

# Application Tips

The following information may assist you in compiling your curriculum vitae:

## **Name**

In cases where your name may be gender neutral, you may wish to indicate how mail should be addressed i.e. Mr. or Ms. etc. This saves firms the embarrassment of assuming your gender, perhaps in error.

## **Address**

Always include a permanent address and telephone number, in addition to your school address (if different). If you are from out-of-town and difficult to reach during the interview period, firms can at least reach a number that you may be in touch with.

If you change addresses during the recruitment process be sure to advise the firms to which you have applied.

## **Telephone**

Make sure you include your area code.

If you provide more than one number, indicate which number you can be reached at on call day.

This may be a good time to listen to the greeting on your voicemail and ensure it is appropriate.

## **Email**

Make sure you provide the address you use most frequently.

Check your email on a regular basis to avoid a full mailbox. This is important as most firms use email as a primary method of communication.

## **Cover Letter**

Don't rely on the computer to do your proofreading/spellcheck. Firms frequently receive letters containing merge errors where the address refers to one firm and the body of the letter refers to another. A spelling or grammatical error in your cover letter will inevitably negatively affect the reviewer's impression of your application.

Confirm that the contact information is current. Is the person you are writing to still responsible for recruitment? Have you spelled the name of the firm and the name of that person correctly? Do not email firms directly to confirm contact information - such inquiries are not a good demonstration of initiative or reviewing readily available information. While you may obtain information from your Career Office, keep in mind that some information may have recently changed. *Nalpcanada.com* or a firm's website will often be the best place to start.

## **Cover Letter Contents**

Indicate which law school you are attending and what year you are in.

You do not need to repeat information included in your c.v.

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. This is particularly relevant when applying to Boutique firms.

Creativity in cover letters can sometimes backfire – it won't get you an interview and may hurt you. Avoid being overly cute, funny, etc.

## **Résumé**

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.

Do not leave gaps in chronological order without an explanation.

List language skills.

Keep to no more than two pages.

## **Grades**

Review the viDesktop application system (viLawPortal) and/or the firm's website to see what is required. Provide copies of your undergrad and law school marks available to date. Bring official transcripts with you to the interview.

You may wish to include (on your transcript) 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 resume can relate to one poor mark.

## **Submitting an Application**

Do not leave your application until the last minute. Although the Law Society has established deadlines for the submission of applications, **do not wait until this date**. By submitting early you avoid a potential overload to the electronic application system and you enable firms to acknowledge receipt in a timely fashion.

Many firms will indicate whether or not they will be contacting you to arrange an interview. By submitting your application in a timely fashion you will be in a better position to gauge firms' interest. You will also have the security of knowing that your application has been received. Firms do not appreciate students submitting their application the day before the deadline and then calling the firm the next day to confirm it has been received.

## **General**

Under certain circumstances, the Law Society will grant permission for students to interview outside the interview period established by the recruitment guidelines. This may be helpful for out-of-province students who may be in Toronto in advance of the recruitment period. Applications for permission should be submitted directly to the Law Society.