

Recruiting Policies & Procedures for Students & Employers

1. Guiding Principles

The mission of the office of Career Planning & Professionalism is to provide individualized services and resources to enable our students to understand their professional interests, identify the related career possibilities, and secure jobs that align with their goals.

We are committed to supporting a fair and equitable recruiting process that facilitates connecting our students with the widest range of employment opportunities and allows for informed career decisions.

We believe that a positive relationship with employers and the legal community as a whole is essential to supporting our students and promoting the mission and goals of the law school. We value our relationships with employers and strive to ensure a recruiting experience that is positive and mutually beneficial.

The University of Pennsylvania is a NALP member and, as such, abides by the organization's [Principles for a Fair & Ethical Recruitment Process](#).

2. Non Discrimination Policy

The University of Pennsylvania and its Law School do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, age, disability, or veteran status or any other legally protected class status. Employers utilizing our career planning facilities will be held to the same standard of non-discrimination. Any claims of discrimination brought against recruiting employers will be referred to the Faculty/Student Career Planning and Professionalism Committee.

3. Grading Policy

In the spirit of seeking the best and the brightest, employers often seek students who rank at the top of their law school class. We encourage employers to consider additional qualifications when evaluating our students; Penn Law students are admitted to the Law School under very competitive standards. Their academic excellence should be kept in mind when considering their grades, both in comparison with their classmates and with their peers at other law schools.

The Law School's grading system consists of A, A- B+, B, B-, C and F grades, with a rare A+ awarded for distinguished performance. The 1L Legal Practice Skills course is graded on an honors/pass/fail basis.

University of Pennsylvania Law School students are not ranked in class or assigned grade point averages. Employers should take care in comparing our system with those of other schools; our students are admitted under very competitive standards, yet first-year grading is subject to a mandatory curve.

4. No Pre-Screening

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5. Interviewing and extending offers

5.a. Summer Employment for 1L Students

Commitment to academics: Penn Law believes that it is critical for first year law students to focus during their first semester of law school on acclimating to the law school academic environment. Career activities should be limited to gaining a general understanding of legal careers and the skills that relate to these career paths.

Recruiting 1Ls during the fall semester: Fall semester activities with employers should be limited to career education, and not formal recruiting. Employers seeking to hire students for the summer after their first year of law school should not accept applications, request interviews or extend offers to 1L students before December 1. Exceptions are permitted for public sector applications that start early due to background check timelines or international public sector positions with fall deadlines. Appointments with students for interviews should be established at a mutually convenient time so as not to interfere with class attendance or otherwise disrupt students' studies.

5.b. Interviews When Class is in Session

Students should not miss class for the purpose of attending an interview. Employers are asked to work closely with students to ensure that their job search does not impact class attendance. Our office is happy to assist students in arranging space and equipment for video interviews.

5.c. On Campus Interviewing and Recruiting Programs

In addition to posting jobs on our internal posting board (Symplicity), employers are encouraged to participate in the variety of interview programs that we offer on campus.

Summer On-Campus Interview Program ("Summer OCI"): This takes place at the end of July or beginning of August and is geared primarily towards private sector legal employers seeking to hire students for 2L summer jobs, as well as post graduate jobs.

2021 Note: for Summer 2021 hiring, this interview program has been moved to January 2021.

January On-Campus Interview Program ("January OCI") Note: This is the private sector on-campus Interview program for Summer 2021 hiring. It was moved due to the pandemic, from July 2020 to January 2021.

Regional Interview Program: This is a companion program to our Summer OCI and is offered in select cities, usually the week before Summer OCI. Students travel at their own expense to participating firms and interview in the firm offices on a scheduled date.

2021 Note: For Summer 2021 hiring, this program has been moved to align with OCI in January 2021.

Fall On-Campus Public Sector Recruiting: This usually takes place on Fridays in September and October and includes primarily public sector employers seeking to hire students for 2L summer jobs, as well as 3L students for post graduate employment.

Spring On-Campus Interview Program: This usually takes place on Fridays in January and February and includes public and private sector employers seeking to hire 1L students for their 1L summer, 2L students for their 2L summer, and 3L students seeking post graduate employment.

5.d. No Pre-Screening for On-Campus Interviews

On-campus interviews at Penn Law are assigned by computer lottery system based on student bids and taking into account student preferences and availability. Employers are not permitted to “pre-screen” candidates. A limited exception is made for IP firms, which may conduct pre-screening to ensure that technical degree requirements are met by candidates.

5.e. Pre-OCI Interviews for 2L Summer Employment

Employers participating in Penn Law’s Summer On-Campus Interview Program (“Summer OCI”), the 2021 rescheduled January On-Campus Interview Program (“January OCI”), and the companion Regional Interview Program may not schedule or conduct initial or callback interviews of Penn Law students for 2L summer positions prior to their assigned OCI date, except for:

- Interviews arranged through organized job fair programs,
- Interviews for employer fellowship or scholarship programs that provide a benefit or compensation in addition to an offer of 2L summer employment,
- Interviews with students currently employed by, or who were previously employed by, the interviewing organization, and
- Interviews resulting from informational interviews or other student-initiated networking efforts.
 - *This is intended to include circumstances where the student and employer have engaged in purposeful networking with each other in one or more instance.*
 - *This is not intended to include circumstances where the only contact has been the employer inviting students to respond to an online application.*

2021 Guidance for Pre-OCI Interviews Policy:

In light of the impact of the pandemic on the OCI process and timeline, for the current recruiting season (Fall 2020 through January 2021) we are interpreting the final exception narrowly. Outside of job fair programs, fellowship or scholarship applications, and prior employment, interviews should be limited to “informational interviews”. The focus of an informational interview is as follows:

- Establishing a connection between students and firms (networking)
- Learning more about each other (networking)
- This is not a substitute for an OCI screening interview
- Employers should not make an employment decision
- Employers should not request transcripts

The purpose of this interpretation is to ensure a fair and robust on-campus interview process that puts our students in the best position for career success. Employers have expressed an intention to adhere to these expectations.

5.f. Written Offers

All offers of employment to law students should be made in writing and include the material terms of employment, as well as the deadline for a response, and any reaffirmation requirements.

5.g. Time to Make Decisions

Reasonable time for informed decisions: Allowing students the opportunity to reflect on their options and make fully informed employment decisions will facilitate the right match between student and employer and facilitate mutually beneficial outcomes. Offers that must be accepted on the spot or within a very short time frame (“exploding offers”) are inconsistent with these principles and therefore prohibited. Incentives for accepting offers in advance of the required deadline are strongly discouraged for the same reasons.

Time frames for various categories of private sector offers are set forth below and reflect an understanding that firms with smaller class sizes have a more pressing need for responses within a shorter time frame. For offers that are not covered by the sections below, employers should provide no less than two weeks.

5.h. Minimum times to Consider Offers

Class Level	Type of Offer	Firm Size	*Summer Class Size	Days to Consider	Other considerations
1L	Offers for 1L summer employment	Any size	Any size	14	
2L	Offers for 2L summer employment - presented during or after OCI	Any size	≤ 12	14	Timing to respond begins on the date of the offer.
			> 12	21	
2L	Offers for 2L summer employment - presented before OCI by employers participating in OCI	Any size	≤ 12	14	Timing to respond begins the later of the date of the offer or the first day of Penn Law OCI.
			> 12	21	
2L	Offers by firms that do not participate in OCI	Any size	≤ 12	14	
			> 12	21	
3L	Post graduate offer, previously employed by the employer	Any size	n/a	21	Offer deadline should be the later of 21 days or Oct 1.
3L	Post graduate offer, not previously employed by the employer	40+	n/a	21	
		< 40	n/a	14	
Any year	Offers from public sector employers	Any size	Any size	14	Or no less than the time granted all other applicants for the same or similar positions.
<p>*Summer class size is based on the firm’s good faith estimate of the number of students they expect to hire for that summer in that particular office.</p>					

These are minimum time frames: Offers should be held open for no shorter duration than the time frames afforded candidates from other schools.

7-day extension: A 7-day extension should be granted upon written request from the student prior to the expiration of the offer. Additional extensions should be considered for students who are in communication with the employer and provide reasonable assurances that they are seriously considering the offer.

Requests for extensions to accommodate public sector job seekers: Employers are encouraged to grant requests for extensions from students who are actively seeking positions with public interest or government organizations. Extensions should be granted until as late as April 1, provided that the student is holding only one extended offer.

Reaffirmation requirements: Employers may require students to reaffirm an offer (of either 2L summer or post graduate employment) after holding it for a particular number of days. This requirement should be stated in the written offer letter, including the consequences for failing to comply. If the student fails to reaffirm as required, the offer may expire at the employer's discretion.

6. Holding & Accepting Offers

6.a. Adhere to deadlines

Students are expected to accept or release offers or request an extension by the applicable deadline. Offers that are not accepted by the offer deadline may expire at the employer's discretion.

6.b. Offer Limits

A student should not hold open more than three offers of employment at any one time. For each offer received that places a student over the offer limit, the student should, within one week of receipt of the excess offer, release an offer. Students seeking employment in more than one geographic market are encouraged to hold no more than five offers at any one time.

6.c. Reneging

CP&P will not support a student who reneges on a commitment to an employer, except in extraordinary cases of unforeseen circumstances or of personal emergency. This means that a student who reneges without cause may not use any CP&P services or programs. The offense may become a permanent part of the student's law school record. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case by case basis, taking into consideration, for example, the extent to which the student and employer have adhered to CP&P's policies and the NALP Principles for a Fair & Ethical Recruitment Process.

6.d. Job search after accepting an offer

A student should accept an offer of employment only when committed to working for that employer. Continuing to conduct a job search and/or interview after having accepted a position is considered unacceptable, except in circumstances where the student is seeking a second job in addition to the one already accepted, e.g. to "split" a summer with multiple employers.