GUIDE TO OTHER APPLICATION MATERIALS: REFERENCES, WRITING SAMPLES AND TRANSCRIPTS

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
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In addition to a resume and cover letter, you should also prepare a list of references, a writing Sample, and your law school transcript for a potential employer in the event that you are asked for them during your legal job search. Some students also find business cards helpful for networking purposes.

A. LIST OF REFERENCES

Your references should never be listed on your resume. Instead, you should create a list of references that can be provided to an employer.

The format of a reference list is simple. Start with your name and contact information at the top (typically the same letterhead format as on your resume), followed by the names and contact information (name, work address, telephone number, e-mail and relationship to you) of three to four people.

Your references should be diverse, preferably a combination of professors and former/current employers. They should also be people who know you well enough to recommend you to other professionals. Always obtain permission from your references prior to submitting your list to employers.

The following is a sample reference list:

LIST OF REFERENCES

1. Professor Thomas Smith
   University of Miami School of Law
   1311 Miller Drive
   Coral Gables, Florida 33146
   (305) 284-2339
   tsmith@miami.edu
   Relationship: First-Year Civil Procedure Instructor

2. Professor Rachael Myers
   University of Miami School of Law
   1311 Miller Drive
   Coral Gables, Florida 33146
   (305) 284-2339
   rmyers@miami.edu
   Relationship: First-Year Legal Writing Instructor

3. Tammy Jones, Esquire
   Smith & Jones, P.A.
   1020 Brickell Avenue
   Miami, Florida 33333
   (305) 555-3456
   tjones@smithjones.com
   Relationship: Supervisor During Summer Clerkship, 2017
B. WRITING SAMPLE

If you are a first-year law student, or do not have prior legal employment experience, you most likely will submit a class brief or memorandum as a writing sample. It can be a memorandum from a summer job, a portion of a moot court brief or part of a memorandum or brief that you wrote for Legal Communication & Research Skills (LComm). If at the time you are applying you have a law journal note or a seminar paper, use that. Use work from LComm if you did well on the assignment, and you feel that this first year effort reflects your current ability.

If you possess legal experience, you may submit a sample from your previous or current legal jobs - after the employer gives you permission and any privileged information is properly redacted. In either case, make certain that your writing sample depicts your best piece of legal writing, as well as your analytical skills.

Do not choose a lengthy writing sample - brevity is key. The ideal length is between 5-10 pages. If you must use an excerpt from a longer document, be sure to note that at the top of the sample or include a cover page explaining that the sample that follows is an excerpt.

The Career Development Office (“CDO”) does not review writing samples, but students may work with their LComm professor or the Academic Achievement Program Writing Dean’s Fellows to perfect their writing samples. Writing Dean’s Fellows may not review any LComm class assignment UNTIL AFTER the assignment has been fully completed and the student has received a letter grade for it.

Remember: Grammar and punctuation must be perfect. Plagiarism can be deadly. Typos are the kiss of death.
SAMPLE WRITING SAMPLE COVER PAGES

I prepared the attached memorandum while working as a summer associate at Smith and Smith. The memorandum examines whether the fees charged by commercial tax preparers for “instant refund loans” violate the state usury laws in Florida, Georgia or Alabama.

To preserve client confidentiality, all individual names, locations and other identifying facts have been changed. I have received permission from the firm to use this memorandum as a writing sample. The writing sample is in its original format and has only minimal grammatical edits after review by my supervising partner.

WRITING SAMPLE

The following Memorandum of Law in Support of Defendant’s Motion for Summary Judgment was the final assignment in my first year, second semester legal writing course. I earned an “A” on the memorandum. The memorandum is my own work product and has not been substantially edited by any other person.

In its original format, the memorandum is 25 pages long. For the purpose of serving as a writing sample, and as a means of reducing its length, this submission includes only the Introduction, Sections A and C of the Argument, and the Conclusion, so that the memorandum is now 15 pages long. A copy of the original memorandum, in its entirety, is available upon request. (If you received an “A” in the course, you can include that as well.)
C. LAW SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

Employers may sometimes ask for a law school transcript to evaluate your overall grade point average and to see how you did in elective classes that relate to their practice areas.

Currently enrolled students may obtain an unofficial copy of their transcript from their CaneLink account. Official transcripts for current students can be ordered using CaneLink or through Credentials Solutions (link available on the law school’s Registrar’s web-page) and are also available for pick up at the Office of the University Registrar, located at 121 Whitten University Center.

For alumni who need an unofficial copy of their transcript, they must complete the Authorization and Release form and email it to LawReg@law.miami.edu. Official transcripts can be ordered through Credentials Solutions (links to the Authorization and Release Form and to Credential Solutions can be found on the law school’s Registrar’s page) and are also available for pick up at the Office of the University Registrar, located at 121 Whitten University Center.

D. BUSINESS CARDS

A business card is a relatively easy, effective, and inexpensive form of networking. You should include your name, contact information and graduation year in the business card. The CDO is pleased to offer business cards for a fee to current students. To order your University of Miami School of Law business card:

1) Go to www.printfarm.com/um.
2) Create an account.
3) Fill in your information.
4) Click on Start Order.
5) In the Coral Gables campus list select UM SCHOOL OF LAW – STUDENTS.
6) You may select from the three (3) templates shown.
7) Input the information you would like on the business card.
8) Review the PROOF and continue to checkout.
9) Enter shipping address (Cards will only be delivered to the UM Law Career Development Office) – Career Development Office, University of Miami School of Law, 1311 Miller Drive, Suite A-112, Coral Gables, FL 33146.
10) Enter Credit Card information. You will not be charged while placing the order. Your credit card will be charged once the order is received.
11) Finalize your order and SEND.

Please note that outside of the pre-approved cards, available through the CDO, University of Miami School of Law does not allow the use of its logo on student business cards.

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