

SECTION I

***Self-Assessment
&
Career Planning***

A. SELF ASSESSMENT

There are a variety of professional opportunities available to students during law school and beyond. Law firms, public interest organizations, government agencies, judges, and professors all hire law students. The process might seem daunting at first. Do not get overwhelmed. Begin to narrow down your options by conducting a self-assessment. Ask yourself:

- What potential practice areas do I want to pursue?
- What geographical locations am I interested in?
- What type of employer do I want to work for?
- What are my interests, skills and values?
- What are my academic and professional priorities?
- Why did I come to law school?
- What are my short-term and long-term professional goals?

There are several resources in the Career Development Office and on-line that contain tests and exercises you can do at your convenience. We also suggest that you answer some of the following questions to ascertain your current interests and goals.

Work Environment

1. Would you prefer a large office to a small one?
2. Do you function better in a team environment?
3. Do you mind spending your day at your desk, with small breaks?
4. Would you prefer to spread your day equally between the office and court?
5. How do you feel about being in the court?
6. Do you prefer structured training or are you comfortable learning on the job?
7. What level of feedback do you prefer?
8. Are you seeking lots of responsibility early in your career?

Practice Areas

1. What skills do you prefer to use on a daily basis? Writing, researching, negotiating, advocacy?
2. Which classes do you enjoy the most?
3. Do you consider yourself a self-starter?
4. Are you attracted to a cause or a mission?
5. Are you multi-lingual?
6. Do you have a background that includes public service or volunteerism?
7. Are you good with numbers, accounting or calculations?
8. Do you enjoy looking at the “big picture” or digging into the details?
9. Do you desire the “spotlight” or do you prefer to work behind the scenes?
10. Do you have political aspirations or desire to be a public servant?
11. Do you like working with facts and data?
12. Are you comfortable working one on one with people?

Other Considerations

1. Where would you prefer to work? How far are you willing/able to travel for work?
2. What are your family responsibilities? How will you balance work, family, community and peers?

3. What are your current financial obligations? How can you adjust your budget so that you have maximum flexibility in exploring viable career pathways?
4. Have you established a family budget and gathered information concerning typical salaries? Doing so early will greatly assist in your career planning process.

When you are finished, consider meeting with a career counselor to discuss your discoveries and decide how you might best use the information in your job search process.

B. CAREER PLANNING

The Career Development Office is invested in the success of our students and alumni and strives to provide employment leads and opportunities, career-related skills, training and education to ensure that every student is employed upon graduation. To facilitate that goal, the CDO will:

- Create and maintain a database of job listings and potential legal employers with information about the employers and contact persons at each employer.
- Develop and maintain robust relationships with law firms, judges and their staffs, in-house counsel, government attorneys and officials, nonprofits, and public interest organizations.
- Work with each student to develop and refine the skills necessary to find employment as a legal professional.
- Provide ongoing counseling to students and alumni on strategies to assist with both short and long-term career goals.

Employers highly value students who can demonstrate, through specific experiences, their ability to succeed as a lawyer, and commitment to excelling as a professional. Taking time early on to understand your professional goals and how they can be fulfilled is essential to your long-term professional success. The Career Development Office works with a multitude of employers to help you gain the necessary experience, including pro bono and other volunteer work, externships, part-time legal work, clinics, etc.

The Career Development Office has developed a set of timelines to help students identify and plan for critical events through their law school experience. Please contact the CDO for more information and to obtain a copy.