B-Line’s Judicial Clerkship Database (JCDB) & the Paper Application Process

The following step-by-step instructions have been written to support 2Ls who are planning on submitting applications to federal judges throughout the 2014-15 academic year. ¹

Applicants will use the “Clerkships” tab in the B-Line to generate a list of the judges to whom they will be sending paper applications. This database contains the mailing address information for all federal judges and is regularly updated by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. You will export this list to an Excel spreadsheet, follow our exact formatting instructions, and then send your list to Eric Stern in the CDO.

**REMEMBER** - Your paper judge list should not contain any judges who have indicated in their OSCAR profile that they require or accept on-line applications. More information on this point and specifically how to interpret OSCAR postings can be found below.

The data in your paper judge list will be used by FSU assistants to create mail-merged copies of recommendation letters that will contain individualized judge address and salutation information. The letters will be signed and inserted into sealed envelopes that will show the judge’s name and address information in a clear envelope window. You will then insert those letters into your complete paper application packets (see Appendix 1 of the Clerkship Guide for a paper application checklist).

**OUTSIDE RECOMMENDERS** - We do not have the capacity to support the processing of paper letters from outside recommenders. We will, however, support the processing of on-line letters from outside recommenders. More guidance on this subject can be found in the Clerkship Guide (within the section entitled “Overview of Clerkship Application Process”).

**STATE COURT JUDGES** - If you are planning on applying to state court clerkships, please see the section entitled “State Court Judges” in the Clerkship Guide for advice on how to determine when individual courts are hiring and their specific application requirements. If those courts require recommendation letters, we would recommend manually adding these judges to your Paper Judge List. (State court judges do not participate in OSCAR).

**HONOR CODE REMINDER:** Remember, it is a violation of the Honor Code for you to open the faculty recommendation letters that we will be making available to you in sealed envelopes. If for some reason you do not end up using any of the faculty recommendation letters we have prepared for you, please either return those letters to the CDO for shredding or make arrangements to shred those letters on your own.

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¹ 3Ls and Alums must also follow these instructions in order to obtain paper recommendation letters from recommenders associated with Berkeley Law. If you need a B-Line alumni account, please send your request to us at career@law.berkeley.edu.
BUILDING YOUR PAPER JUDGE LIST

(1) Log-in to the B-Line with your CAL ID and Pass Phrase.

(2) Click on the “Clerkships” tab.

(3) You can begin building your judge list by either using the basic or detailed search functions, such as circuit codes or city/state search parameters.

(4) Once you have built your judge list, you should use the “Export to Excel” feature to download contact information for judges. Save your list using a clear file name label (Student X Paper Judge List_01_15_15). It’s important to “date-stamp” your judge lists because it will help to ensure that the FSU Assistants are processing each new batch of letters as you submit subsequent paper judge lists.

NOTE: Please do your best to make your first judge list as comprehensive as is possible and avoid sending in lists with one, two or three judges once a week.

(5) Next, open up your list in Excel. You will need to eliminate a number of columns in the original spreadsheet in order for it to conform to the required Berkeley Law paper judge list template. Go ahead and delete the following fields from the spreadsheet: phone, fax, email, circuit code, district code, judge type, “Position Available in OSCAR,” OSCAR - Online, OSCAR - Paper, OSCAR - Email, and OSCAR - Fax.

(6) Before you submit your paper judge list to Eric Stern, however, you will need to make a good faith effort to verify the hiring information for all of the judges in your spreadsheet.

(7) OSCAR is the authoritative resource you should be using to research clerkship vacancies. (If you have not yet set-up your account in OSCAR, please see our OSCAR Quick Guide for step-by-step instructions). You should NOT search for clerkship hiring information in the B-Line’s Clerkship Database - that resource should be used only for the purpose of building your paper judge list (once you have used OSCAR to verify which judges are hiring and in what format they require applications). Be sure to sign up for email alerts in OSCAR so that you are notified of new openings in your targeted jurisdictions. Before you begin using OSCAR to research clerkship vacancies, here are a couple of items to keep in mind.

(8) Judge is Hiring Only for 2017 Term and/or requires clerkship or post-graduate legal experience: Before you submit applications to those judges who are only hiring for the 2017 (or 2018!) term, be sure to think carefully about whether you are definitely willing to commit to a clerkship this far out and whether it would work personally and professionally. Be mindful particularly of those judges who express either very strong preferences or requirements - such as that applicants must be 3Ls or experienced attorneys; or those circuit court judges who require that an applicant first complete a district court clerkship. For example, if you are very interested in and competitive for a 2017 term clerkship with a circuit court judge who expresses a strong preference for applicants who will be coming directly from a district court clerkship - go ahead and apply - as long as you are geographically...
flexible, willing to hustle and network, and work closely with Eric Stern and your advocates on landing a 2016 term district court clerkship.

(9) **Judge Full for 2016 Term - No Info about 2017 Hiring:** If a judge has indicated in OSCAR that she is full for 2016, but has not provided any info about her 2017 term hiring plans - you can submit a paper application to her chambers (but with the caveats expressed in #8).

(10) **Judge No Longer Hires Term Clerks.** Some judges - including a handful that have been on senior status for a considerable period of time - may no longer hire term clerks - something that may be denoted in their OSCAR profile. You should not submit an application to any of these judges.

(11) **OSCAR Tip Sheets & Video Tutorials.** When you are ready to begin doing your searches in OSCAR, we would strongly recommend reviewing the well-written OSCAR Tip Sheets and Video Tutorials, both of which can be found under the “Resources” tab on your home page. You might want to start with the Tip Sheets entitled “Search for Positions” and “Use the Advanced Search.” And you should refer back to the master list of OSCAR Tip Sheets should you encounter any other challenges as you begin building your on-line applications (for those judges who require or accept them).

(12) Remember, every federal judge has an OSCAR account - but not all federal judges’ chambers provide updated information about their hiring plans.

(13) To make this guidance more concrete, I did a search on August 11, 2014 of the 47 Article III District Court Judges in the Southern District of New York. (Please don’t rely on my search results as judges frequently update their hiring information).

**Judges who have posted positions.** Judge Oetken, for example, has three 2016 term clerkship positions listed. As of 8/11/13, they were still available. If they were no longer available and the judge’s chambers had updated their OSCAR profile, you might see in OSCAR that the positions are now labeled as “Filled” or “Expired.” You do not want to submit paper applications to judges who have positions that are listed as either “Filled” or “Expired.”

Judge Oetken has also indicated that he is currently accepting applications for these positions and will continue doing so through September 10, 2015. And you can also see that he requires on-line applications (which means you will apply only through OSCAR and will not submit a paper application). In order to find out more information about the position and Judge Oetken’s hiring preferences, you will need to click on his hyperlinked last name.

First, you will want to visit his “Judge Details” tab. This will provide you with additional information, including (assuming the judge’s chambers has filled it out) how many term and/or career clerks they have. And, as you can see from the “Hiring Practices” section of Judge Oetken’s profile, he is reviewing applications for 2016 term positions on a rolling basis.
Now, in order to find out more, you should click on the “Clerkship List” tab. Once there, click on the “View and Apply” tab under “Options.” This is the place where the judge’s chambers may have provided more specific information about the clerkship itself (e.g., post-graduate experience required/preferred, practice-area expertise sought, etc.). It is also the place - for those judges like Oetken who accept or require on-line applications - where you will begin the process of building your on-line application. (See our OSCAR Quick Guide for step by step instructions on how to build your on-line applications).

As you can see from the “Description” section of Judge Oetken’s available 2016 term clerkship position description, he requires applicants to specify in their cover letters whether they would be interested also in being considered for a clerkship position for future terms (e.g., 2017, 2018).

**Judges who accept paper and on-line applications.** As of 8/11/14, Judge Nathan was accepting paper, on-line and email applications for her available 2016 term clerkship positions. We would recommend sending an on-line application in circumstances like these (it’s also the quickest way to send an application because on-line applications are released to chambers as soon as they are finalized and because it takes very little time for FSU Assistants - with proper notice from you - to fulfill recommendation requests in OSCAR). Again, as advised above, be sure to first review the “Judge Details” tab and then the clerkship position itself for more specific hiring information and instructions. As you can see in Judge Nathan’s “Hiring Practices” section, she indicates a preference for candidates with at least one year of post-graduate experience (practicing or clerking) AND states that she will not make offers to candidates without seeing at least 3 semesters of law school grades.

**Email Applications.** If a judge ONLY accepts email applications, you should proceed as follows. Put together your application materials in one single PDF document. Then, send a judge list to me with any and all of the judges to whom you are applying who ONLY accept email applications (including in the body of your email to me the email addresses to which applications should be sent along with any other specific instructions of which I should be aware). This email also must contain the names of your recommenders. I will forward your request on to the FSU Assistants supporting your recommenders, they will send me PDF letters, and then I will add the recommendation letters to the packet and email it to chambers. Requests to email applications to judges who accept paper applications or on-line applications in OSCAR will be rejected.

**Judges who have not posted positions - but have hyper-linked last names and hiring information in their Judge Details tab.** Take Judge Fairbank (in the Central District of California), for example. When you click on her last name and review the information in her Judge Details tab, you see that she does not hire term clerks anymore. Therefore, you should not send her an application.

(14) **Judges who have not posted positions and do not have hyper linked last names.** Take Judge Keller (also in the Central District of California), for example. His last name is not hyper-linked and, thus, there is no available information on his hiring plans. You can see from the Alumni Clerkship Directory that he has not hired Berkeley Law term clerks before. And if you do a quick Google search on him, you will see that he has been on senior status.
since 1999. Thus, there is a high likelihood that he no longer hires term clerks. However, if you find active judges in other jurisdictions whose last names are not “hyperlinked,” you could email a former or current clerk (if applicable; contact info will be in the Alumni Clerkship Directory), or you could call chambers (see this resource for chambers contact information). If you end up calling chambers, identify yourself as a 2L from Berkeley Law, indicate that you reviewed the judge’s profile in OSCAR and state that you are calling to inquire about the judge’s hiring plans for 2016 (and 2017 if you are interested in that term as well).

**Judges who have not posted positions and have hyperlinked names, but have no hiring information whatsoever in their Judge Details.** Take Judge Lodge (in the District of New Mexico), for example. He has not updated his OSCAR profile since 2008 and has no hiring information in his Judge Details section. Before sending Judge Lodge a paper application, you might want to call his chambers.

(15) Once you have verified the hiring information (to the best of your ability), you are ready to put your list into its final format. We have provided a sample paper judge list template to give you a sense of what your list should look like when you are done making the following formatting changes.

(16) Then, you will want to go ahead and create two new fields for insertion at the beginning of your spreadsheet: Column A – Applicant Name and Column B - GRAD YR.

(17) Once you have deleted the extraneous columns (i.e., those not included in the sample paper judge list template; see #5) and added the new required columns referenced in #16, you will sort each of the worksheets by the “Last_Name” field. (See the paper judge list template for guidance).

(18) You should then email this clearly labeled Excel file (e.g., Last Name_First Name_Paper Judge List_01_15_15) to Eric Stern. That email (and every subsequent judge list email) must include the names of your faculty recommenders. Not including this information will delay the processing of your paper recommendation letters.

(19) If your judge list deviates from the above format, you will be asked to reformat and resubmit your file.

(20) If your judge list was formatted properly, Eric Stern will instruct the FSU Assistants to begin processing your letters.

(21) We will email you when your letters are available for pick-up in the CDO!