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Resumé & Interview Tips



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Application Tips

The following information may assist you in compiling your application.

Many firms accept applications exclusively through the viLaw Portal. **The information you enter when creating your viLaw profile is used throughout the system. Ensure it is current and free from typos (including errors in capitalization).**

Name

- When introducing yourself during the application process, and at the beginning of any meeting or interview, you may wish to indicate your title (e.g. Mr./Ms./Mx.) and your pronouns.

Address

- Always include a permanent address in addition to your school address (if different). Also include the telephone number where you can be reached during Interview Week.
- Ensure your address is complete including apartment number and postal code.
- If your contact information changes during the recruitment process, be sure to advise firms as early as possible.

Telephone

- Include your area code.
- If you provide more than one number, indicate which number you can be reached at for Call Day.
- This is be a good time to check your voicemail greeting and update it if necessary. You will also want to ensure that your account has capacity to accept new messages (that it is not full).

Email

- Provide the address you use most frequently. Most firms use email as a primary method of communication.

Cover Letter

- Proofread, proofread, proofread! Spelling or grammatical errors in your cover letter will negatively affect the reviewer's impression of your application. Have someone else review the letter as well.
- Confirm the spelling of the firm's name and contact person. Refer to the firm's website and/or NALP's Canadian Directory of Legal Employers (www.nalpcanada.com/).

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Cover Letter Contents

- Indicate which law school you are attending and what year you are in.
- Keep it brief and be modest about what you can bring to the firm. You do not need to repeat information included in your CV.
- If you have an area of interest, identify it. This will assist the firm in arranging an interview with an individual(s) from the area(s) in which you are interested.
- Creativity in a cover letter may backfire — it won't get you an interview and may hurt you. Avoid being overly cute, funny, etc.

Resumé

- Do not go into lengthy descriptions of summer employment (such as part-time employment in the service industry) which is not directly related to the practice of law.
- Do not exaggerate your experience.
- Extra-curricular experience is particularly important for students who have relatively little work experience. Volunteer work, school activities and organization memberships indicate a well-rounded individual and may also demonstrate a student's leadership and interpersonal skills. Believe it or not, firms look for more than grades.
- List language skills.
- Keep it to no more than two pages.

Grades

- Provide copies of your official undergrad and law school transcripts. Do not send a screenshot of your grades from your law school webpage.
- You may wish to include a brief explanation of a particularly poor mark, although this may be a discussion best left to the interview stage. Hopefully, the mark will show up as an anomaly and most individuals reviewing your resumé can relate to one poor mark.

Submitting an Application

- Get your application in as early as possible. Although there are established deadlines for the submission of applications, you should not wait for until these dates to prepare and submit your application. If you are participating in the On-Campus Interview (OCI) process, there are specific deadlines for each school, which may be earlier than the main application deadline.

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Cover Letters – Do’s & Don’ts

» Do

- Keep presentation simple.
- Include permanent and sessional address(es).
- Most firms accept applications electronically. Where possible, sign your letter.

» Don’t

- Use flashy paper.
- Repeat information contained in resumé.
- Attach writing samples, discs, etc.
- Address the letter to “Chair” or “Hiring Committee” – personalize it.

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Strategies Prior To Interview

- » Get organized — do your research!
- » Create law firm profiles (see next page). Take advantage of firm visits/open houses.
- » Review the Vancouver Bar Association Articling Guidelines:
www.vancouverbar.ca/for-students/articling-interview-guidelines/

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Call Day Planner

MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY: FOLLOW-UPS	
8:___ am	Firm: Details:	8:___ am	Firm: Details	8:___ am	Firm: Details
10:___ am	Firm: Details	10:___ am	Firm: Details	10:___ am	Firm: Details
12:___ pm	Firm: Details	12:___ pm	Firm: Details	12:___ pm	Firm: Details
2:___ pm	Firm: Details	2:___ pm	Firm: Details	2:___ pm	Firm: Details
4:___ pm	Firm: Details	4:___ pm	Firm: Details	4:___ pm	Firm: Details
6:___ pm	Firm: Details	6:___ pm	Firm: Details	6:___ pm	Firm: Details
Reception		Reception		Reception	
Dinner		Dinner		Dinner	

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Interview Planner

Law Firm Profile

Law Firm:

Address:

Telephone:

Floor:

Date of Interview:

Interviewers:

Time of Interview:

Firm Profile:

Questions you wish to ask:

Comments on Interviewers:

Follow-Up Arrangements:

Post Interview Evaluation

Firm Strengths:

Negatives:

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Call Day

- » Formalize your voicemail. Ensure your voicemail has capacity to receive new messages (it is not full).
- » Return voicemail messages as promptly as possible.
- » As best as you can, draft your schedule prior to call day.
- » Schedule no more than 4-5 interviews per day.

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Interview — Questions & Topics

- » Have questions prepared, but avoid reading your notes. Know your resumé.
- » Develop questions which indicate you are interested in more than just a summer position.
- » Ask your interviewer about personal experience with the firm.
- » “What type of work/level of responsibility do you give students?”
- » “Can you tell me about the firm’s approach to continuing legal education (CLE)?”
- » “What attracted you to the firm?”
- » “What type of work do you assign to students?”
- » Use discretion concerning compensation/benefit issues (use NALP website).

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Interview — Do's

» Do

- Ensure that firms have the best phone number to reach you at.
- Out-of-towners: consider booking into a hotel (sharing the cost with another student).
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Be courteous to the firm's staff.
- Visit the washroom (sweaty hands).
- Arrive a few minutes early.
- Call ahead if you are delayed.
- Pay equal attention to all of your interviewers (not just the senior member).
- Be yourself.

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Interview — Don'ts

» Don't

- Arrive with food/drink/gum.
- Take notes during the interview.
- Make inappropriate comments or jokes.

NO FEELINGS

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Strategies During Interview

- » Ability to relate to interviewer is critical.
- » Make and maintain eye contact.
- » Be prepared to discuss **everything**, including any time gaps or a poor grade, on your resumé.
- » Project confidence.
- » Keep an open mind.
- » Interviews at the Firm:
 - Meet student committee members.
 - Talk with current students.

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Strategies After Interview

- » Follow-up with a “thank you” email and express your interest.
- » Keep in touch.
- » Show interest, but avoid overselling.
- » There is a 24 hour window after receiving an offer to make your decision. However, let firms know your decision as soon as you decide as it may free up a spot for a colleague.
- » Firms can handle rejection so don’t hesitate because you feel bad for saying “no”.
- » No offers? Call and ask for status.
- » Status may change during the process.

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First Year Students

- » Go to Career Fairs and Receptions.
- » Get involved, join associations, participate.
- » Take advantage of firm visits.
- » Speak with alumni who are at the firm.

NOELFERNS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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