OSCAR Quick Reference Guide for Applicants

https://oscar.uscourts.gov

OSCAR AT A GLANCE

- Create an OSCAR account to research federal law clerk and appellate staff attorney positions.
- Receive automatic notifications about law clerk and staff attorney positions fitting your selection criteria.
- Create cover letters and grade sheets online in OSCAR.
- Upload PDF application documents including resumes, cover letters, and writing samples.

- Identify your recommenders and generate electronic requests for letters of recommendation.
- Search for available clerkships and staff attorney positions using OSCAR's powerful tools.
- Organize clerkships and staff attorney positions into custom folders.
- Save a list of positions to your computer.
- Build and submit applications online to OSCAR-participating judges and staff attorney offices.

THE OSCAR WINDOW

1 MAIN NAVIGATION MENU
Click navigation tabs to move to different sections of the OSCAR website.

2 TABS
Use tabs to navigate each section of OSCAR.

3 INSTRUCTION BOX
Blue boxes provide basic instructions and information as well as links to relevant help and resources.

4 HELP RESOURCES
Look for these links to video tutorials and tip sheets with step-by-step instructions on performing OSCAR tasks.

5 BASIC SEARCH BOX
Use the available search options to find positions that meet your criteria.

6 FUNCTION BUTTONS
Click to perform designated functions.

7 BATCH OPTIONS MENU
Use this menu to apply batch functions to selected items in OSCAR lists.

8 COLUMN HEADERS
Click the arrow to sort the list by that column. Click again to reverse the order.

9 LIST OF ITEMS
View sortable lists of judges and staff attorneys in OSCAR available under various tabs.

MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT

Register for an Account

Eligible law schools students and graduates can register for OSCAR accounts and apply for clerkship and staff attorney positions.

1. Navigate to the OSCAR website at https://oscar.uscourts.gov.
2. Click **Register** in the main navigation menu. OSCAR displays the Registration screen.
3. Click the **Are You Applying** link. OSCAR displays the registration form.
4. Complete the applicant registration form and click **Submit**.
5. OSCAR logs you into the system. Complete the rest of your OSCAR profile.

Update Your Profile

1. Click **My Profile > Profile**. OSCAR displays your applicant profile.
2. Click **Edit Profile** and make the desired changes.
3. Select **Yes** in the Verification of Data field.
4. Click **Update Profile**.

Receive Notifications of Position Postings

OSCAR provides automatic email notifications for new positions; position modifications, closings, or expirations; and updates to judge Hiring Practices or Chambers information. You can customize this function to only provide notifications of positions posted by preferred judge types or states using the instructions under **Update Your Profile**.

Change Your Password

1. Click **My Profile** > **My Account**. OSCAR displays your account information.
2. Select the **Main** tab.
3. Enter and verify new password.
4. Click **Change Password**.

Note: Ensure that your new password meets the stated requirements.

Update Your Security Questions

1. Click **My Profile** > **My Account**.
2. Select the **Security Questions** tab.
3. Choose a question from the drop-down menu, enter the answer, and repeat for questions 2 and 3.
4. Click **Save**.

CREATE AND UPLOAD APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

The **My Documents** tab is where you upload or create all of the applicant-generated documents that you will include in your applications. The process of uploading documents to OSCAR is simple, but there are certain restrictions you must be aware of:

- All documents uploaded to OSCAR must be in PDF format and less than 1 MB in size.
- Transcripts cannot be uploaded to OSCAR. You must create "grade sheets" using the online form.
  Note: Judges and staff attorney offices are aware that these are not official transcripts.
- OSCAR restricts the total number of documents you can have uploaded at any one time. Restrictions vary by document type and are listed on the *My Documents* tab.

Create a Cover Letter Using the Online Editor

Creating cover letters in OSCAR's online letter does not limit you on the total number of cover letters and allows you to use merge fields to automatically personalize the letters with the recipient's name and address information from the OSCAR database.

1. Click **My Documents**.
2. Click **Add New** (bottom of screen). OSCAR displays the Document screen.
3. Enter a name for your cover letter in the Document Label field.
4. Choose **Clerkship Cover Letter** or **Staff Atty Cover Letter** from the *Document Type* drop-down menu.

5. The screen will refresh and display the online editor where you can type your letter.
6. Click **Upload** (shown at the top and bottom of the screen) to save your work.
7. On the *My Documents* tab, click on the label (entered in step 3) to reopen the cover letter and continue working.
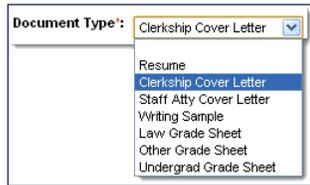
Create Grade Sheets

Applicants must enter their grades into an online grade sheet form. OSCAR allows you to create three types of grade sheets: Law School Grade Sheet, Undergraduate Grade Sheet, and Other Grade Sheet.

1. Click **My Documents**.
2. Click **Add New** (bottom of screen). OSCAR displays the *Document* screen.
3. Enter a name for your grade sheet in the Document Label field.
4. Choose **Law Grade Sheet**, **Undergraduate Grade Sheet**, or **Other Grade Sheet** from the *Document Type* drop-down menu. OSCAR displays the grade sheet form.
5. Enter a number in the *Grade Sheet Ordering* field. If you have multiple grade sheets of the same type in your application (e.g., two law grade sheets), the Grade Sheet Ordering field allows you to control which grade sheet appears first in the application.

6. Verify or enter the *School Name*.
7. (Optional) Use the *Grading System Description* box to describe your school's grading system. (Useful for alternative grading methods.)
8. (Optional) Enter cumulative GPA.
9. Enter *Semester/Quarter Date* for your first term.
10. Enter the *Ordering* number for the semester/quarter.

Note: This determines the order your semesters/quarters appear in the grade sheet. OSCAR does not use the date to establish a chronological order. Enter "1" for your first term, "2" for your second term, etc. Failure to do this will result in a disorganized grade sheet that shows your terms in a random order.
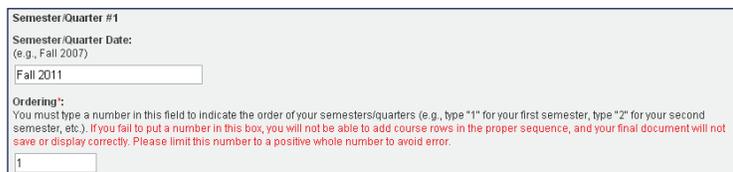
Create Grade Sheets (continued)

11. Enter your courses in the Course Rows. Only *Course Name* is required—all other fields are optional.

12. Click **Add Course Row** to add a new row to that semester/quarter. Remove extra rows using **Delete Course Row**.
13. Enter additional information in the **Narrative** text box (e.g., a leave of absence, semester honors or other academic awards, etc.)
14. Click **Add Semester/Quarter** to add a new section.
15. Click the **Save** button frequently to save your work to the OSCAR server.
16. Click **Upload** to:
    - Save your work to the OSCAR server.
    - Return to the *My Documents* tab.
    - Convert your grade sheet into a PDF document.
17. After you click **Upload**, your grade sheet will be available on the *My Documents* tab. If you do not click **Upload**, OSCAR will not convert your grade sheet to PDF and will not make it available to include on your applications. Click the PDF icon 📄 to the left of your grade sheet to preview your work.

Upload Resumes, Writing Samples, and Cover Letters as PDF Files

1. Click **My Documents**.
2. Click **Add New** (bottom of screen). OSCAR displays the *Document* screen.
3. Enter a name for your document in the *Document Label* field.
4. Choose the document type from the drop-down menu.
5. If you are uploading a resume or writing sample:
    - Click the **Browse** button in the gray file box.

   - In the pop-up window that displays, navigate to where the file is stored on your computer or network, select the file, and click the **Open** button. The file path displays in the browse box.
   - Click **Upload**.
6. If you are uploading a cover letter:
    - OSCAR displays the online editor screen. In the area immediately below the Document Type pull-down menu, choose **.pdf file**. OSCAR will display the same file browse box shown above.
    - Click **Browse** to locate your file.
    - Click **Upload**.
7. Your new document will be available in the list on the *My Documents* tab.

CHOOSE RECOMMENDERS

Selecting your recommenders is a crucial part of the application process. You must identify all of your recommenders before submitting applications just as you must upload all your application documents before applying to a position. Please note that simply identifying your pool of recommenders does not generate recommendation requests. Recommendation letters are associated specifically with an application packet, so you must actually create an application and select recommenders for the application to generate recommendation requests. Use one of the three methods described below to identify your recommenders in OSCAR.

Search for a Faculty Recommender

For each law school participating in the OSCAR program, the law school administrator uploads a master directory that contains a list of the school's faculty recommenders. To search this list:

1. Click **My Recommendations** > **Choose My Recommenders**.
2. Scroll down to *Choose My Recommenders*, and click **Choose Faculty Recommender**. OSCAR displays a drop-down menu.

Choose My Recommenders

[Choose Faculty Recommender] or [Search All Recommenders] or [+ Create Recommender]

3. Select your recommender from the menu.
4. Click **Add to My Recommenders**.

Search for a Non-Faculty Recommender

If you cannot find your faculty recommender on the drop-down menu or you are including non-faculty recommenders in your applications, you can search to see if another law school or applicant already added your recommender to OSCAR.

1. Click **My Recommendations** > **Choose My Recommenders**.
2. Scroll down to Choose *My Recommenders*, and click **Search All Recommenders**. OSCAR displays a text box.
3. Begin typing the name of your recommender. OSCAR displays a list of recommenders with names containing the characters you enter.
4. Select your recommender from the list.
5. Click **Add to My Recommenders**.

Create New Recommender Accounts

If you are unable to find your recommender in OSCAR, create a new account for the recommender.

1. Click **My Recommendations** > **Choose My Recommenders**.
2. Scroll down to *Choose My Recommenders*, and click **Create Recommender**. OSCAR displays a pop-up window.
3. Enter the recommender's information. Required fields are marked with a red asterisk (*).
4. Click **Save**.

View Your Recommenders/Change Default Status

OSCAR automatically sets the recommenders selected from your school's database as *Default Recommenders*, which means that they will automatically be checked as selected recommenders when you create an application.

1. Click **My Recommendations** > **Choose My Recommenders**.
2. Scroll down to *Current Recommenders* to see the recommenders you previously identified.
3. Default recommenders display a green check (✓) in the Default column of your *Current Recommenders* list. To change a recommender's default status, check the box next to the name and select the appropriate function from the *Batch Options* menu.

Request Letters of Recommendation

OSCAR automatically sends recommendation requests to the accounts of the recommenders you selected when you create a draft application.

See **Create a Draft Application** on the following page.

SEARCH FOR POSITIONS

Find clerkship and staff attorney positions with ease using OSCAR's powerful search features. Remember that **you can submit only 100 online applications to chambers law clerk positions**. There are no restrictions on applications submitted to pro se, death penalty, and bankruptcy appellate panel (BAP) law clerk positions or staff attorney positions.

Basic Search

OSCAR provides Basic Searches on the *Judges List* and *Staff Attorney Offices List*. Choose search parameters and click **Apply Search**. Results show below. Click **Clear** to reset the screen.

Advanced Search

OSCAR provides Advanced Search tabs under the *Judges* and *Staff Attorneys* tabs. Choose search parameters and click **Submit**. Results appear in new *Search Results* tab. Click **Clear** to reset search.

*Hint: Use **Batch Options** menu > **Save This List As Excel** to export results to a spreadsheet.*

Review Hiring Preferences

OSCAR provides several methods for judges and staff attorney office to indicate their hiring preferences. *Remember: If there is no position posted, OSCAR considers the chambers/office to be "not hiring."*

Review Judge/Staff Attorney Office Profile

1. Click **Search for Positions** and select **Judges** or **Staff Attorneys**.
2. Click the **Judges List** or **Staff Attorney Offices List** tab.
3. Locate desired judge or staff attorney office in list. Click the **last name** or **circuit name** to view.

Tester	Tyrus	Bankruptcy Judge	United States District Court, District of District of Columbia	Washington	✓		Nov 28, 2012

Clerkship Information
☐ Term Law Clerk-Chambers 4 Years Term Start: 9/1/2013 Term End: 8/30/2017 Accepting Applications: 10/5/2012 - 12/31/2012 Available
☐ Bankruptcy Appellate Panel Law Clerk 3 Years Term Start: 10/16/2013 Term End: 9/27/2016 Accepting Applications: 10/5/2012 - 12/15/2012 Available

4. Review information under *Judge Details* or *Staff Attorney Office Profile* tab. For judges, pay special attention to the **Hiring Practices** section.

Find Available Positions

OSCAR provides a simple search feature to locate judges/staff attorney offices with available positions in OSCAR.

1. Click **Search for Positions** and select **Judges** or **Staff Attorneys**.
2. Click the **Judges List** or **Staff Attorney Offices List** tab.
3. In the Basic Search, check **Available** under *Clerkship Position Status/Position Status*.

Clerkship Position Status ? ☑ Available ☐ Filled ☐ Expired ☐ None ☐ Archived

4. Click **Apply Search**. OSCAR displays a list of judges/staff attorney offices with available positions.
5. Click **Clear** to reset search parameters.

Review Positions

1. Click **Search for Positions** and select **Judges** or **Staff Attorneys**.
2. Click the **Judges List** or **Staff Attorney Offices List** tab.
3. Locate desired judge or staff attorney office in list. Click the **last name** or **circuit name** to view.
4. Click the **Clerkship List** or **Positions List** tab.
5. Scroll down to view the position information. Click **View & Apply** for the complete position listing and to create a draft application.

Options	Clerkship Type	Clerkship Term	Term Start Date	Term End Date	Accepting Applications	Status	Application Status
▶ View & Apply	Term Law Clerk-Chambers	2 Years	Jan 01, 2014	Jan 01, 2015	11/13/2012 - 5/13/2013	Available	

Create Folders and Save Positions

Save judges or staff attorney offices with open positions to custom-named folders you create in OSCAR. *Note: You can also create new folders from the Home tab or using Copy to New Folder in the Batch Options menu.*

1. Click **Search for Positions** and select **Judges** or **Staff Attorneys**.
2. Click the **Folders** tab and click **Add New Folder**.
3. Enter the new folder name in the pop-up window.
4. Choose parent folder if applicable and click **Create**.

Save a List of Judges to Your Computer

1. Click **Search for Positions** and select **Judges**.
2. Click the **Judges List** tab.

Note: You can also execute this process from the Folders or Search Results tabs.

3. Click **Save This List to Excel** in the *Batch Options* menu.
4. Click **Entire List**, **Selected Items**, or **This Page**.
5. Your browser will prompt you to save or open the file. Choose **Save** and select the location (local disk or network drive) for file download.

CREATE AND SUBMIT APPLICATIONS

Assemble your draft applications, send recommendation letter requests, and submit your applications to judges and staff attorney offices. **OSCAR limits you to 100 finalized applications to chambers law clerk positions.**

Create a Draft Application

1. Click **Search for Positions** and select **Judges** or **Staff Attorneys**.
2. Click the **Judges List** or **Staff Attorney Offices List** tab.

Note: You can also execute this process from the Folders *and* Search Results *tabs.*

3. Locate desired judge or staff attorney office in list. Click **last name** or **circuit name** to view.
4. Click the **Clerkship List** or **Positions List** tab. Scroll down to view the list of positions.
5. Click **View & Apply** for the complete position listing and to create a draft application.
6. Use menus under *Choose My Documents* to select application documents.
7. Use check boxes to select any recommenders who should receive letter requests for this application.
8. Click **Create Draft Application**.

Note: Creating a draft application causes OSCAR to send a recommendation request to the accounts of the recommenders you selected for the application.

Finalize Your Application

Warning: Applicants can submit only 100 online applications to chambers law clerk positions.

1. Click **My Applications** and select **Clerkship Applications** or **Staff Attorney Applications**.
2. Locate the application in the list you wish to finalize.
3. Click **Edit** in the *Options* column to view the draft application. Ensure that all documents are correct and that all desired recommenders are checked.

4. Click **Finalize Application**.
5. OSCAR displays a confirmation pop-up. Click **OK** to continue.
6. Confirmation time and number will display in the *Date Finalized* column. OSCAR sends a confirmation email with the final application packet.

Track Your Application Totals

OSCAR provides an Application Dashboard on the Home and *My Applications* pages to track the total number of chambers law clerk applications you submit. You can reclaim application slots by withdrawing applications (discussed below). If you submitted an application to a position that is marked filled, the application slot will return to you. If a position expires, you will receive the application slot back after 30 days, although you have the option to withdraw the application to immediately reclaim the slot.

Application Dashboard

Total finalized applications	35
Total application slots remaining	65
Total withdrawn applications and applications to filled positions	2
Total finalized applications to expired positions	24
Total draft applications	0
Any application update requests	0

Withdraw an Application

Warning: Applicants cannot re-apply to a position after withdrawing an application.

1. Click **My Applications** and select **Clerkship Applications** or **Staff Attorney Applications**.
2. Locate the application in the list you wish to withdraw.
3. Click **Withdraw** in the Options column.
4. OSCAR displays a confirmation pop-up. Click **OK** to continue.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources Tab

The OSCAR Resources tab contains help and training resources to aid you in using OSCAR more effectively. Under the *Resources* tab, you will find:

- **Applicant Resources**—Links to general information on judiciary employment and federal clerkships, the OSCAR Glossary, and shortcuts to other resources
- **Tip Sheets**—Illustrated instructions available in OSCAR online help
- **Video Tutorials**—Online instructional videos for using OSCAR
- **Downloadable Resources**—Other help documentation
- **FAQs**—Frequently Asked Questions

Online Help

Click **Help** in the main navigation menu to view searchable, indexed online help from any OSCAR screen.

OSCAR Program Support

The OSCAR Program Office provides live support 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time Monday - Friday.

Contact us via email at oscar-support@ao.uscourts.gov or by phone (toll free) at 1-866-666-2120.

The OSCAR website is maintained by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts on behalf of the Federal Judiciary.

https://oscar.uscourts.gov