

Office of Career Services  
St. Thomas University School of Law  
16401 N.W. 37<sup>th</sup> Ave., Miami Gardens, FL 33054  
(305) 623-2351

# **ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW**

## **RESUME GUIDE**

# RESUME GUIDE

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## Introduction

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In most cases, your resume is your first contact with a potential employer. It shows not only what you've done with your life so far, but also what you have accomplished. Because employers consider your resume an example of your work product, it must be concise, accurate, error-free, well-organized, clear, easy to read, and visually pleasing.

Keep in mind that the reader of your resume will probably spend no more than 30 seconds reviewing it. To be effective, it must be brief while still offering enough information to stimulate the employer's interest.

A resume is a formal timeline of your past educational and professional experiences and employment skill sets. It should highlight your strengths and background in a way that will convince a prospective employer to take a closer look at you. For this reason, you will want to compile one early in your law school career and update it as you establish academic and relevant experience. Use the samples in Appendix A as a guide.

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## Basic Resume Guidelines

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There is no single way to set up a resume. However, there are some general rules you should keep in mind:

- Be honest. A lawyer's word is his/her reputation. Never include false information on any document. If you include class rank and/or GPA, do not round up. Employers may call the law school to verify.
- Most law student resumes will be one page in length. However, if you have extensive or unusual education or experience, then your resume might be longer.
- All margins should be one inch. However, you may have to decrease margins in order to make the resume fit. Remember a resume should be aesthetically pleasing. Margins should be no smaller than .5 inches.
- Use a standard font, such as Times New Roman, Ariel, or Rockwell. These are simple, business like, and most traditional.
- Font size should not exceed 12 point, and should not be smaller than 10 point.
- Justify the text in the legal description.
- Use action verbs to describe your legal experience. Use the samples in Appendix B as a guide.
- Be sure to check spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Beyond spelling, grammar, and punctuation, consider capitalization and formatting.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread. Do not give potential employers any excuse to think your work would be sloppy. Always have someone proofread your resume.

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## **The Heading**

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Your heading should be your contact information. It should be placed at the top of your resume. Your heading should include your name, current address, telephone, and email. Your telephone number should be one where an employer may reach you or leave a message. Your message should be conservative, professional, and identify you by name. Also, be sure your email address is appropriate.

If you are looking for employment locally, we recommend that you list only your current address. However, if you are from another area of the country, plan on returning there, and have a permanent address in that area, you should list both your current address and your permanent address on the resume you use for job searches in that area.

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## **The Education Section**

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### **Degrees**

Your education section should be the first section of your resume. List your degrees in reverse chronological order, with St. Thomas University School of Law first. The name of the institution (St. Thomas University School of Law) should be followed by the geographic location (Miami Gardens, FL) of the institution. Underneath your law school name, you should indicate the degree you are pursuing (Juris Doctor) and date of graduation (Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2012, or Juris Doctor expected, May 2012, or Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2012).

You should use this same format for your undergraduate institution, and other higher education institutions. Be sure to include the name of the institution, the city and state of the institution, followed by the degree received and date of graduation. If you studied abroad a semester or year, include that. Do not include high school education information on your resume.

### **Grade Point Average and Class Rank**

Whether or not to include your GPA on your resume is a personal decision. However, be aware that some employers may assume your grades are poor if you do not include them. Generally, if your GPA is a B average (3.0 or above) and your class rank is at or above the 50% mark, you should consider including it on your resume. If you decide to include your GPA and class rank, they must be those which have been provided to you by the Registrar's Office. Rounding up your GPA and recalculating your class rank is not allowed.

If you decide to include your GPA and class rank on your resume, you should list your exact GPA and then provide your class rank in parentheses( Class Rank: Top 20% (46/230)). Finally, if you choose not to include your law school GPA and class rank, you should not include your undergraduate grades either.

## Honors and Activities

If you have honors and activities related to your legal and undergraduate education, list them immediately below each school, degree, and grade information. Honors go directly under the school, degree, and grade information, if any. Activities go directly under honors.

Academic honors, such as cum laude, should follow the degree, and be lowercase and italicized. When listing information about honors and activities, list all honors and activities in order of importance. Honors include Law Reviews, Moot Court Boards, Dean's List, and Scholarships. Note: if you have been on Dean's List some, but not all, of the semesters you have been in law school you must be sure to make that clear on your resume. Each semester that you achieved Dean's List status should be listed unless you have made Dean's List all semesters. Activities include student organization memberships and offices.

Be sure to name the honor or activity, and then include your position, if you hold one followed by the years held. (St. Thomas Law Review, Student Articles Editor (2011 – Present)).

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## The Experiences Section

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This section is labeled experience to allow for the inclusion of relevant activity which may not be employment per se, such as volunteer internships and other positions of responsibility. This section should be presented in reverse chronological order, with the most recent experience first. Full-time, part-time, legal and non-legal experience should be listed in this section. Feel free to include work performed as part of your scholastic experiences in your experience section, including clinical experience, research for a professor, and pro bono hours.

Keep this section consistent with the education section above. List the name of the firm or organization in the same manner you listed the names of your educational institutions. To the right of the name, list the city and state in which the organization is located. Underneath the name of the organization, list your title and the dates you worked there. Underneath your title, use paragraph format to describe your responsibility briefly. Use action words as much as possible to describe your accomplishments. Avoid the phrase "responsibilities included" and the word "duties". Use the samples in Appendix B as a guide.

The purpose of the description is to attract the employer's attention and cause him or her to ask further questions about your work. Try to include in your description those aspects of your job which were particularly noteworthy or interesting. Note that when listing a non-legal experience, you should highlight the accomplishments which utilized skills that are transferable to a legal job. And when it comes to listing legal experience, make sure to include basic duties, areas of law you were exposed to, legal issues researched, skills developed, special projects or extra responsibilities given and training or certifications completed. Job descriptions should be written in the past tense unless you are currently

employed at the particular job you are describing. Be sure to vary the verbs so that you do not bore the reader. Carefully review spelling and grammar. (Note: the plural of memorandum is memoranda.)

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## **The Skills, Interests, Languages, Publications, & Community Involvement Section**

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Following the experience section many students include a skills, interest, languages, publications, or community involvement section. Being a good lawyer requires more than an education and experience. If you have special skills that enhance your marketability as a lawyer, you should list them. You may want to include proficiency in a foreign language, any publications, professional certifications or licenses, or significant community involvement/volunteer activities. You may also include personal interests/activities that are important to you, if you choose. This section generally serves as a good ice breaker in an interview.

### **Skills and Interests**

This section is used as a catch-all category for information that may help market you to the prospective employer. Many employers like to see interests, as they give some additional material for conversation and demonstrate your other dimensions. If you choose to include your computer or online legal research skills, this is where you will do so. However, if you are short on space or beyond the first year of law school, it is not necessary to include these types of skills. Most employers will assume that you are capable of using LexisNexis, Westlaw, and Microsoft Office.

### **Languages**

When listing a language, you should indicate your precise knowledge of the language on your resume. If you are truly **fluent** in a language, you should be able to read and write that language completely, with no regard to topic. If you are **proficient**, you are a bit less than fluent, but still very good. If you are **conversational**, you are indicating to an employer that you can get by using the language, but you have areas where you may lack the ability to write or translate it. A **working knowledge** of the language means you are between rudimentary and proficient. Remember that your interviewer may speak the language you claim to know, so be prepared to conduct a portion of your interview in the language if you have listed.

### **Publications**

If, as a result of your educational or work experience, you have published something, you should put it on your resume. Since the practice of law requires solid writing skills, evidence that you write well is invaluable. Make sure the publication titles are in Blue Book format.

## **Community Involvement**

If you have been involved in any significant community service or volunteered at an organization, you should include it in your resume. Depending on the extent of your involvement you may want to describe the duties you performed or simply list it under its own section.

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## **Items not to List**

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The following is a list of information that should not be included on your resume: LSAT scores, age, health, marital status, social security number, other personal statistics, and/or references.

## **References**

While references should not be identified on your resume, you should always be prepared to provide them. Your references should be on a separate sheet of paper with your address, phone number, and email at the top of the page in the same format as your resume. List each reference with his/her title, company, address, phone number, and email. Call your references before you list them, and ask their permission to be used as a reference. As a general rule, you should list legal employers, faculty members or someone who has knowledge of your work. We do not recommend using personal references, such as family or friends.

**APPENDIX A**  
**SAMPLE RESUMES**

## Sample Resume

### Scout Finch

123 NW Thomas Ave.  
Miami Gardens, FL 33055  
305-625-6000  
sfinch@stu.edu

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#### EDUCATION

**St. Thomas University School of Law**, Miami Gardens, FL

*Juris Doctor* candidate

Anticipated May 2013

GPA: 3.16      Class Rank: Top 20% (28/346)

Honors: St. Thomas University School of Law Merit Scholarship, 2011 – Present; Moot Court Board; Dean's List: Spring 2011, Fall 2011.

Activities: Environmental Law Society.

**University of Florida**, Gainesville, FL

*Master of Business Administration*

June 2009

**Rutgers University**, New Brunswick, NJ

*Bachelor of Arts* in Psychology, *cum laude*

May 2008

Honors: Deans List: Spring 2008; Golden Key National Honors Society, 2006.

#### EXPERIENCE

**Elizabeth Stanton and Associates LLP**, Miami, FL

August 2011 – Present

*Financial Clerk*

Perform financial planning and analysis. Create budgets and forecasts for the firm, based upon practice group and location. Complete *ad hoc* reports upon request regarding revenue and profits. Provide Financial Analysis Presentations for Board of Directors on a monthly basis.

**Susan B. Anthony, PA**, Cherry Hill, NJ

May 2011 – August 2011

*Law Clerk*

Performed legal research. Drafted pleadings and legal memoranda. Scheduled hearings, mediations, and client interviews. Managed case files. Attended court hearings.

**Ausley and McMullen Law Firm**, New Brunswick, NJ

August 2007 – May 2008

*Administrative Assistant*

Maintained files for senior partners. Served subpoenas for attorneys. Filed documents with courthouse. Performed various other office tasks.

**NJ Association of Homes for the Aging**, New Brunswick, NJ

August 2006 – May 2007

*Legislative Intern*

Attended, monitored and took notes during committee meetings and during session for senior lobbyist. Researched enrolled bills and reported findings to lobbyist prior to the hearing of the bills on the floor.

#### SKILLS

Fluent Spanish. Conversational Italian. Certified in Westlaw Advanced Research.

#### COMMUNITY SERVICE

Habitat for Humanity, 2005-2008.

## Sample Resume

### MARY JONES

123 Main Street, #1, Miami, FL 33333  
(305) 555-1234  
Mjones@stu.edu

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#### EDUCATION

**St. Thomas University School of Law, Miami Gardens, FL**

*Juris Doctor Candidate*

May 2014

Honors: Dean's List  
Book Award: Legal Research and Writing

**Master of Science, Marriage and Family Therapy**

May 2014

Activity: Chi Sigma Iota, Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society  
International.

**Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL**

*Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude, in Political Science*

May 2011

GPA: 3.78  
Honors: Dean's List (6 semesters)  
National Collegiate Honor Society  
Activities: Pre-Law Society  
Intramural Volleyball Captain

#### EXPERIENCE

**Legal Services of Greater Miami, Miami, FL**

*Law Clerk*

Spring 2012

Researched numerous cases on domestic disputes and wrote subsequent legal memoranda. Drafted motions corresponding to cases dealing with domestic disputes.

**Florida State University Office of Admissions, Tallahassee, FL**

*Telecounselor / Clerical Office Staff*

August 2008 – May 2011

Placed outgoing calls to prospective Florida State Students. Worked closely with office staff.

#### SKILLS

Fluent in Spanish.  
Proficient in Westlaw and LexisNexis.

## Sample Resume

### SEAN R. SMITH

1122 Southwest 36th Avenue • Miami, Florida 33112 • (305) 888-9999 • s.smith@gmail.com

#### EDUCATION

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**St. Thomas University School of Law**, Miami Gardens, FL

*Juris Doctor*

*Expected May 2013*

Honors: Book Award: Torts II; *St. Thomas Law Review* (Member-Candidate); International Moot Court Board (2011).

Activities: Phi Alpha Delta (2011).

**Florida International University**, Miami, FL

*Bachelor of Arts in Psychology*

*May 2010*

Honors: Dean's List (three semesters); Golden Key National Honor Society.

Activities: Federalist Society (2011).

#### EXPERIENCE

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**St. Thomas University School of Law**, Miami Gardens, FL

*Research Assistant for Professor Lauren Gilbert*

*August 2011 – Present*

Conduct legal research relating to immigration issues. Assist in editing the professor's pending law review articles.

*Active Learning Instructor*, Torts II, Dean John F. Hernandez

*August 2011 – Present*

Coordinate classroom exercises. Assist professor in developing materials to be used in class, such as exam hypotheticals and multiple choice questions. Act as liaison between first-year students and professor.

**Pax Romana, United Nations**, New York, NY

*Legal Intern, Assigned to Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization*

*May – August 2011*

Drafted official memoranda and correspondence for Ambassador Bhagwat-Singh. Represented and reported for AALCO at the United Nations Commission of International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the Permanent Forum for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Committee on South-South Cooperation, and the States Parties Meeting on the Law of the Sea.

**The Gap**, Miami, FL

*Sales Associate*

*Summers, 2007 – 2008*

Responsible for customer service. Handled inventory control. Exceeded sales quota by 15%. Trained new employees.

#### SKILLS

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Certified in Westlaw and LexisNexis.

Bilingual: Spanish.

#### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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Special Olympics: 2008 – 2009

Ronald McDonald House: 2007 – 2010

Habitat for Humanity: 2007

## Sample Resume

### Sam S. Rodriguez

ssrodriguez@stu.edu  
(212) 111-2222

#### Local Address:

3654 South 200 Avenue  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33332

#### Permanent Address:

166 East Cain Drive  
Richmond, Virginia 11223

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#### EDUCATION:

##### St. Thomas University School of Law

Miami Gardens, Florida

*Juris Doctor Candidate*

May 2012

GPA: 3.5

Class Rank: Top 5%

Honors:

*Intercultural Human Rights Law Review*, Managing Editor (2011 – 2012);  
Moot Court Board, President (2011 – 2012), Best Oralist Award.

Activities:

Peter T. Fay American Inn of Court; Cuban American Student Bar  
Association.

Study Abroad:

St. Thomas University School of Law Summer in Spain Program, 2010.

##### University of Miami

Coral Gables, Florida

*Bachelor of Arts, Art* (Minors: Art History, Photojournalism)

December 2008

Honors:

Dean's List, 3 semesters.

#### EXPERIENCE:

##### St. Thomas University School of Law

Miami Gardens, Florida

*Intern, Immigration Clinic*

August 2011 – Present

Prepare and litigate client cases involving cancellation of removal and asylum. Compile evidence and organize client application for legal residency under the Violence Against Women Act.

##### Department of Children and Families

Miami, Florida

*Florida Bar Foundation Public Service Fellow*

January 2011 – May 2011

Attended Miami Dade Unified Family Court and worked closely with supervising attorney. Researched legal issues. Outlined depositions. Drafted trial materials. Organized case files for trial. Managed case files.

##### Florida Immigration Advocacy Center

Miami, Florida

*Law Clerk*

August 2010 – December 2010

Interviewed clients in Spanish and English. Researched immigration issues affecting Florida residents. Drafted legal memoranda. Prepared Cuban Adjustment Act citizenship applications and completed medical waivers.

##### Legal Aid Services of Broward County

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

*Legal Intern*

Summer 2010

Responsible for intake of new clients in housing division. Interviewed potential clients and presented cases to staff attorneys for review. Researched applicable law and drafted memoranda. Drafted portions of appellate brief resulting in reversal.

#### SKILLS:

Fluent in Spanish.

## Sample Alumni Resume

### MICHAEL E. ROE

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1234 College Ave. • Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314 • (954) 444-2963 • michael.e.roe@gmail.com

#### EXPERIENCE

**The Honorable Marcia G. Cooke, US District Court, Southern District of Florida, Miami, FL**  
*Judicial Clerk* Fall 2011 – Present  
Researching legal issues before the Court. Drafting memoranda and proposed orders.

**BarBri Review, Miami Gardens, FL**  
*Student Representative* August 2010 – July 2011  
Marketed, sold, and answered student questions concerning the BarBri Bar Review Course.

**Holland & Knight, Ft. Lauderdale, FL**  
*Summer Associate* Summer 2010  
Researched and drafted legal memoranda. Drafted client letters. Prepared and presented research to partners and associates. Assisted attorneys in day-to-day activities.

**Dell & Schaefer, Hollywood, FL**  
*Law Clerk* February 2010 – May 2010  
Reviewed client files. Drafted memoranda. Assembled demand packages to be used as part of early settlement negotiations. Conducted initial meetings with potential clients. Compiled billable hours.

**Department of Homeland Security - Immigration & Customs Enforcement, Miami, FL**  
*Law Clerk* Fall 2009  
Drafted legal memoranda, motions, and appellate briefs dealing with immigration issues.

**The Honorable Robert Baker, Third District Court of Appeal, Miami, FL**  
*Judicial Intern* Summer 2009  
Researched and wrote legal memoranda on civil and criminal issues, such as motions to suppress, ineffective assistance of counsel, improper venue, personal jurisdiction, attorneys' fees, and motions for post conviction relief. Attended oral arguments.

**Staples Office Store, Gainesville, FL**  
*Customer Service Associate* July 2004 – June 2008  
Sold electronics and office supplies and processed returns and exchanges. Resolved problems brought to the customer-service desk. Performed inventory and stocking of new products. Prepared store for weekly sales.

#### EDUCATION

**St. Thomas University School of Law, Miami Gardens, FL**  
*Juris Doctor, cum laude* May 2011  
GPA: 3.82  
Honors: Dean's List (all semesters)

**University of Florida, Gainesville, FL**  
*Bachelor of Arts, Political Science* May 2008  
GPA: 3.67  
Activities: Student Government, Senator  
Political Science Students Association

#### SKILLS

Bilingual in Spanish.

**APPENDIX B**  
**LIST OF ACTION VERBS**

## List of Action Verbs

accelerated	converted	fabricated	observed	served
accommodated	coordinated	facilitated	obtained	serviced
achieved	corrected	familiarized	opened up	shut down
acquainted	counseled	formulated	operated	simplified
adapted	created	founded	optimized	sold
addressed	curtailed		ordered	solved
administered		governed	organized	sorted
advertised	decorated	grouped	originated	sponsored
aided	decreased	guaranteed	overhauled	started
altered	devised	guided		stimulated
analyzed	diagrammed		performed	strengthened
assisted	directed	implemented	persuaded	surpassed
assumed	disciplined	improved	presented	surveyed
attached	disclosed	increased	procured	systemized
augmented	discontinued	informed	produced	
authored	discovered	initiated	promoted	tended
authorized	dispatched	innovated	proposed	terminated
	displayed	inspected	protected	tested
balanced	distributed	instructed	provided	took charge
budgeted	documented	interpreted	publicized	took over
built	drafted	introduced	published	trained
		invented	put together	transacted
chartered	economized	inventoried		transferred
classified	edited	invested	rectified	transformed
closed up	educated	investigated	recommended	translated
combined	eliminated		recruited	transported
commanded	employed	lectured	reduced	
communicated	encouraged		refined	unified
compiled	endorsed	maintained	regulated	updated
completed	enhanced	managed	removed	upgraded
composed	enlarged	manipulated	renewed	utilized
computed	entailed	maximized	reorganized	
conceived	established	measured	repaired	wrote
concluded	estimated	merged	replaced	
condensed	evaluated	minimized	reported	
conferred	examined	modeled	researched	
confined	exceeded	modernized	restored	
consolidated	executed	modified	restructured	
constructed	exhibited	motivated	revised	
consulted	expanded		revitalized	
contacted	expedited	negotiated		
contributed	extended	notified	scheduled	

