

Office for Career Development
St. Thomas University School of Law
16401 N.W. 37th Ave., Miami Gardens, FL 33054
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ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW



RESUME GUIDE

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Introduction

A resume is typically your first contact with a potential employer. It shows your life experiences and your accomplishments. Because employers consider your resume an example of your work product, it must be concise, accurate, error-free, well-organized, clear, and visually appealing.

Remember that the reader of your resume will probably spend less than one minute reviewing it. To be effective, it must be brief while still offering enough information to grab the employer's interest.

A resume is a formal timeline of your past educational and professional experiences and 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 continually update it as you establish academic and relevant experience. Use the samples in [Appendix A](#) as a guide.

Basic Resume Guidelines

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 their reputation. Never include false information on any document. If you include class rank and/or GPA, use precise numbers and do not round up. Employers may call the law school to verify.
- Most law student resumes will be one page long. However, if you have extensive or diverse education and experiences, then your resume may be longer.
- Standard margins are one inch on all sides. You may have to decrease margins in order to make the resume fit on one page, though margins should be no smaller than 0.5 inches. Remember a resume should be aesthetically pleasing.
- Use a standard font, such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Cambria. These are simple, professional, and most traditional.
- Font size should not exceed 12 point, and should not be smaller than 11 point.
- Justify the text in the descriptions of each experience.
- Use action verbs to describe your legal experience. Do not start an experience description with "worked" or "responsible for...". Use [Appendix B](#) for sample verbs.
- 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 product is less than perfect. Students are encouraged to review their resume with a Career Development Counselor before sending it to an employer.

The Heading

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

If you are looking for employment locally, it is recommended that you list only your local address. However, if you plan an out-of-state job search and have a permanent address in the geographic area where you are applying, you should list both your current address and your permanent address on the resume.

The Education Section

Degrees

The 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 city and state (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 2019, or Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2019).

Use the 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 month and year of graduation. If you studied abroad a semester or year, include the relevant details. Do not include high school education 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), you should consider including it on your resume. If you decide to include your GPA and class rank, they must be the current values provided to you by the Registrar's Office. Rounding up your GPA and/or recalculating your class rank is not acceptable. Since our institution operates on a mandatory grading curve, the Office for Career Development can provide an explanation letter with your resume GPA at your request.

If you include your GPA and class rank on your resume, you should list your exact GPA and provide your class rank in parentheses. For example: GPA: 3.042, 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 GPA.

Honors and Activities

If you have honors and activities related to your law school 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 each item in order of importance. Honors include Law Reviews (with the title *italicized*), Moot Court Boards, Dean's List, and Scholarships. Each semester that you achieved Dean's List status should be clearly listed or you may indicate Dean's List with the notation "all semesters". Activities include student organization memberships and other elected offices.

Be sure to name the honor or activity and include your position, if you hold one followed by the years held, i.e. *St. Thomas Law Review*, Student Articles Editor (2015 – Present).

The Experience Section

The experience section includes relevant activity which may not be only paid employment, but also include 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. You may choose to include work performed as part of your academic career in your experience section, including clinical experience, research for a professor, and *pro bono* work.

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. Below your title, use paragraph format to describe your responsibilities briefly. Use action verbs as much as possible to describe your accomplishments. Avoid the phrase "responsibilities included" and the word "duties...". Use [Appendix B](#) for sample action verbs.

The purpose of the description is to attract the employer's attention and cause the reader to ask further questions about your work. Try to include in your description those aspects of your job which were particularly noteworthy or interesting. When describing a non-legal experience, highlight the accomplishments which utilized skills that are transferable to a legal job. And when 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, and training or certifications completed. Job descriptions should be written in the past tense unless you are currently employed at the position. Be sure to vary the action verbs and do not repeat phrases or sentences in job descriptions. Carefully review spelling and grammar. Then proofread the job descriptions again before finalizing.

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

Following the experience section many students include a skills, interest, languages, publications, and/or community involvement section. Being an upstanding 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 language other than English, 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, which can also serve as a good ice breaker in an interview.

Skills and Interests

This section is used as a broad 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, Microsoft Office, and Windows/macOS.

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 capable. 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 listed, so be prepared to conduct a portion of your interview in any language identified on your resume.

Publications

If, as a result of your educational or work experience, you have published an article, book or other writing product, include it on your resume. Since the practice of law requires solid writing skills, evidence that you write well is invaluable. Make sure the citation is in proper Bluebook format.

Community Involvement

If you have been involved in any significant community service or volunteer work 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 with the name of the organization, the city and state, your title and the dates. This section is essential for students applying to public interest law employers.

Items Not to Include

The following is a list of information that should not be included on your resume: LSAT score, age, health, marital/family 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. Contact 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 professional and/or legal work. You should generally not use personal references, such as family or friends. The phrase "References Available Upon Request" is not necessary since it is already assumed as part of your application.

Only provide the number of references requested by the employer. If no specific number is requested, then provide three (3) references. Refer to Appendix C for a sample of a "References" page.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE RESUMES

Sample 2L Resume

SEAN R. SMITH

1122 Southwest 36th Avenue • Miami, FL 33112 • (305) 888-9999 • ssmith@stu.edu

EDUCATION

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

Juris Doctor

Expected *May 2018*

Honors: CALI Book Award: Torts II; *St. Thomas Law Review*, Member-Candidate; International Moot Court Board (2016).

Activities: Phi Alpha Delta (2015 – 2016).

Florida International University, Miami, FL

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

May 2013

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

Activities: Pre-Law Society.

EXPERIENCE

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

Research Assistant for Professor Samantha Sample

August 2016 – Present

Conduct legal research relating to immigration statutes and regulations. Assist in editing professor's pending law review articles.

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

August 2016 – Present

Assist first-year law students with class preparation and study methods specific to their Torts course; plan and execute bi-weekly sessions to improve student preparation and comprehension; and meet with students in small groups to address individual concerns.

Pax Romana, United Nations, New York, NY

Legal Intern, Assigned to Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization

May 2016 – August 2016

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.

Singer & Associates, Miami, FL

Paralegal

August 2013 – July 2015

Prepared trial documents and conducted legal research for briefs, organized and prepared files for attorney review, and drafted letters to clients.

SKILLS

Certified in Westlaw and LexisNexis.

Fluent in Spanish.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Special Olympics, *Event Volunteer*, Miami, FL (2013).

Ronald McDonald House, *Volunteer*, Fort Lauderdale, FL (2007 – 2010).

Habitat for Humanity, *Volunteer Builder*, Doral, FL (2012).

PUBLICATION

Sean R. Smith, *The First Amendment and Private Property*, ST. THOMAS L. REV. (Pending Publication).

Sample 3L Resume with Out-of-State Home Address

Sam S. Rodriguez

ssrodriguez@stu.edu

(212) 111-2222

Local Address:

3654 South 200 Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33332

Permanent Address:

166 East State Drive
Richmond, Virginia 11223

EDUCATION:

St. Thomas University School of Law

Miami Gardens, Florida

Juris Doctor Candidate

May 2017

GPA: 3.5 Class Rank: Top 10% (13/140)

Honors: *Intercultural Human Rights Law Review*, Managing Editor (2016 – 2017);
Moot Court Board, President (2015 – 2016), Best Oralist Award.

Activities: The Hon. Peter T. Fay American Inn of Court; Cuban American Student
Bar Association.

Study Abroad: Summer in Spain Program, San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain (2015).

Florida State University

Tallahassee, Florida

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science (Minor: Photojournalism)

December 2014

Honors: Dean's List, 3 semesters.

EXPERIENCE:

St. Thomas University School of Law Immigration Clinic

Miami Gardens, Florida

Student Intern

August 2016 – Present

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

Department of Children and Families, Children's Legal Services

Miami, Florida

Legal Intern

January 2016 – May 2016

Attended Miami Dade Unified Family Court and worked closely with supervising attorney. Researched legal issues, outlined depositions, drafted trial materials, and organized case files for trial.

Americans for Immigrant Justice

Miami, Florida

Law Clerk

August 2015 – December 2015

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 Service of Broward County

Plantation, Florida

Legal Intern

Summer 2015

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

SKILLS:

Fluent in Spanish.

Sample International Law Degree

ERIN JONES

100 NE 35th Street, Miami, Florida 33145 • (786) 999-9999 • ejones@stu.edu

EDUCATION

St. Thomas University School of Law Miami Gardens, Florida
Juris Doctor Candidate December 2016

GPA: 3.27 Class Rank: Top 5% (5/140)

Honors: Dean's List (Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015); CALI Book Award: Advanced Legal Research and Writing.

Activities: International Law Society, Secretary (2014 – Present); ABA Young Lawyers Division (2015 – Present).

Universidad Metropolitana de Caracas Caracas, Venezuela
Bachelor in Law June 2014

Certificate: Specialty in International Legal Studies.

EXPERIENCE

International Law Firm, P.A. Miami, Florida
Law Clerk June 2016 – Present

Assist in drafting contracts, powers of attorney, memoranda of understanding, franchise agreements, settlement agreements, and other corporate documents.

U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida Miami, Florida
Judicial Intern to U.S. District Judge Robert N. Scola, Jr. August 2015 – December 2015

Conducted legal research; reviewed parties' filed motions and pleadings; drafted final judicial orders; and observed courtroom hearings on civil and criminal cases, including trials and sentencing.

Martinez & Martinez Caracas, Venezuela
Corporate Law Clerk May 2011 – January 2013

Assisted foreign corporations to legally invest and do business in Venezuela; advised a foreign telecommunications company on applicable operating requirements; prepared corporate data reports; assisted in due diligence investigations; researched legal issues; drafted legal documents including contracts, client letters, powers of attorney, complaints and counterclaims; recorded minutes of shareholders' and board of directors' meetings; contributed to firm's newsletter; and translated legal documents.

LICENSES AND LEGAL ASSOCIATIONS

Member in good standing of "El Colegio de Abogados del Distrito Capital" (Bar Association of the Capital District); and INPREABOGADO (Venezuelan Bar Association), Caracas, Venezuela (July 2014 – Present).

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Languages: Spanish, including legal and business terminology. Conversational in French.

Computer: Certified in Westlaw and LexisNexis; Proficient in Microsoft Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Prezi; Proficient in Mac OS X and Windows.

Sample Public Interest Resume

Scout Finch

200 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL 33131 · 305-625-6000 · sfinch@stu.edu

EDUCATION **St. Thomas University School of Law**, Miami Gardens, FL
Juris Doctor Candidate May 2017
Honors: St. Thomas University School of Law Merit Scholarship (2014 – Present);
Moot Court Board; Dean's List (Spring 2015, Fall 2016); Pro Bono
Commendation (over 100 hours of pro bono service)
Activities: Public Interest Law Society, Board Member; Student Bar Association
Honors Council, Member

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
Bachelor of Arts in English, *cum laude* May 2012
Honors: Dean's List (Spring 2008); Golden Key National Honors Society (2006).

EXPERIENCE **Legal Services of Greater Miami**, Miami, FL
Law Clerk Spring 2016
Researched numerous housing cases including landlord/tenant law, evictions, and
foreclosure and wrote subsequent legal memoranda. Conducted client intake and
summarized relevant facts to attorneys. Drafted motions for supervising attorney in
pending cases.

Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, Civil Division, Miami, FL
Judicial Intern to the Honorable Steven Smith May 2015 – August 2015
Performed legal research and drafted orders for Judge's review. Observed court
hearings, trials and pre-trial conferences.

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), New York, NY
Paralegal May 2012 – June 2014
Assisted supervising attorney in developing, maintaining, and overseeing the *pro bono*
legal representation of unaccompanied minor children for a nationwide non-profit
immigration legal referral organization. Interviewed and screened child clients in
Spanish and English, and prepared client files prior to referral to volunteer attorneys.

Sen. Steven Smith, New Jersey State Senate, Trenton, NJ
Legislative Intern May 2010 – March 2012
Attended, monitored, and took notes during committee meetings and legislative session
for Senator Smith. Researched enrolled bills and reported findings to aides prior to
hearings on the floor. Greeted visitors, answered phones, and drafted memos.

SKILLS Fluent in Spanish. Conversational in French Creole.

VOLUNTEER WORK **Habitat for Humanity**, *Volunteer*, Newark, NJ (2009 – 2011).
New York City Animal Shelter, *Volunteer*, New York, NY (2012 – 2013).

Sample Resume with Experience Highlighted

MICHAEL E. ROE

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

Law Clerk

Fall 2015 – Present

Research legal issues before Court. Draft memoranda and propose orders.

BarBri Bar Review, Miami Gardens, FL

Student Representative

August 2014 – May 2015

Marketed, sold, and answered student questions concerning BarBri Bar Review Course.

Holland & Knight, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Summer Associate

Summer 2014

Researched and drafted legal memoranda. Drafted client letters. Prepared and presented research to partners and associates.

Dell & Schaefer, Hollywood, FL

Law Clerk

February 2014 – May 2014

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 and Customs Enforcement, Miami, FL

Law Clerk

Fall 2013

Drafted legal memoranda, motions, and appellate briefs dealing with immigration enforcement issues.

The Honorable Robert Baker, Third District Court of Appeal, Miami, FL

Judicial Intern

Summer 2013

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 2010 – June 2012

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 2015

GPA: 3.82

Honors: Dean's List (all semesters)

University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Bachelor of Arts, Political Science

May 2012

GPA: 3.67

Activities: Student Government, Senator
Political Science Students Association

SKILLS

Bilingual in Spanish.

Sample Alumni Resume

Stephen Jones

7000 SW 12th Terrace | Miami, FL 33178 | 305-999-9999 | StephenJones@gmail.com

Member in Good Standing of the Florida Bar

EXPERIENCE

Smith & Jones, P.A., Miami FL

Associate for Litigation Firm

September 2014 – Present

Prepare pleadings, motions, memoranda, and discovery documents. Handle state and federal cases dealing with bankruptcy, probate, international law, foreclosure proceedings, contract disputes, trademark infringement, and criminal law.

Guardianship Program of Broward County, Inc., Fort Lauderdale, FL

Legal Intern

May 2013 – July 2013

Drafted petitions, motions, and other pleadings for clients. Attended *ex parte* and restoration hearings, and aided attorney in preparation of guardianship cases before probate, criminal, and juvenile judges and magistrates. Conducted intake and discharge of new clients. Participated in field work, including visiting clients, taking inventory of client assets, and determining which clients were in need of an emergency temporary guardian. Performed E-Filing.

Stevens & Stevens, P.A., Gainesville, FL

Runner

June 2010 – August 2011

Filed motions, delivered abstracts, set hearings, recorded liens and other documents, and ran errands for partners. Assisted with administrative duties, including filing, copying and answering phones.

EDUCATION

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

Juris Doctor

May 2014

Certificate: Elder Law

Honors: Dean's List (Fall 2012, Spring 2014)

Activities: Phi Delta Phi Spellman Inn; Elder Law Society, President; Florida Bar Elder Law Section, Student Member

University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Bachelor of Arts in English (Concentration: Writing)

May 2010

SKILLS

Proficient in Westlaw, PACER, AD Summation, Time Matters, and Timeslips.
Trained in Florida Courts E-Filing Portal (June 2013).

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	

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE LIST OF REFERENCES PAGE

SEAN R. SMITH

1122 Southwest 20th Avenue • Miami, Florida 33112 • (305) 888-9999 • ssmith@stu.edu

REFERENCES

Professor Samantha Sample
St. Thomas University School of Law
16401 NW 37th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33054
rprofessor@stu.edu
(305) 623-9999

Hon. Melissa Smith
Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, Civil Division
Dade County Courthouse
73 West Flagler Street
Miami, FL 33130
jsmith@jud11.flcourts.org (John Jones, Judicial Assistant)
(305) 349-9999

James Jackson, Associate
Smith & Smith LLP
Brickell City Tower, Suite 1000
80 Southwest 8th Street
Miami, FL 33130
jsmith@smithllp.com
(305) 333-9999