

The VLS Academic & Career Road Map

A Three-Year Guide to Finding a Job

1L Year: 2011-12

DATE	ACTIVITY	WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT	NOTES
August 20-24	<p>Orientation Week You'll hear a brief overview of this Road Map and of how Career Services will help you develop the job search skills you'll need so you will be successful in finding your first job.</p>	<p>The Road Map helps you focus on why you are here: to get a terrific legal education and to get your first post-graduate job. The Road Map will be your guide to all three years.</p>	
September-October	<p>Attend Programs on Campus To encourage first-year students to focus on their course work, the Office of Career Services schedules no activities specifically geared to 1Ls during these two months. But you should keep an eye out for speakers on campus who interest you and Career Services events that may be helpful. Watch the Career Services newsletter, <i>Career Strategies</i>, and the daily listing of activities, Town Crier, for what's going on.</p>	<p>While it's important to focus most of your attention on your first-year classes, it's also smart not to ignore some of the early opportunities at VLS to think about possible careers. Listening to speakers and attending Career Services events are good ways to start to focus on the future. Attending some of these programs will be the beginning of a career-long focus on networking.</p>	
November	<p>Introduction to Career Services Late in the semester, two of your Legal Writing classes will be devoted to Career Services topics, which is a good way to start to focus on your résumé and your options for the summer. While slightly oversimplified, there are three ways to get a summer position:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring job listings on the web 2. Contacting directly employers you're interested in 3. Networking with lawyers and other professionals in fields that interest you 	<p>Deadlines for some summer positions, particularly with larger law firms, the federal government and other organizations, are in late fall -- and these deadlines can sneak up on you. So if you think you may be interested, you will want to have your résumé and cover letter ready. Even if you are in the joint degree program and will be taking classes on campus in the summer, this is still the right time to get your résumé and cover letter in order. If an opportunity arises for an informational interview, you'll be ready. The Career Services web pages have samples of résumés and cover letters.</p>	

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November-December	<p>Start Thinking About the Summer In addition to preparing your job application materials, here are some other things to do later in the first semester:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the weekly <i>Career Strategies</i> newsletter for specific Career Services programs aimed at 1Ls. • Start to monitor on-line job postings for summer internships: new positions are listed almost every day. • Check out some of the guides and other helpful sections on the Career Services web pages. There is a great deal you can do on your own. 	<p>We want you to get into the habit of making regular visits to Symplicity, the web-based recruitment management system used by VLS. It's updated daily and has the latest job listings and notices of events and special programs. If you have questions about your Symplicity password, contact Shelly Parker, Career Services office manager, sparker@vermontlaw.edu. And, of course, there are a number of other excellent web sites that carry job listings. <i>Career Strategies</i> will list many of them. A career counselor can point you to other web sites, too.</p> <p>Even if you're not ready to apply for the postings, it's a good idea to become familiar with the specific background and experience that various employers are seeking.</p>	
December-January	<p>Best Uses of the Semester Break Here are two things you should plan to do over your winter break:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start to practice your networking skills by conducting at least two informational interviews with people in your hometown involved in some aspect of the law. • Start to map out your preferred and back-up summer job plans. Wondering where to start? Check out the Career Services web site, which has a wealth of helpful guides to thinking about possible careers. 	<p>Even if you don't think you want to practice law in your hometown, the more experience you can get in networking with professionals, the better off you'll be. If you don't know any lawyers to contact in your hometown, make an appointment to see a career counselor, who can help you develop a list of VLS alumni in your area who are willing to be contacted.</p>	

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	<p>Boot Camp This is a <u>mandatory</u> two-day professional development program, including an afternoon networking reception. Featured topics are: interview skills, assessing your strengths, thinking about what career paths might be right for you, networking strategies, professional etiquette, finding a summer internship and what to expect from a summer position. (A detailed schedule will be emailed to 1Ls before exams.)</p>	<p>MILESTONE This is the official start to your professional working career in the law. Before you get caught up in second-semester classes, it is critical that you are thinking about the summer and beginning to put together a plan. And, if you talk to any students who attended last January's first-ever VLS Boot Camp, you'll hear that this was fun. No cases to read. No papers to write. The focus is on you and how to start to figure out career options and to be prepared for the job search.</p>	
February	<p>Spring On-Campus Interviews This is the start of the spring on-campus interview program. Employers who will be participating are usually from nearby firms, non-profit organizations and government agencies. Check <i>Career Strategies</i> and Symplicity for the latest listings and deadlines. This is also a good time to start to line up summer job interviews for spring recess.</p>	<p>Keep in mind that employers who agree to come to campus to interview VLS students have a strong preference for VLS students. Think broadly about the possibilities and plan to take part in the interview process. Some employers who are unable to come to campus may offer the option of a video interview. The Career Services office has the equipment to facilitate such interviews.</p>	
March	<p>Five Things to Focus On</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult a career counselor about summer opportunities • Keep an eye on Symplicity and other web sites that have job listings in fields you're interested in for new daily postings • Sign up for on-campus interviews • Attend professional development programs offered by Career Services • Plan job interviews and informational interviews for spring break 	<p>Plan ahead to make the best use of your spring break. Can you line up job interviews for summer internships? Set up networking meetings?</p> <p>If you're not in the joint-degree program, legal experience during the summer is the best way to start to build an impressive résumé.</p> <p>And if you are in the joint-degree program, while you'll be on campus for the summer, you should still be looking for programs to attend and other networking opportunities.</p>	

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March 12	<p>Special VLS Washington, DC, Job Fair If you are interested in working in Washington for the summer or after graduation (or both), this is a must-attend event. A number of employers who are committed to interviewing VLS students will be participating. Watch the web and <i>Career Strategies</i> for details.</p>	<p>This is the best way to make contacts and to be interviewed for internships and permanent positions in Washington. The first spring Job Fair last March was a huge success for VLS students.</p>	<p>The Job Fair is scheduled for the first day of the spring break, with a chartered bus taking you down on March 11 and returning late on March 12. You can sign up to ride roundtrip or one-way.</p>
March 27	<p>Academic Advising Fair This is a <u>mandatory</u> program that gives an overview of course selection for the next two years followed by smaller informational sessions on experiential programs and other academic opportunities.</p>	<p>MILESTONE Today's meeting starts a crucial two-week period when you will draw up an academic and career plan for the next two years. The thinking you've already done on career options will be a critical part of your planning.</p>	
March 27- April 15	<p>Plan the Next Four Semesters You'll be assigned a super adviser – a member of the faculty or staff who has been specially trained to advise you on how to make the best use of the next four semesters.</p>	<p>These are among the most important meetings you'll attend in the spring. You'll be thinking about possible career paths and lining up classes for the next four semesters that will best position you.</p>	
April-May	<p>Press On with Your Internship Applications If you haven't yet lined up a summer internship, here are two things you should be doing now:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with your career counselor to brainstorm other options and approaches. • Check the job postings: many summer positions are not listed until late spring. 	<p>Better late than never. Rather than sit out the summer because you've gotten off to a slow start, we urge you to look for opportunities now because it will still be possible to line up a legal experience for the summer.</p>	

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Mid-May	<p>End of Semester Check List</p> <p>These are the career and academic basics you should have taken care of in your first year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Met with your super adviser and career counselor to sketch out likely course selection for the next four semesters and to start to develop a career plan <input type="checkbox"/> Developed a résumé that reflects your accomplishments to date <input type="checkbox"/> Developed a general cover letter that can be easily revised for specific employers as needed <input type="checkbox"/> Practiced networking skills <input type="checkbox"/> Attended a mock interviewing session <input type="checkbox"/> Have a plan in place for your first summer 		
June-August	<p>Make the Most of Your Summer Experience</p> <p>And be sure to keep an eye out for a memo from Career Services reminding you of the mid-summer deadlines for your second summer job search!</p>	<p>What you do this first summer will help to build your résumé and give you insights into the kinds of legal work you will want to do long-term.</p>	

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