresent any information about your experiences on your resume. You may NOT round your GPA up. Anyone known to be deliberately providing false information about credentials will be identified to the Academic Dean for possible disciplinary action.
7. **Proofread, and then proofread again.** Finally, be sure to proofread and spell check your resume, and read it out loud or backwards to catch any and all mistakes. Use a ruler to read it line by line to ensure proper spacing and alignment.
8. **Save it.** Include your name in the file name (i.e. "John Smith Resume" or "J Smith Resume"). Always save a copy of your resume as a pdf. file. Use this file to send your resume electronically unless a potential employer specifically asks for a different format.
9. **Print it.** When submitting a paper resume, print your resume on **good quality, neutral color (white or ivory) resume paper**. Even if you are submitting your resume electronically, it helps to print it out and proofread the physical copy.

SECTION 2: RESUME CONTENT

Education

1. **Start with the present.** List the schools you attended in **reverse chronological order** with **Chicago-Kent College of Law** first.
2. **Think about impact.** When deciding what to include in a resume, or any application material, ask yourself whether this is something you want to talk about in an interview. If it isn't, don't include it.
3. **Get degrees right.** You are pursuing your Juris Doctor, **not** a “Juris Doctorate” or “J.D.” If you are in a dual degree program, list that appropriately. For example, "Juris Doctor/Masters in Business Administration" or Juris Doctor/Master of Laws in Taxation". 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*).
4. **Don't forget undergraduate/graduate degrees.** 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.” If you studied abroad for one semester or one year, you may include that information.
5. **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 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.
6. **Give yourself credit.** 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 in all lowercase letters.
 - 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, make that clear on your resume. 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 2017, Fall 2018, and Spring 2019; *or*
Dean’s List: three 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 2019
Moot Court Honor Society, member as of August 2019

- 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 2018 – May 2019).
7. **Legal Publications.** If you have written a law-related article that has been or is about to be published, list it as a bullet point under your law school education entry, or 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)

Experience

1. **Show your experience.** In general, list jobs in reverse chronological order, starting with your present experience or most recent position. Include 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. 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.
2. **Describe your work.** Use **bullet points** and **action verbs** to set forth and highlight your various responsibilities and skills for each position. Describe a **current job in present tense**, and describe all **past positions in past tense**.
 - a. **Describing legal work.** List the substantive areas of law in which you dealt, the types of legal documents you drafted, and the tasks you accomplished. Use **action verbs** to describe your responsibilities and tasks. (There is a long list of sample active verbs at the end of this guide).

Other Sections

1. **Show community involvement.** 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. Make sure to include any leadership positions held in groups or organizations. 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.
2. **Be careful with interests.** Whether to list interests or not is up to you. Some employers like interest sections because they show whether a candidate is well-rounded. If you choose to include them, be

aware your interests are conveying an image to an employer. Do not feign an interest. Make sure you can keep up a conversation on these subjects.

- 3. References:** Do not write “References Available Upon Request” on your legal resume. Employers assume you will provide references if asked. If an employer requests references with an application, include a separate sheet which lists three references, unless the employer asks for a specific number. The “heading” on your reference list should be the same as your resume heading). See references section of this guide for more information.

SECTION 3: REFERENCES

1. Create a separate document that uses the same font and header as your resume (maintain your personal brand).
2. Include the reference's name, title, affiliation, address and phone number.
3. Never list a reference unless you ask that individual to be a reference in advance.
4. Make sure your references have a copy of your resume and information about the position you are applying for. This allows them to be more prepared when speaking with potential employers.
5. Law school Faculty and legal employers are the best references because they can speak to your potential as an attorney. Undergraduate faculty and former employers are also appropriate references. **Do not use relatives, friends, or other personal references.**

Sample reference list:

1. Professor Mary Smith
Visiting Assistant Professor of Law
Chicago-Kent College of Law
565 West Adams, Room 717
Chicago, IL 60661
(312) 906-5000
mmccormi@kentlaw.iit.edu
2. Jane L. Doe
Managing Partner
Doe & Smith, PLC
1234 Main Street
Chicago, IL 60661
(312) 123-4567
janeldoe@doesmith.com
3. John M. Blank
Clinical Professor of Law
C-K Law Group: The Law Office of Chicago-Kent
565 W. Adams Street, Room 609
Chicago, IL 60661
(312) 906-5050
johnmblank@kentlaw.iit.edu

SECTION 4: SAMPLE RESUMES (FOLLOWING PAGES)

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 2016

Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Program

GPA: 3.72/4.0

- **Chicago-Kent Law Review, Editor-in-Chief (2015-2016)**
- Semifinalist, Charles Evans Hughes Moot Court Competition
- Published Note: *Effect of Fair Debt Collection Practices Act on Illinois Consumers*, 90 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 1141 (2015)
- Dean's List

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, May 2013

GPA: 3.4/4.0

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Jenner & Block, Chicago, IL

Summer Associate, May 2015 – August 2015 (extended offer for Associate position)

- Researched state and federal case law and statutes and drafted memoranda in several practice areas including corporate, litigation, bankruptcy, and estate planning
- Responded to and drafted 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 2014 – August 2014

- Interviewed witnesses and analyzed evidence to assess strength of cases
- 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

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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

Intern, May – August 2012 & 2013

- 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 2010 – August 2010

- Drafted correspondence to alumni, planned alumni events, and developed and edited alumni website content
- Performed general office duties including purchase ordering, organizing files, and answering telephones

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Madison Cares, *Volunteer Tutor*, June 2010 – August 2011

ELEANOR 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 2017

GPA: 3.52/4.0

- **Moot Court Honor Society**, Member as of August 2015
- Women in Law Member

Stuart School of Business, Chicago, Illinois

Candidate for Master of Business Administration, December 2017

DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, magna cum laude, May 2006

GPA: 3.9/4.0

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

EXPERIENCE

Honorable John Tharp Jr., U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois

Judicial Extern, May 2015 to August 2015

- Researched federal case law regarding employment discrimination and commodities regulation, 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 jury trials

Hesson International, Chicago, Illinois

Senior Staff Associate, February 2008 to July 2014

- 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 2006 to January 2008

- 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, 2009

INTERESTS

- European travel, gourmet cooking, financial markets

**** This is a sample resume for patent students. There are separate experience sections because patent employers want to see legal and engineering experience****

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 2016

Intellectual Property Law Certificate Program

- Intellectual Property Law Moot Court
- Dean's Advisory Council Member
- **Intellectual Property Summer Institute, Franklin Pierce Law Center**, Concord, NH, 2014

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, Chicago, IL

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, May 2006

- 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 2015 – Present

- Draft patent specifications and claims, patent information disclosure statements and other intellectual property related documents
- Research federal case law for patent and trademark infringement actions

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

Legal Intern, Antitrust Division, May 2014 – July 2014

- 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

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

Research Assistant, Institute of Science, Law and Technology, November 2013 – April 2014

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

ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE

GENERAL MOTORS, Warren, MI

Project Engineer of Technical Center, June 2006 – August 2013

- 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, 2005

- Assisted engineers with a variety of design projects

INTERESTS

- Cross-country running, squash, and 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 2015

- CALI Award for highest grade in Computers and Legal Reasoning, Spring 2015
- Evening Law Student Society Member

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, Normal, IL
Bachelor of Science in Accounting, May 1996

EXPERIENCE

GRANT, FARRELL & WATERFORD, INC., Wheaton, IL
Information Systems Manager, 2005 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, 2001 to 2003

- Corresponded with client and assisted them with 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, 1998 to 2001

- 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, 1996 to 1998

- 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 2016

Labor and Employment Law Certificate Program

GPA: 3.23/4.0

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

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

Bachelor of Arts in English, May 2010

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 2009

EXPERIENCE

C-K Law Group, Civil Litigation Clinic, Chicago, IL

Legal Intern, May 2015 - 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 2014 - August 2014

- 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

Joan & David, Los Angeles, CA

Assistant Buyer, Shoes, May 2010 - April 2013

- 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 2006 - April 2007

Saks, Los Angeles, CA, *Seasonal Salesperson*, 2006 and 2007

Four Seasons Hotel, Los Angeles, CA, *Reservations Clerk*, June 2008 - May 2010

JIMMY MCGILL

5432 W Wacker Dr. • Chicago, IL 60661 • 312-123-4567 • jmcgill@kentlaw.iit.edu

Education

Chicago-Kent College of Law, Chicago, IL

Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2019

GPA: 3.93/4.0, Dean's List, All Semesters

- **Moot Court Honor Society**, member as of April 2016
- **Chicago-Kent Law Review**, member as of June 2016
- CALI Awards for highest grade in Torts, Criminal Law, Property, and Legal Writing I & II
- Chicago-Kent Lambdas: *Secretary*, 2016 – Present; *member*, 2015-2016

DePaul University, Chicago, IL

Bachelor of Arts in History, magna cum laude, March 2012

GPA: 3.8/4.0; *Dean's List*, All Semesters

- Phi Alpha Theta Historical Honors Society; National Society for Collegiate Scholars

Legal Experience

Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP., Chicago, IL

Law Clerk, June 2016 – Present

- Research federal and state labor and employment laws regarding discrimination against LGBT employees in order to create an anti-harassment and best practices training program for the firm
- Research case law and draft memorandum on several legal issues, including insurer-insured privilege, *res judicata* and collateral estoppel, and Article III standing in class action lawsuits
- Attend hearings, respond to discovery requests, and participate in firm's trial advocacy program

Professional & Research Experience

Chicago-Kent College of Law, Career Services Office, Chicago, IL

Student Assistant, September 2015 – May 2016

- Communicated with employers and searched for potential job openings and internships
- Updated online job posting portal with new positions
- Promoted programs such as career fairs and panel discussions

Hub Group, Oak Brook, IL

Account Manager, February 2015 – August 2015

- Managed a team of with 20-30 customers for top nationwide intermodal (rail) shipment company
- Informed customers on industry changes involving improvements in reducing carbon emissions
- Developed and executed timely and cost effective resolutions to customer concerns

Account Management Specialist, June 2013 – February 2015

- Managed customers' daily order entry and tracking, ensuring it was complete and accurate
- Assisted Account Manager with customer communication and strategy

DePaul University, Practicum in Historical Research and Writing, Chicago, IL

Researcher, September 2010 – March 2011

- Researched the history of miscegenation law and the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Loving v. Virginia*
- Analyzed the application of miscegenation laws leading up to and after the Court decision
- Selected to present research paper at the DePaul Student History Conference in Spring 2011

DePaul University, Sophomore Independent Research Project, Chicago, IL

Researcher, January 2010 – March 2010

- Researched the U.S. presidential election of 1800 and the history of the Federalist Party
- Analyzed the division among the Federalists and its contribution to their loss in the election
- Selected to present research paper at the DePaul Student History Conference in Spring 2010

ATTICUS FINCH

324 E. Washington St. · Chicago, IL 60657 · (312) 789-7222 · afinch@kentlaw.iit.edu

EDUCATION

CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW, Chicago, IL

Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2018

Business Law Certificate Program Candidate

- Real Estate Law Society
- Corporate Law Society

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, Gainesville, FL

Bachelor of Science, International Relations and Philosophy, summa cum laude, December 2014

- Dean's List, Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2014
- Sigma Phi Epsilon, Member
- Study abroad at University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 2013 – December 2013

EXPERIENCE

MASON & MASON, P.C., Chicago, IL

Law Clerk, July 2015 – August 2015

- Researched and drafted legal memoranda on numerous issues, including general negligence, vicarious liability, employment discrimination under Title VII, and FMLA interference
- Drafted motions to dismiss, motions for summary judgment and responses to interrogatories
- Served as interpreter between Spanish speaking clients and attorneys
- Filed pleadings in both state and federal court

MASON INTERNATIONAL EQUITIES, Miami, FL

Intern, June 2013 – August 2013

- Analyzed firm's compliance with data service contracts
- Prepared, reviewed, and filed the firm's Form ADVs
- Edited the firm's compliance manual to reflect the transition to FCA regulation

WINSTON INVESTMENT CORPORATION, Chicago, IL

Associate, January 2015 – June 2015

- Conducted research on investment portfolios, performance and risks
- Drafted memoranda on investment alternatives
- Produced quarterly materials for investment committees
- Participated in due diligence reviews of client portfolios

WALKER EDUCATION PAVILION, Miami, FL

Intern, May 2010 – December 2010

- Drafted blog entries regarding the impact of local regulations on student success
- Organized and led writing workshops

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Volunteer, May 2013 – Present
- Alzheimer's Association, Volunteer fundraiser, June 2011 – May 2013

LANGUAGES AND INTERESTS

- Fluent in Spanish and Portuguese
- American history, postmodern design and college football

ALLY McBEAL

1545 Scarlett Street | Chicago, IL 60600 | 312.555.1212 | amcbeal@kentlaw.iit.edu

EDUCATION

IIT CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW, Chicago, IL
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2018

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA, Urbana, IL
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, May 2015

- Future Attorneys of America, 2012 – 2015
- Illini Marching Band, 2011 – 2015
- Kappa Kappa Gamma, 2011 – 2015

EXPERIENCE

BENNIGAN'S RESTAURANT, Chicago, IL
Server, May 2015 – August 2015

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

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA, Urbana, IL
Cafeteria Worker, 2012 – 2014

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

MARIMETA CAMP FOR GIRLS, Eagle River, WI
Camp Supervisor, May – August 2013, 2014

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

Camp Counselor, May 2012 – August 2012

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

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Habitat for Humanity, Fundraiser and House Builder, 2013 – 2014

Ronald McDonald House, “Big Sister” and Fundraiser, 2011 – 2012

Volunteer Illini Projects, Worked for a variety of children’s organizations, 2010 – 2011

INTERESTS

- Triathlon training, French cuisine, Motown music, photography

SECTION 5: OTHER TIPS

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

CAREER SERVICES OFFICE

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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	improve	orient	resolve	use
challenge	draft	incorporate	originate	restore	write



Chicago-Kent College of Law
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Career Services Office

COVER LETTER GUIDE

1. Cover letter format
2. Cover letter contents
3. Sample cover letters

SECTION 1: COVER LETTER FORMAT

1. **A complement to your resume.** Your cover letter should expand on what is in your resume, not restate it. You don't have to address every aspect of your resume in a cover letter, focus on the parts that are most relevant to the job you are applying for. 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.
2. **Show what you bring.** Employers want to know what you will do for them. A cover letter is not the place to discuss how this opportunity will benefit you or help you grow. Discuss how your skill set will allow you to make immediate contributions to your future employer.
3. **Brief but specific.** Like a resume, a cover letter should be no longer than one (1) page; and should consist of 3 to 4 paragraphs.
4. **Business focused.** Include the date at the top left of your cover letter, under your heading. 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.
5. **Greetings and salutations.** A cover letter is not the place to get fancy with a greeting. The standard "Dear Mr./Ms. Smith" is appropriate. Do not include the person's first name here.
 - a. **Who to address.** Do not start a cover letter by saying "To Whom it May Concern". This shows the potential employer that you did not put an effort into finding out who to address your letter to. If you are applying to a job that is posted on Symplicity, the appropriate contact person should be listed somewhere. If you are applying to a job posted elsewhere start by looking at the company website. You can also call the company and politely ask to whom a cover letter should be addressed.
6. **Substance.** The basic paragraph format for a cover letter is: introduction, body, and closing. Having two body paragraphs is advised. The first will discuss technical knowledge like legal research and writing. The second will cover "soft" skills like communication, management or leadership.
7. **Closing.** The conclusion of a cover letter should be a clear and concise statement that thanks the employer for their consideration and requests an interview.
8. **Get the facts.** Before sitting down to write a cover letter, research the company or employer and allow that information to help you tailor your cover letter.
9. **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.

SECTION 2: COVER LETTER CONTENTS

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 (but do not write "Hello, my name is..."). 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. When responding to a job posting or advertisement, indicate what position you are seeking and from where you found out about the opening.

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 second and third paragraphs reveal information about yourself and how you are going to meet the needs of the employer. Your research of the firm or organization is significant at this point, because it provides you with a means to link your background to the employer's 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 the 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. The third paragraph of your cover letter is a good place to highlight "soft skills" like organization, attention to detail, client management, or interpersonal skills.

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," 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.

THE CLOSING:

The last paragraph should thank the employer contact for his/her time, and may request a personal interview. "I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss how my background might fit your needs." Make your last paragraph brief.

**SECTION 3: SAMPLE COVER LETTERS
(FOLLOWING PAGES)**

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

[INSERT PERSONAL HEADING USED IN RESUME HERE]

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 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 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 COVER LETTER 1

JOHN R. DOE

1234 Cherry Tree Lane | Chicago, IL 60600
(312) 555-0001 | john.smith@kentlaw.iit.edu

August 19, 2019

Jane M. Smith, Managing Partner
Smith, Black, & White, PLC
54321 Wacker, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am a second year student at Chicago-Kent College of Law and am excited to submit my application for the Law Clerk position at Smith, Black, & White. Environmental law has been a passion of mine for some time and I have been following the strides your firm has made as advocates for communities who do not have access to clean drinking water.

For the past year, I have worked as an intern at the Chicago office of the Natural Resources Defense Council. In this role I assisted the Senior Attorney with research and advocacy surrounding promoting clean and renewable energy, protecting the Great Lakes ecosystem, and ensuring that communities have clean drinking water. As an intern, I was frequently trusted to perform complex research and drafting without supervision. I played a critical role in drafting issue briefs related to the NRDC's revitalization of the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). Through my research the NRDC was able to show that the CAWS is failing to meet the standards of the Clean Water Act.

I was also fortunate to have the opportunity to gain extensive experience in environmental law during my semester working in the Chicago Environmental Law Clinic. As a student in the clinic, I assisted the clinic with its mission to provide legal education and advocacy services to people confronting urban environmental problems in the Chicago area. I am particularly proud of the work I performed on one particular enforcement case. Through careful research, thorough witness interviews, focused records reviews, and ascertaining relevant facts, I helped build the case for our client that the defendant's plant had been leeching hazardous waste into the surrounding water table. As a result, the defendant was ordered to clean up several hundred tons of waste and set up a victims fund for those affected by the pollution.

As you can see from my background, I have concentrated on obtaining experience in environmental law that will allow me to make a dramatic contribution to a firm such as Smith, Black, & White. Enclosed please find my resume. Thank you for your consideration of my application. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Best Regards,

John R. Doe.

Enclosure: Resume

Ally McBeal

640 S. Main Street • Chicago, IL 60611 • 312-555-5678 • amcbeal@gmail.com

September 3, 2019

Ms. Ann Smith
Recruiting Coordinator
Jones, Jones, & Jones
5555 State Street
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am a first year student at Chicago-Kent College of Law, and I am interested in a law clerk position with your firm. I believe my strong research and writing skills would make me a valuable addition to Jones, Jones, & Jones.

During my first semester at Chicago-Kent, I developed excellent research and writing skills. In my legal research class, I learned to conduct legal research on complex legal issues and wrote a ten page memorandum and a twenty page motion for summary judgment. Prior to entering law school, I attended the University of Illinois, where I majored in English and was a member of the debate team. My undergraduate coursework and my debate experience required that I develop excellent research, writing, and public speaking skills.

As an intern this past summer with USA Bank, I developed strong organizational skills and learned to work effectively on group projects. Finally, my current volunteer work at a homeless shelter, on top of attending law school full-time, has strengthened my time management skills. I would welcome the opportunity to put these skills to work as a law clerk at Jones, Jones, & Jones.

Enclosed for your review is my resume. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future and hope to discuss the possibility of my employment with your firm. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ally McBeal

Enclosure: Resume