

The Legal Resume

Devra Hermosilla - Assistant Dean
Career & Professional Development



The Legal Resume – Sections to Include

- Header
- Education
- Experience
- Community Involvement
- Languages/Special Skills
- Interests

JOHN DOE

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EDUCATION

Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2023 | Lewis & Clark Law School, Portland Oregon

- GPA 3.2 (Top 33%)
- Scholarship Recipient, Prestigious Scholarship Title
- Editor, *Environmental Law Review*
- Vice President, Immigration Law Student Group

Bachelor of Science, magna cum laude | June 2019 | Portland State University | Portland, Oregon

- Major: Political Science; Minor: Law and Legal Studies
- GPA 3.88
 - Member, International Political Science Organization

EXPERIENCE

Certified Law Student | May 2020 – August 2020

Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, Portland, Oregon

- Interviewed witnesses and victims in preparation for trial while practicing trauma informed strategies
- Drafted and negotiating pre-trial offers and corresponded with defense counsel
- Represented the State of Oregon in Misdemeanor cases (for motions and trial), including possession of narcotics, driving while suspended, DUI, reckless driving, criminal mischief, and interfering with a police officer
- Represented the State of Oregon in county wide mental health docket matters including probation status checks, probation violations, and 9 civil commitment hearings
- Conducted one full jury trial on a double count of failure to perform the duties of a driver (double hit and run)
]Guilty both Counts)

Summer Law Clerk | May 2019 – August 2019

American Constitution Society, Washington, D.C.

- Conducted legal research on potential U.S. appellate circuit splits and prepared memoranda analyzing findings
- Reviewed and documented findings from election official trainings for nine U.S. states
- Drafted issue briefs on impact of recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions on active criminal justice cases throughout U.S. circuits

Outreach Coordinator | October 2017 – July 2018

Portland State University's Middle East Studies Center, Portland Oregon

- Collaborated with Director to organize and promote events regarding international relations and multicultural awareness
- Developed an annual strategic plan for educational awareness and community outreach
- Served as a liaison to community partners located throughout the United States
- Balanced conflicting desires of partners to find mutual understandings and commitments
- Oversaw all compliance measures with the U.S. Department of Education and State
- Oversaw an \$83,000 grant focused on multi-cultural experiences in North Cyprus

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Workers' Rights Education Volunteer |  Portland, Oregon | May 2018 – Present

LANGUAGE

Spanish | fluent

Header



- Name
- Address (City/State)
- Phone
- Email
- LinkedIn (optional)
- Match to all Materials
- Include smaller on p.2+

Education

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- Most Recent on Top
- Law Degree in Progress =
Juris Doctor Candidate, 2023
- Include Educational Related Honors and
Activities within the Education Section
(that's where employers look for it)

Experience

- Most Recent on Top
- Experience is Experience
- Include Months & Years
- Title, Employer, Dates, Location, and Duties / Accomplishments

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Community Involvement

- Position, Organization, Years, Location, indication of work performed
- Show leadership, community interest, topical interests, business development ability

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Workers' Rights Education Volunteer | [VQZ](#), Portland, Oregon | May 2018 – Present

Languages / Special Skills

- Language and proficiency
- Special Skills include certifications, abilities beyond those expected for a law student

Interests

- Optional Category
- Judicial Clerkship applications
- Include items that are not average but instead demonstrate high skill, determination, dedication, or are unique

Top 10 Tips

1. Keep Concise
2. Use Elegant Format
3. Make Easy to Scan
4. Tell a Story
5. Avoid First-Person
6. Use Active Verbs
7. Describe Work
8. Emphasize Skills
9. Avoid Fluff
10. Proofread

Keep Concise

Your Resume is the Highlight ... Not the Novel

- 1 Page is the Rule for Student Resumes
 - Exceptions: Academia, Lots of publications, Extensive relevant prior career
- Avoid prose
 - Use bullets, clauses, highlights
- Don't Use 10 words when you can say it in 5
conducted research in regards to motion to dismiss = researched law on dismissal;
including but not limited to = such as; deleting "a" "the"

Use Elegant Format

Legal Resumes are Expected to be Conservative

- Conservative does not mean “Boring”
 - Elegant, simple, clear
- Layout should not be crowded
 - Use good white space (squint test)
- Avoid flashy templates
 - Use color sparingly and lawyerly
 - Use graphics only to enhance, not for splash
- Look at but don't copy resume models

Make Easy to Scan

Resumes are scanned, not read

- 30 second rule
 - You have 30 seconds to impress the recruiter
- Make important information jump to attention
 - Use bullets, headers, bold, italic
- Use font that is easy to read
 - Times New Roman, Arial, similar
- Avoid complicated formats and graphics that can fail in technology transfer

Tell a Story

Speak to your Audience about You for THIS Job

- Use the language, ethos, pathos of your audience
- Tailor your resume to the job, multiple resumes
- Show your uniqueness, quirky, human side
- Indicate your interest in the work or field by highlighting your relevant experiences, volunteering, club involvement
 - *i.e.*, public interest vs private practice / criminal defense vs prosecution / litigation vs transaction / environmental law vs general

Avoid First-Person

There is no “I” in Resume

- Avoid the use of I, me, my, our

I conducted research ... = Conducted research ... = Researched ...

I reviewed our data ... = Reviewed data ...

I like to spend time with my cat = Enjoy spending time with cat

Use Active Verbs

Bring Your Work to Life

- Start each task description with an active verb
- Past-tense for past jobs; present-tense for current jobs
- Get right to the meat:
Assisted in reviewing documents = Reviewed documents
- Avoid repeating the same verbs – use a thesaurus or the action/verb list in the Handbook

Describe Work

Paint a Picture of You Doing the Work

- How was this research & writing different from that research & writing?
- Describe your work in enough detail to explain what you actually did
- List achievements, awards
- Use the *Awesomeness Sandwich* method

Emphasize Skills

Legal Internships Aren't the Only Valuable Experience

- List the highest-level tasks performed
 - Don't lessen the awesome with the mediocre
- Law-related skills to emphasize:
 - Legal Work / Writing / Research / Presentations / Client Contact / Collaboration / Decision-Making / Leadership-Management / Advocacy / Policy / Compliance / Contracts /
- Other skills to emphasize:
 - Business Acumen / Financial / Marketing / Business Development / Dedication / Work-Ethic / Dealing with People / Language Technical Skills / Industry Experience

Avoid Fluff

Lawyers like concrete examples

- Avoid describing your work in a fluffy way:
 - Avoid describing your work with adjectives – just tell them what you did and document achievements
 - Don't make lesser work try to sound important
- Summaries and Skill Sections are considered fluff in Legal Resumes (but are useful in JDA resumes)

Proofread

Typos Will Kill Your Application

- Proofread your resume yourself
 - Read clauses backwards
 - Beware of ALLCAPS
- Ask someone else to proofread it
- Repeat the process any time you add anything to the resume