

COVER LETTERS FOR JUDICIAL EXTERNSHIPS

Career Services has an excellent guide on cover letters that covers format, content, and gives samples. Please see their guide, but consider the following Dos and Don'ts when drafting a cover letter for a judicial externship:

- 1) Do be formal and deferential

Remember this is a letter to a judge, so be formal and deferential.

- 2) Do not restate your resume

It is likely that the first thing the Judge will do is read your resume. Cover letters should not simply restate the information located there, but give you some depth and character. You can highlight something from your resume, but don't just restate your resume.

- 3) Do tell the Judge more about yourself

Judges will sometimes be looking for something specific about you that will benefit chambers; they know you will benefit and grow from the experience of working with them.

Work and volunteer experience does not always cover your uniqueness, so feel free to provide background information or skill sets that might not be relevant from reading your resume. Please use your best judgment.

- 4) Do be a strong writer and advocate for yourself

Judges will be looking for how you express yourself in every document you submit, so remember to convey your thoughts in concise sentences free of any grammar or spelling errors.

Be candid and sincere, and write without hyperbole and you will be the best advocate for yourself.

- 5) Consider a wider audience

You will address your letter to the judge and be tempted to do research and tailor letters to each particular judge, but a lot of times, judges have their law clerks read the materials first and select their favorites. Draft a cover letter that would interest a wide audience - then, if called in for an interview, you can research the judge and clerks to highlight things you think they might want to know about you during your interview.