

# The Judicial Clerkship Application Guide - For Alumni Applicants

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This guide was designed to aid those who are applying to clerkships after they have graduated from Berkeley Law or as spring semester 3L students (“Alumni Applicants”). Please note that this guide is a supplement and not a substitute for the [Judicial Clerkship Application Guide](#),<sup>1</sup> which is updated annually. If you are pursuing clerkships as an alumnus -- we are here to help, please let us know if we can offer support! You can sign up for our alumni clerkship seekers list [here](#).<sup>2</sup>

The following provides answers to common questions and explains important logistical information for applying as an Alumni Applicant.

## 1. Accessing Password-Protected Berkeley Law Resources

Many of the resources on the CDO website are password protected and you will need account information to access them. You can access our Judicial Clerkships website by entering “cdoaccess” as your password.

**If you graduated in 2009 or later:** You should be able to use your CAL ID and Passphrase to access our password protected materials.

**If you graduated before 2009:** please contact the CDO at [career@law.berkeley.edu](mailto:career@law.berkeley.edu) to request access to the latest versions of our clerkship resources.

Password protected resources include: the Alumni Clerkship & Judicial Staff [Directory](#),<sup>3</sup> Judicial Application [Guide](#),<sup>4</sup> and the Alumni Clerkship [Evaluations](#).<sup>5</sup>

**Counseling Appointments & Judge Addresses:** In order to access [b-Line](#)<sup>6</sup> (our jobs database & counseling appointment center) and the Judicial Clerkship Database (JCDB) which is on b-Line, you will need a unique alumni account. If you do not yet have an alumni account, please request one at [career@law.berkeley.edu](mailto:career@law.berkeley.edu). Once you have an account, you can access all the resources on b-Line, including to review clerkship and externship interview evaluations and to set up an appointment with the Director of Judicial Clerkships, Anna Han.

## 2. Letters of Recommendation

One of the most common issues that comes up with alumni clerkship applicants are stale letters of recommendation. Best practice is for your letters of recommendation to be **dated no more than a year from the date you submit your application**. So, if you are submitting an application on July 1, 2021, your letters should be dated no earlier than July 1, 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.law.berkeley.edu/students/career\\_services/forstudents/pw/CDO\\_Judicial\\_Clerkship\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.law.berkeley.edu/students/career_services/forstudents/pw/CDO_Judicial_Clerkship_Guide.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://groups.google.com/g/BerkeleyAlumClerkships>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.law.berkeley.edu/students/career\\_services/forstudents/pw/AlumniClerkshipDirectory\\_Public2.pdf](https://www.law.berkeley.edu/students/career_services/forstudents/pw/AlumniClerkshipDirectory_Public2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.law.berkeley.edu/students/career\\_services/forstudents/pw/CDO\\_Judicial\\_Clerkship\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.law.berkeley.edu/students/career_services/forstudents/pw/CDO_Judicial_Clerkship_Guide.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.law.berkeley.edu/php-programs/jcdb/feedback.php?report=judge\\_list](https://www.law.berkeley.edu/php-programs/jcdb/feedback.php?report=judge_list)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/careers/b-line/>

**If you already have letters of recommendation on file at Berkeley Law, it is necessary to notify your letter-writer(s) that you are applying to clerkships and to ask them to update your letters if they are out of date.** Specifically, you should ask for a refreshed date and provide your recommenders with any important new updated career information. This check-in is also a great opportunity to express gratitude for your recommenders' time and continued support. Recommenders do not need to write brand new letters – but unless you reach out, we cannot verify that your letter is still valid, and **we cannot provide outdated letters without your recommenders' approval.**

**a. OSCAR Applications**

Remember to check in with your recommenders before making OSCAR recommendation requests as an Alumni Applicant. **Best Practice:** the week before you create a draft application on OSCAR, send your recommender an e-mail (cc/bcc Anna at ahan@law.berkeley.edu) letting them know that you are going to be applying to clerkships and hope to use their letter with a refreshed date.

If you applied to clerkships as a 2L, you likely had letters of recommendation uploaded into OSCAR that were automatically attached to your clerkship applications for that application cycle. However, this automatic attach feature ended 12 months after your letters of recommendation were first uploaded. After that time, when you apply to a clerkship via OSCAR and you select a recommender for a draft application, OSCAR will send an e-mail request within a week to your recommenders asking them to upload a new letter. For faculty recommenders, this e-mail also goes to their Faculty Support Unit Assistant, who will not automatically attach a letter of recommendation unless it is dated within 12 months of the request. **It is your responsibility to reach out to your recommenders before making an OSCAR request to ask that they refresh the date on your letter of recommendation.** Failing to do so can lead to confusion and a delay in your application or potentially complicate your relationship with your recommender.

*Potential Scenario:* If you are applying to a clerkship one year out of law school and try to attach a letter of recommendation that a professor wrote for you 2 years ago when you applied as a 2L, that professor's FSU Assistant will receive a request for a letter, see the untimely date, and ask the professor if they are in contact with you. If the professor has not heard from you in 2 years, this is often an uncomfortable surprise. It will reflect much more highly on you if you have been diligent in following up with them and they know that you are still using their letter of recommendation and the request is expected.

**b. Paper/E-mail Letters of Recommendation for Non-OSCAR Judges**

Please follow this [guide](#)<sup>7</sup> for paper<sup>8</sup> or e-mail letters of recommendation to be processed and sent. It is important to let us know in your cover e-mail if you have any deadlines for processing letters of recommendation.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o889BLambtHdcB7XSq-9Xdx8wBm31QGS/view?usp=sharing>

<sup>8</sup> While the law school is closed, we will not have the capacity to print and mail letters and will send non-OSCAR recommendation letters by e-mail only.

### **3. Timeline for Applying**

When you are applying as an alumni clerkship applicant, there is no uniform “timeline” for applying to clerkships. Unlike applying as a 2L law student, there is no set date as to when you should submit your applications -- instead, the key is to be flexible and ready to apply as openings arise or when a judge may be looking to hire. Some state court clerkships (especially state supreme courts and the Delaware courts) have defined hiring periods or deadlines, which you can identify by going to that court’s website. However, most state and federal judges hire just once (at most) per year, so determining when to submit your applications can be tricky.

For federal courts, as an initial step, you should set up your OSCAR account to receive hiring notifications (daily or weekly). From there, you can monitor and apply to clerkship openings as they arise (before you apply, it is always wise to reach out to alumni clerks on the alumni clerkship database to gain valuable intel on whether a clerkship will be a good fit or not). Judges hire at all times during the calendar year and an OSCAR posting or personal tip is the best way to assure that they are currently accepting applications. However, do not be disappointed if you do not hear back quickly -- an OSCAR posting may stay open for many months and hiring decisions and interviews can take place months after you have submitted an application.

For state courts, first check out the court’s website. You can also review the State Court Resources [here](#).<sup>9</sup>

If you are hoping to do a broader application push, applying to many judges at the same time, it can make sense to apply close in time to the 2L hiring timeline (for 2022 clerkships, for example, that would mean submitting your application in early June 2021). Please be sure to follow the guide above for letters of recommendation to non-OSCAR judges, and reach out to the CDO’s Director of Judicial Clerkships, Anna Han, so we can support you through the process!

Good Luck!

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/careers/for-students/judicial-clerkships/state-court-resources/>