

# The VLS Academic & Career Road Map

## A Three-Year Guide to Finding a Job

*3L Year: 2011-12*

DATE	ACTIVITY	WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT	NOTES
July-August	<p><b><u>Summer Deadlines</u></b></p> <p><b>1. Entry Level.</b> A basic rule in the search for a job: it's never too early. July and August are the time to start planning what you want to do after graduation. Many federal, state and local governments, large law firms and some larger public interest organizations recruit law students in the fall for entry-level positions. Keep an eye on Symplicity because many of those opportunities for on-campus interviews, video conference interviews and job fairs have early deadlines. This list is updated frequently throughout the summer.</p> <p><b>2. Judicial Clerkships.</b> To learn more about serving as a judicial law clerk, consult the Judicial Clerkship Information Handbook on the VLS Career Services web site. Required application materials and deadlines are critical and vary from state to state. For details consult the VLS Guide to State Judicial Clerkships on the VLS web site. There is one crucial deadline for federal applications – the day after Labor Day, when the applications are distributed on-line to each judge's chambers.</p>	<p>Depending on your interests, <b><u>many deadlines to apply for entry-level positions are in August and September.</u></b></p> <p>All employers interviewing on campus are doing so because they are specifically interested in hiring VLS students. That means you should try to find ways to take advantage of their interest, even if they do not represent what might be your dream job today.</p> <p>Typically, 15% of the third-year students begin their careers as judicial law clerks, primarily with state court judges. You should consider this option.</p> <p>Focusing on the deadlines and materials required is critical, particularly for the federal positions and the states with early deadlines.</p>	

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September	<p><b>Seven Things to Do in September</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you met with a career counselor to discuss the relationship between your job search and the bar exam?</li> <li>• Once you've decided where you want to take the bar, double-check that state's requirements, particularly the deadline to register</li> <li>• Check Symplicity regularly for the latest on-campus interviews, job postings and other announcements</li> <li>• Read the weekly <i>Career Strategies</i> e-newsletter for information about programs and special events that can be helpful to your job search</li> <li>• Watch for notices about speakers coming to campus and attend those sessions in areas of the law that interest you – these can also be excellent networking opportunities</li> <li>• Explore whether a part-time externship in the spring could help prepare you for your professional future</li> <li>• Begin to plan for the 7<sup>th</sup> semester if you are pursuing that option for finishing your MELP degree</li> </ul>	<p>This is not the time to procrastinate; it is the time for action. Working with your career counselor, you should develop a job-search strategy and then focus on completing the details.</p> <p>Symplicity and other web sites have job listings that you should be monitored; they are updated frequently.</p>	
September 1	<p><b>Special 3L Career Program</b> This refresher course during the lunch break will help you focus on your job search.</p>	<p><b>MILESTONE</b> Planning for your post-graduation career, including the bar exam, starts today.</p>	Chase, 12:45 to 2, bag lunch included

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October	<p><b>Mid-Semester Reminders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you worked with a career counselor to map out your preferred career plan for after graduation?</li> <li>• Have you developed a backup plan?</li> <li>• Have you registered for a bar review course?</li> <li>• Have you participated in some networking opportunities?</li> </ul>		
October 11	<p><b>Special VLS Fall Job Fair in Washington</b>            If you are interested in working in Washington, DC, after graduation, this could be a helpful event. You will have the opportunity for informational interviews with some key Washington employers. Watch <i>Career Strategies</i> and <i>Symplicity</i> for additional details.</p>	<p>This could be your best way to make contacts and to network with some VLS alums and other potential employers in the Washington area and to learn about relevant hiring practices and timelines.</p>	<p>The Job Fair is scheduled for the last day of fall break, with a chartered bus bringing you back to campus late on October 11.</p>
November-December	<p><b>End of Semester Check List</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you attended at least two career programs this semester?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you seen a career counselor this semester?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you set up networking opportunities and informational interviews for the semester break?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you thought ahead to the summer when you will want to have housing and some money set aside while you are studying for the bar exam?</li> </ul>	<p>Be sure to talk with your career counselor about where you're planning to take the bar exam. Each state's deadlines and other rules are different.</p>	

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<b>January</b>	<p><b>What to Do in January</b> As your final semester gets underway, here are four things you should do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See your career counselor for possible revisions to your job-search plan</li> <li>• Network with two alums in the field you hope to practice in – in-person or by phone</li> <li>• Line up job interviews for spring break</li> <li>• Monitor Symplicity and other job sites on the web once a day</li> </ul>	<p><b>MILESTONE</b> Update your plan. After testing the waters in areas you think you'd like to practice, it would be smart to go back to your career counselor to consult on your results up to this point. It may be time to broaden your plan.</p>	
<b>February</b>	<p><b>On-Campus Interviews</b> This is the start of the spring on-campus interview program. Employers who will be participating are usually from smaller firms, non-profit organizations and some nearby government agencies. Check <i>Career Strategies</i> and Symplicity frequently for the latest listings and deadlines.</p>	<p>Remember 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 help facilitate such opportunities.</p>	
<b>March</b>	<p><b>Step Up Your Job Applications</b> Redouble your job-search efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New job listings are posted everyday on Symplicity and other job sites on the web.</li> <li>• Watch for on-campus interviews. Be flexible and open to opportunities that may not be your first choice.</li> <li>• How can you make the best use of spring recess?</li> <li>• If you are a joint-degree student and plan to take advantage of the 7<sup>th</sup> semester option to complete your MELP degree, you should meet with a career counselor to discuss the various ways to take maximum advantage of this opportunity.</li> </ul>		

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April	<p><b>Stay Focused</b>            Check the job listings: many positions don't get posted on job sites on the web until late spring. While this is a bit of an oversimplification, we have found that there are generally three ways to get that first post-graduate job:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring job listings on the web</li> <li>2. Contacting directly employers you're interested in working for</li> <li>3. Networking with lawyers and other professionals in fields that interest you</li> </ol>	In other words, you should be pro-active!	
May	<p><b>New Jobs Listings Are Posted Daily</b>            Stay in touch. New job postings come in everyday. In a typical year, about one-third to one-half of the members of the graduating class have lined up their first job by graduation day. So if you're still looking, don't despair. Be optimistic. Be energetic. You will find a job.</p>	Most smaller law firms, government agencies and non-profits hire on an as-needed basis or after you have passed a bar exam. Usually this means that they do not make hiring decisions until the fall after you have graduated. If these are the kinds of jobs you're pursuing, it is imperative that you have a game plan in place now for the fall.	
May 21	<p><b>Commencement</b>  <i>Congratulations!</i></p>		
June-July	<p><b>Bar Exams</b>            Study for the bar. Now, it's the most important step along your career path.</p>	<p><b>MILESTONE</b>            Keep in mind that many employers won't even consider your application until you have passed the bar. Once your final exams (and commencement) are behind you, you have to focus 100% on the bar. Nothing is more important to your long-term success and your short-term objective of finding a job than to devote yourself to preparing for the bar exam – and passing it.</p>	

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<p><b>August-September-October</b></p>	<p><b>Stay in Touch with Career Services</b>            We can help you after the bar, too.            While you're waiting for bar results, look for temporary, even unpaid law-related opportunities to round out your experience.            Stay positive. You'll get a job. Our experience shows that most graduates find their first jobs after they have passed the bar.</p>	<p>It's often the case that a temporary job taken to build experience while you're waiting for bar results can lead to being hired for a permanent position.</p>	

August 23, 2011