Duquesne University School of Law Career Services Office  
Federal Judicial Clerkships Information Sheet (Post-Graduate Positions)

❖The following information is provided to students as an introduction to the application process for federal clerkships. Please inform the Career Services Office if you are interested in clerkships so we may work together to identify potential clerkships and review your application materials.

❖The Administrative Office of the Federal Courts operates an online application resource called OSCAR (Online System for Clerkship Application & Review) where some federal judges post information regarding their open law clerk or staff attorney positions and where applicants may apply for these positions. Additional detailed information about the application process can be found on OSCAR (www.oscar.uscourts.gov).

❖Judicial clerkship applicants must be proactive in their pursuit of a clerkship. Information on OSCAR may be updated at any time as needed by judges, so students should either check the website on a regular basis or create a search agent in order to receive email notifications about new postings. Keep in mind that OSCAR is a good resource to consult, but it is not the only avenue to pursue regarding federal clerkships.

❖Student applicants may apply during their 2L (2D, 3E, 3P) or 3L (3D, 4E, 4P) year. Some federal judges will accept applications from students during the fall or spring of their 2L year, and rising 2L students may access OSCAR on July 1.

❖Some federal judges do not use OSCAR to post their open clerkship positions or to collect application materials. Students should review the judicial profile information that is provided by the judges on OSCAR. Students will find information about open positions, notifications that the judge is not accepting applications, or no information at all. In the latter case, students should consult the judge’s biography on his or her court website in order to see if the judge has posted any clerkship application information there (this occurs in rare instances).

❖If OSCAR and the court’s website are silent as to a judge’s open clerkship positions, students are advised to apply via U.S. Mail. Some judges will not post their open clerkship positions because they receive many unsolicited applications and interview from that pool of candidates.

❖When applying via OSCAR, applicants must create a free account and complete all necessary sections before an application is considered finalized. Students are encouraged to watch the videos on OSCAR before starting their applications. OSCAR has proven to be very confusing to many applicants, and the videos can be helpful in navigating the application process on OSCAR.

❖Unless otherwise directed, applicants should submit the following application materials:
* cover letter
* resume
* writing sample (10-15 pages)
* letters of recommendation (3)
* law school transcript (unofficial)

❖Apply to only those judges from whom you are prepared to accept an employment offer. When a judge selects his or her law clerk among numerous applicants, the judge assumes that the offer will be accepted immediately. Failing to do so could adversely impact your professional reputation and that of future applicants from Duquesne University School of Law.

❖Applicants are encouraged to have their application documents reviewed by the Career Services Office prior to submitting them via OSCAR or mailing them to judges. Sample resumes and cover letters are available in The CSO Handbook (available at www.duqlawblogs.org/cso).

❖Candidates are encouraged to do a mock interview and to review the list of questions that are typically asked during a clerkship interview, which can be found in the Appendix of The CSO Handbook.

Questions? Contact the Career Services Office at (412) 396-6279 or comas@duq.edu, or consult the “FAQ” section on OSCAR.  
Sources: OSCAR Website and various NALP Annual Conference Handouts. Revised August 2016-MDC.