

# **CDO Guide:**

## *Application Materials*

Resumes, Cover Letters, References, Writing Samples,  
Transcripts & Thank You Notes

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This CDO Guide is intended to serve as a general resource for University of Denver Sturm College of Law students and alumni. Using and/or following this Guide is not a guarantee of employment and does not constitute legal advice. The information contained in this Guide reflects the collective knowledge of the University of Denver Sturm College of Law's Career Development Office, which may have been influenced by the content of Kimm Alayne Walton, J.D.'s popular legal career guide, *Guerrilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams* (2d ed. 2008; 1st ed. 1999, 1995)

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# RESUME

## **What makes a good resume?**

A good resume presents information in a way that is easy to digest. (In fact, some employers only take 20 seconds to review your resume!) Both format and substance are important.

Ultimately, your resume should:

- Make a positive first impression;
- Highlight your significant accomplishments;
- Highlight qualities and experiences that set you apart from other candidates;
- Be tailored to the position/industry you are seeking;
- Be truthful;
- Be mindful of any confidentiality considerations;
- Be logically formatted for a 20 second (or less) review;
- Be appealing on its face and easy to read; and
- Be **one page** (unless you have significant work experience prior to law school).

Your resume should NOT:

- Serve as an autobiography;
- Exaggerate, lie, or mislead;
- Be overly crowded (use font smaller than 11 point or have margins smaller than 0.5");
- Have any typos, spelling mistakes, or grammatical errors;
- Include extraneous, impertinent information;
- Include a photograph or multiple font colors; or
- List references.

## **How should I organize my resume?**

We suggest organizing your resume in a way that will make it easy for prospective

employers to identify key information about you, your educational background, your experience, and your accomplishments. While this can mean different things for different people, we generally suggest organizing your resume in the following order:

(1) Heading

- Include your name and contact information in the heading. Contact information typically includes address (if you do not want to include your entire address, just include your city and state), phone number, and email address (we suggest that students use their Denver Law email address).
- Use the same heading on your resume, cover letter, and any other application materials (writing sample cover sheet, reference list, etc.)
- If you are applying out-of-state and have a local address, consider including that address to demonstrate your connection to the area where the employer is located. You should include this in addition to your current address.
- List the best phone number to reach you, and make sure your voicemail message is professional and that your mailbox is not full. Employers may call that number to schedule an interview.

(2) Licenses/Bar Admission

- If you hold professional licenses or are admitted to the bar, list your admission.
- If you are eligible to take the bar exam but have not taken it yet:
  - “Eligible for July 20xx/February 20xx Colorado bar exam”
- If you have submitted your application to sit for the bar exam but have not taken it yet:
  - “Candidate for July 20xx/February 20xx Colorado bar exam” or
  - “Colorado (sitting for July 20xx/February 20xx exam)”
- If you have taken the bar exam and are awaiting results:
  - “Candidate for July 20xx/February 20xx Colorado bar exam (results pending)”
  - “Candidate for July 20xx/February 20xx Colorado bar exam (results expected October 20xx/April 20xx)” or
  - “Sat for July 20xx/February 20xx Colorado bar exam (results pending)”
- If you have been admitted, are active, and in good standing:
  - “Colorado (October 20xx/April 20xx)”

- If you have been admitted, but are inactive, then use your state’s official language for your status:
  - Colorado (inactive)
- If you have been admitted, but are not in good standing:
  - Call your state’s licensing authority (Colorado Office of Attorney Regulation Counsel or your state’s bar association) to find out what you need to do to correct the situation!

(3) Education/Honors/School-Related Activities

- List your law school and any graduate or undergraduate education in reverse chronological order (do not include high school education).
- List the name and location of each school, as well as the degree obtained or expected to be obtained and the year in which it was obtained or is expected to be obtained.
- We generally suggest including your law school GPA if 3.0 or higher and class rank if in the top one-third. However, employers focus on different things, so consider scheduling an appointment with the CDO to discuss whether to include your GPA on your resume.
- Under each school entry, use sub-headings or bullet points to detail any scholarships, awards, honors, certificates, journals, leadership, activities/involvement, or relevant coursework. If you had an achievement or honors section on your resume prior to law school, those entries should be listed under the corresponding school in the education section.
- Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant positions can either be listed here or as separate work experience (see below for more information).

(4) Professional/Work Experience

- Include employer name, employer location, job title, and months/years of employment (formatted as a date range, e.g., June 20xx – July 20xx). Be consistent in how you present the information for each employer. For examples of how to format present experience and upcoming experience, please refer to the sample resumes in Appendix A.
- Instead of simply listing job duties for each position, try to write more compelling “**accomplishment statements**” that highlight your major achievements for each professional experience. When drafting accomplishment statements, we typically recommend using bullet point format.
- Depending on the job you are applying to and your prior work history, you want to have one section titled “Experience” or “Professional Experience” or multiple sections that differentiate among experience such as “Legal Experience,”

“Volunteer Experience,” or “Other Professional Experience (or another relevant category such as “Teaching Experience”).

- Include your legal internships/externships. You can also include clinical experience, Research Assistant positions, or Teaching Assistant positions in this section.

#### (5) Interests/Skills/Certifications/Additional

- You may want to include a “Skills and Interests,” “Interests,” Or “Certifications and Skills” section. We recommend this section in the Colorado market (and be specific with your interests!)
- You could also consider a more general “Additional” section where you use sub-headings or bullet points to provide additional information about yourself such as interests, skills, or certifications. (If you don’t include a separate “Volunteer experience” section, list volunteer experience here).
- This section can include special skills such as fluency in a foreign language, advanced computer skill beyond those expected (do not include Word or Westlaw/Lexis unless an employer identifies these as required skills), extracurricular activities, hobbies, etc.

### **How do I write accomplishment statements for my professional/work experience?**

#### (1) Identify Your Job Duties

- What tasks did you perform in this job daily? What tasks did you perform weekly? Monthly? Yearly?
- What were some of the unique aspects of this job that helped you grow and develop as a person/employee/future professional?
- Remember that this is just the first step in writing an accomplishment statement. We encourage you to not simply identify tasks but also the accomplishments that grew out of those tasks (see steps 2-4).

#### (2) Identify Skills Within Those Job Duties

- What special abilities did you develop in performing these job duties? Which of these have allowed (or will allow) you to perform successfully in subsequent activities/jobs?”
  - This could include technical skills or non-technical skills.
  - This could include exposure to certain specialized subject matters or sectors of the job market.
- What type of stakeholders/groups/individuals did you interact with in

performing these job duties? How has interacting with them allowed (or will allow) you to perform successfully in this and subsequent jobs/activities?”

- Do not be concerned if you have little or no previous experience in legal jobs.  
**Job skills are transferable.** For example, the communication skills learned in a retail position will be useful in your future legal career for both business and client development.

### (3) Categorize Your Skills

- Consider if your skills fall into any of these categories, all of which are important and valued by employers:
  - *Technical/Professional Skills:* Skills related to performing within a job and that are acquired by education, training, reading, and/or hands-on experience (i.e., internships, clerkships, volunteer opportunities). These skills are often listed in advertised job postings, such as legal research abilities, legal writing skills, or working knowledge of certain area of law.
  - *Functional Skills:* Skills related to people, information, and things that are transferable from one field to another (e.g., organization, communication, management, multi-tasking, leadership). These abilities are easy to overlook or downplay but are highly valued by prospective employers and are crucial to successful workplace performance.
  - *Personal/Adaptive Skills:* Skills often referred to as personality and/or character traits (e.g. patience, decisiveness, dedication, collaboration, initiative, quick learner, detail-oriented, working well under pressure).
- Ask Yourself: “Which of these skills/abilities will allow me to perform successfully in THIS job that I am applying to?”

### (4) Use Action Verbs to Explain You Categorized Skills... and Accomplishments!

- Use *action verbs* to start each accomplishment statement. A list of sample action verbs can be found at the end of this section.
- *Quantify* the number of people, products, or profits involved (e.g., “Supervised 15-20 community volunteers”).
- Consider emphasizing *tasks*, *actions*, and *outcomes* in your accomplishment statement.
- Avoid using personal pronouns (e.g., “I” or “my”), and pay careful attention to your use of present and past tense.
- List job duties where accomplishment statements are not feasible. This need not be an exhaustive list – stick to the most significant duties that will be meaningful to the reader.



## **How can I add meaningful substance to my resume?**

As a student, there are numerous ways to add meaningful substance to your resume.

Here are some examples:

- Choosing coursework that speaks to your career interests and exploring certificate programs;
- Participating in one of DU Law's clinical programs;
- Participating in internships or externships;
- Getting involved with student activities, including student organizations;
- Volunteering with an organization that aligns with your interests;
- Applying to writing competitions;
- Participating in moot court, trial, or other competitions;
- Joining a law journal or blog (where you could also try to get published!);
- Working for a professor as a Research Assistance or Teaching Assistant; or
- Joining professional organization as a student member (e.g., [American Bar Association](#), [Colorado Bar Association](#), [Denver Bar Association](#), [Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Colorado](#), [Colorado Hispanic Bar Association](#), [Colorado Women's Bar Association](#), [Colorado Indian Bar Association](#), [Colorado Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Bar Association](#), [Sam Cary Bar Association](#), [South Asian Bar Association of Colorado](#), an Inn of Court, or others).

## **Do you have any sample resumes that I can reference?**

We have included fictionalized resumes for your reference in [Appendix A](#). These are intended to be for reference *only*.

## **Where can I get additional assistance with my resume?**

In addition to scheduling an appointment for one-on-one assistance with a CDO staff member, we encourage you to attend one of our resume workshop presentations. If you aren't able to attend in person, you can find videos of past presentations on the CDO website. Please contact the CDO for access instructions.

## Action Verbs for Resumes

Here is a list of sample action verbs to assist you in describing your experiences and accomplishments:

accelerated	continued	figured	modified	restored
accomplished	contracted	financed	molded	retained
achieved	conveyed	focused	monitored	retrieved
acquired	coordinated	forecasted	motivated	reviewed
activated	corresponded	formed	named	revised
adapted	counseled	formulated	negotiated	rewrote
adjusted	created	fostered	observed	routed
administered	critiqued	founded	obtained	scheduled
advised	decided	functioned	operated	searched
allocated	defined	generated	ordered	selected
analyzed	delegated	governed	organized	served
annotated	delivered	grouped	originated	shaped
anticipated	demonstrated	guided	outlined	shared
applied	derived	helped	oversaw	showed
appraised	designed	identified	perceived	simplified
arranged	detected	illustrated	performed	solicited
articulated	determined	immunized	persuaded	solved
assembled	developed	implemented	planned	specified
assessed	devised	improved	planted	spoke
assigned	directed	increased	presented	stimulated
authored	distributed	informed	presided	structured
balanced	drafted	initiated	printed	studied
briefed	edited	instituted	produced	supervised
budgeted	educated	instructed	protected	supported
built	effected	interpreted	provided	synthesized
catalogued	elicited	interviewed	publicized	targeted
catalogued	encouraged	introduced	questioned	taught
categorized	established	invented	raised	tested
chaired	evaluated	investigated	recommended	trained
clarified	examined	judged	recorded	transferred
cleared	executed	led	recruited	tutored
coded	exhibited	listened	reduced	updated
collaborated	expanded	maintained	rendered	utilized
compared	expedited	managed	reported	verified
compiled	experienced	marketed	represented	wrote
completed	experimented	mastered	reproduced	
composed	explained	measured	researched	
computed	explored	mediated	resolved	
conducted	facilitated	modeled	responded	
consolidated				
constructed				
contacted				

# Resume Checklist

Consistency and double-checking are key to having a polished and professional resume. Are you consistent throughout your resume? Have you confirmed that you don't have any mistakes? Use this checklist to help review and finalize your resume.

1. Your resume has the same heading as your cover letter and any other application materials
2. Educational institutions, locations, and degrees are formatted the same (this also means that you have been consistent in using bold and italics!)
3. Double-check that you wrote "University of Denver Sturm College of Law," **NOT** "University of Denver Strum College of Law"
4. Degrees are either all spelled out (e.g. Juris Doctor, Bachelor of Arts) or all abbreviated (e.g. J.D., B.A.)
5. If spelling out your degrees, confirm that you wrote "Juris Doctor, **NOT** "Juris Doctorate"
6. State names are either all spelled out (e.g. Denver, Colorado) or all abbreviated (e.g. Denver, CO)
7. Employer names, locations, and job titles are formatted the same and in alignment with how you formatted your educational institutions
8. Date ranges are either all spelled out (e.g. January 20xx – October 20xx) or all abbreviated (e.g. Jan. 20xx – Oct. 20xx)
9. Date ranges are separated by the same punctuation (don't have some date ranges separated by hyphens and others separated by em dashes)
10. Bullet points are aligned throughout the document
11. Accomplishment statements are formatted the same (don't have some ending in periods and others not – we generally suggest not using periods at the end of your accomplishment statements, but if you do... be consistent!)
12. Your accomplishment statements do not include personal pronouns
13. Your accomplishment statements do not use "etc." or include phrases like "and more"
14. You are consistent and correct in your use of present and past tense throughout your resume

# COVER LETTERS

## **Why are cover letters important?**

Cover letters are your first opportunity to personally engage with a prospective employer. They allow you to communicate “the intangibles” that are not readily apparent from the factual content of your resume and can provide you with an opportunity to highlight certain experiences. Cover letters should be clear, concise, and convey enthusiasm. If done well, your cover letter will convince an employer to look at your resume and, ultimately, get you to the next stage in the process – the interview.

## **What makes a good cover letter?**

While the best cover letters reflect genuine, personal engagement with the employer and enthusiasm for the position - something that only you can create – we suggest keeping the following in mind when drafting your cover letter.

### (1) Stay Employer-Focused

Remember who your audience is and why you are writing to them. Quickly and clearly answer the employer’s unspoken questions:

- Who are you?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Why should I be interested in meeting you?

To answer these questions, do some research on the employer. An effective cover letter:

- Highlights skills and abilities of greatest interest to the specific employer; and
- Demonstrates familiarity with the firm, organization, or entity and what they do. Be as specific as possible when expressing interest in a firm, organization, or entity by referencing substantive areas, cases, attorneys, or other aspects of the employer that are appealing to you.

### (2) Don’t Re-State Your Resume

Your cover letter should **not** simply re-state your resume. It is an opportunity to demonstrate how your skills and prior experience will benefit the employer.

- **Briefly** describe specific examples from your background that demonstrate you can meet the employer’s needs.
- Remember that you are a student building your career on a solid academic and practical foundation. Avoid phrases such as “*I’m the perfect candidate for this position because...*” or “*I am confident I will exceed your expectations in every way.*” Statements like these can come across as ego-centric and unsubstantiated.
- Make plausible claims and support them with credible/accurate accounts from your experiences,

such as awards or commendations from employers or professors.

### (3) One Page and Concise

A successful cover letter is short (one page or less), concise, quickly absorbed, and rings sincere.

- **Demonstrate confidence and competence through use of simple, straightforward language.** Avoid complex, convoluted sentences or obscure words that could make you come across as trying too hard or insincere.
- **Convey enthusiasm by providing specific examples** from your background that show a demonstrated interest and good fit for the position. Limit the use of elaborate language to convey enthusiasm (e.g. “I am passionate about...” or “this would be an unparalleled experience”).
- **Use active voice.** Passive voice is plodding and drags down your presentation. Active voice conveys a stronger, more positive impression. Active voice also demonstrates that you are the excellent writer you claim to be.
- The **primary theme** of the letter should be about what you can contribute to the employer – your skills and strengths – not what the employer can do for you.
- Use the same heading and font in your cover letter as your resume. Consistency is key!

### (4) Integrity is Critical

Don't manufacture a story or embellish an experience or credential to impress a prospective employer. ***Integrity is critical in this profession.*** You want to begin developing a reputation for being trustworthy and honest ***now.***

### (5) Avoid Typos, Spelling Mistakes, and Other Errors

- Proofread your work, then have the CDO or a friend do it again!
- Sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling should be flawless. Don't give the employer a reason to eliminate your application.
- Address your letter to the specific contact or person responsible for hiring. If you cannot find out who to address the letter to, we suggest addressing it to “Hiring Committee,” “Hiring Manager,” or “Hiring Attorney.” Do ***not*** address your cover letter “To whom it may concern.”
- Confirm the spelling of the recipient's name, their pronouns, and title (check their website or LinkedIn, or confirm with the CDO). If you do not know the recipient's pronouns, address your letter using their first name and last name (e.g. “Dear Alex Smith”).

While these things may seem intuitive, qualified candidates can be rejected for seemingly minor errors. Don't wait until the last minute to prepare letters when you are too tired to catch mistakes. Take the extra time to do the job well.

## **How should I organize my cover letter?**

We suggest organizing your cover letter in the following order:

### (1) Introductory Paragraph

Your introductory paragraph should establish your employment interest **and** generate interest in you. Quickly and clearly answer the employer's unspoken questions:

- Who are you?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Why should I be interested in meeting you?

If you have a mutual acquaintance or were referred to the employer/position, mention that in your opening paragraph. If you don't, draw on something you learned from your research to explain why you are interested in working for this particular employer or discuss why you are drawn to this particular field of work.

### (2) The Body of the Letter – One or Two Paragraphs

The body of the letter should focus on the employer's ultimate question: ***Why should I hire you?***

- Highlight items of relevance to the employers and the position.
- Describe specific training, achievements, or experiences (either before or during law school) that speak to your strengths and abilities and demonstrate the value that you can bring to the employer.
- Establish a theme for these paragraphs using strong topic sentences. For example, "***My demonstrated interest in trial work and my strong research and writing skills make me a good fit for the Denver District Attorney's Office.***" Then, support this theme with specific examples from your background.

### (3) The Final Paragraph – Closing

In the closing paragraph, you should:

- Thank the addressee for their time and consideration.
- Indicate you look forward to the opportunity to meet and discuss the position.

### **Do you have any sample cover letter that I can reference?**

We have included BEFORE FEEDBACK and AFTER FEEDBACK cover letters for your review in [Appendix B](#). These are intended to be for reference **only**.

### **Where can I get additional assistance with my cover letter?**

In addition to scheduling an appointment for one-on-one assistance with a CDO staff member, we encourage you to attend one of our cover letter workshop presentations. If you are not able to attend in person, you can find videos of past presentations on the CDO website. Please contact the CDO for access instructions.

## Cover Letter Checklist

Consistency and double-checking are key to having a polished and professional cover letter. Are you consistent throughout your cover letter (and more generally, throughout your application materials)? Have you confirmed that you don't have any mistakes? Use this checklist to help review and finalize your cover letter.

1. Your cover letter has the same heading as your resume and any other application materials
2. Your cover letter is in letter format, which means that it has (a) a date; (b) an address block; (c) a subject line; (d) a salutation; and (e) a signature block
3. Your cover letter is not addressed to "To Whom It May Concern"; instead, it is addressed to the specific contact or person responsible for hiring
4. The recipient's name, pronouns, and title are correct
5. The salutation uses a colon (not a comma)
6. Your cover letter has an introductory paragraph, one or two body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph
7. Instead of starting with a standard sentence (e.g. "I am a 1L writing to apply for ...."), your cover letter starts with an eye-catching sentence about why you are interested in the position (or, it starts by noting any connections you may have)
8. Your cover letter does not simply re-state your resume
9. The primary theme of your letter is what you can contribute to the employer – your skills and strengths – not what the employer can do for you
10. Your cover letter uses active voice
11. Your cover letter does not have any typos, spelling mistakes, or grammatical errors

# **REFERENCES**

## **What makes a good list of references?**

Employers may request a list of references from you at any point during the job application process. Here are a few suggestions regarding references:

- Provide a separate “References” document rather than listing your references on your resume. Use the same heading that you use on your resume, cover letter, and any other application materials.
- If requested, identify two (2) to three (3) people who can attest to your work product, work ethic, professionalism, and/or good character.
  - As a student, you may want to consider including a professor.
  - Other potential references include current or former employers or people who have supervised any volunteer work you have performed.
  - Friends and family members are not ideal references.
- Ask the people you plan to use as references for their permission before you list them on your reference sheet. Not only is this the polite (and professional) thing to do, connecting with them beforehand will give them advanced notice that an employer may contact them in the near future.
- Note whether the employer has requested a list of references or a letter of recommendation, as they are different.

## **When should I provide a list of references?**

Unless otherwise requested, wait for the employer to ask for your references before providing them. (That being said, sometimes *offering* a list of references can be helpful.)

## **Do you have a sample list of references?**

We have included a sample list of references in [Appendix C](#). This is intended for reference *only*.

The header for this document should match that of your resume. Include a name, title, company/institution, phone number, and email address for each reference. Also, include a short sentence about how each reference knows you.

## **Where can I get additional assistance with my list of references?**

In addition to scheduling an appointment for one-on-one assistance with a CDO staff member, we encourage you to attend one of our workshop presentations on application materials. If you aren't able to attend in person, you can find videos of past presentations on the CDO website. Please contact the CDO for access information.



# **WRITING SAMPLE<sup>1</sup>**

## **What makes a good writing sample?**

Most employers tend to prefer writing samples in the IRAC format (such as a memo or a brief) that is five to seven pages long, excluding the cover sheet. We usually discourage students from using journal articles or academic papers as their primary writing sample.

When selecting a writing sample, you should:

- Avoid selecting a writing sample that has been heavily edited by someone else;
- Note in your cover sheet if, and to what extent, your writing sample has been edited;
- Try to avoid using a writing sample where you were one of multiple authors; however, if you have such a sample where you are the sole author of a particular section, note this in your cover sheet and identify which part(s) of the writing sample you authored;
- Be mindful of any confidentiality considerations; and
- If using a memo or other writing sample from a current or prior work experience (or which you prepared for a client), ask permission to use the writing sample.

***For substantive assistance with your writing sample (or assistance pairing down a longer writing sample), we encourage you to connect with Denver Law’s Academic Achievement Program’s [Legal Writing Clinic](#).***

## **When should I provide a writing sample?**

We suggest you wait for the employer to request a writing sample before providing one.

## **Do you have a sample cover sheet?**

We have included a sample cover sheet in [Appendix D](#). This is intended to be for reference **only**.

The header for your cover sheet should match that of your resume. The cover sheet should (i) introduce your writing sample; (ii) note if, and to what extent, it has been edited by someone else; (iii) note if there were multiple authors, and identify which part(s) of the writing sample you authored; and (iv) provide relevant background facts.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the substantive content in this section can be attributed to University of Denver Sturm College of Law Professor K.K. DuVivier’s ***Writing Samples for the Job Search***.

## **Where can I get additional assistance with my cover sheet?**

In addition to scheduling an appointment for one-on-one assistance with a CDO staff member, we encourage you to attend one of our workshop presentations on application materials. If you aren't about to attend in person, you can find videos of past presentations on the CDO website. Please contact the CDO for access information.

# **TRANSCRIPTS**

## **Why do some employers request a law school transcript?**

A transcript not only reflects your grades in certain classes, which may be important to certain employers, it also tells the employers what classes you have taken. By looking at your transcript, employers can see if you have a demonstrated area of interest or if you are developing expertise in a particular area.

## **Should I provide an unofficial transcript or an official transcript with my application?**

It is always important to read the job posting and see if the employer has requested an unofficial transcript or an official transcript. If the job posting does not specify what type of transcript, it is generally acceptable to provide a copy of your unofficial transcript.

## **When should I provide a transcript?**

You should only provide a transcript when the employer has requested one. Keep in mind that, while an employer may not request a transcript when you initially apply for a position, they may ask for one later in the process.

## **What about undergraduate transcripts?**

Some employers may request an undergraduate transcript. Typically, this can be an unofficial copy (but know that the employer may request an official copy before the start of employment).

## **Where can I get additional assistance with my transcripts?**

Current students can access their unofficial transcripts from PioneerWeb. Click on MyWeb, then click on "Student," then "Student Records," and finally click on "Request Printed/Official Transcript."

For additional assistance with accessing your transcript, please contact the Office of the Registrar ([registrar@law.du.edu](mailto:registrar@law.du.edu)).

# **THANK YOU NOTES**

## **Why are thank you notes important?**

Students often ask whether it is **imperative** to write a thank you note following an interview. Will it **really** be the deciding factor in whether an employer hires you or someone else? The answer is: Possibly.

The same standards apply to a thank you note as to a cover letter. If a thank you note contains grammatical or typographical errors, is poorly composed, or reflects poor judgment, it may eliminate you from consideration. That being said, even if a thank you note is perfect, it will not ensure you get the job.

Ultimately, your objective in sending a thank you note should be to express gratitude for the interviewer's time and reinforce the good impression you made during the interview.

## **What makes a good thank you note?**

Thank you notes should be concise and well written. The best thank you notes:

- Express gratitude for the interviewer's time;
- Note one or two things you enjoyed discussing or learned from the interview; and
- Reiterate your interest in the position.

## **When and how should I send my thank you note?**

We generally suggest sending thank you notes via email within 24 hours of your interview. While it may also be appropriate (or seen as a more personal, meaningful gesture) to follow up with a mailed handwritten note, most employers have come to expect emailed thank you notes soon after interviewing. We recommend that you send a unique thank you note to each interviewer.

If you send a thank you note via email, be sure to include your text in the body of the email. Do not attach it as a separate Word document.

# Appendix A

## Sample Resumes

# J. First Year

Denver, CO • (303) XXX-XXXX • emailaddress@email.edu

## EDUCATION

### **University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO**

*Juris Doctor*

Expected May 20XX

- GPA: 3.63; Class Rank: Top X%
- Sturm College of Law General Scholarship
- Member, Public Interest Law Group

### **Undergraduate University, Flagstaff, AZ**

*Bachelor of Science, Environmental Science*

May 20XX

- GPA: 3.89; Dean's List (8 of 8 semesters)
- Environmental Service Scholarship
- President, Environmental Club; Member, University Intramural Sports Team

## EXPERIENCE

### **Government Agency, Denver, CO**

*Legal Extern*

Forthcoming June 20XX

### **The Law Firm, St. Louis, MO**

*Legal Assistant*

October 20XX – July 20XX

- Gathered and organized medical data for multi-million-dollar class action case; drafted memoranda summarizing key data for attorney review
- Worked closely with attorneys to prepare claim status letters for thousands of class action members; answered phone calls and questions on claims for class members
- Conducted potential new client intake phone interviews; prepared internal memoranda relied upon by attorneys to evaluate claims

### **Environmental Corps, Flagstaff, AZ**

*Crew Supervisor*

May 20XX – March 20XX

- Supervised three Environmental Corps volunteer crews conducting various environmental forest restoration projects throughout rural Arizona
- Trained new Environmental Corps volunteers on chainsaw safety, fire prevention, and environmental education
- Collaborated with project partners from numerous government agencies to identify and achieve environmental restoration goals

*Student Volunteer*

May 20XX – August 20XX

- Worked with project partners and crew members to reduce potential forest fire fuels, mitigate bark beetle outbreak, and provide heating fuel for rural communities
- Participated in bark beetle mitigation in extreme environmental conditions
- Completed over 300 hours of volunteer work

## INTERESTS

Visiting U.S. National Parks (most recently Denali National Park); backpacking; classical guitar

# Crimson Gold

1234 University St., Denver, CO 80808 | 303.XXX.XXXX | emailaddress@email.com

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## EDUCATION

### **University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO**

J.D. Candidate

May 20XX

Scholarships: Provost's Merit Scholarship (two-thirds tuition) Certificate: Certificate in Basic Legal Research Awards: Best Speaker, Trial Advocacy Competition (Fall 2021); First Year Community Service Award (Spring 2022) Relevant Coursework: Trial Practice I - Intensive (by invitation only); Trial Practicum (by invitation only); Advanced Evidence; Advanced Criminal Procedure (currently enrolled)

### **Graduate University, Newark, NJ**

M.B.A., Concentration in Non-Profit Entities

May 20XX

Activities: President, Non-Profit Business Club

### **Undergraduate College, Berkley, CA**

B.A., Political Science & Criminal Justice

May 20XX

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## EXPERIENCE

### **Office of the District Attorney, Xth Judicial District, Colorado Springs, CO**

Student Intern

May 20XX - Present

- Analyzed court transcripts, trial evidence, defense motions, and briefs
- Researched legal issues involving driver's license revocations, speedy trials, sex offenses, the Establishment Clause, body cameras, and joinder of criminal defendants
- Drafted memoranda summarizing case law developments for supervising attorney

### **Civil Litigation Clinic, University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO**

Student Attorney

Aug. 20XX - Dec. 20XX

- Collaborated with other student attorneys and supervising attorney to represent low-income clients in their claims of unpaid wages

### **Government Agency, Denver, CO**

Legal Intern

May 20XX - Aug. 20XX

- Drafted a 23-page memorandum summarizing relevant law impacting certain types of disability discrimination claims in Colorado
  - Analyzed documentation to determine if parties had complied with a conciliation agreement
  - Presented research findings on recent amendments to the Statute Act to a committee of attorneys at the Government Agency
- 

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

### **Community Organization, San Francisco, CA**

Aug. 20XX - Feb. 20XX

- Tutored elementary-aged children in the subjects of reading and writing on a weekly basis

### **Retirement Community, Newark, NJ**

Sept. 20XX - Mar. 20XX

- Led a weekly one-hour seminar on brain health; visited retirees
- 

## SKILLS & INTERESTS

Conversational Spanish; semi-professional pickleball; antiquarian books

# **Appendix B**

## **Cover Letters**

*Before and After Feedback*



# *COVER LETTER DRAFT – BEFORE FEEDBACK*

**J. First Year**

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Denver, CO • (303) XXX-XXXX • emailaddress@email.edu

May 12, 20XX

Non-Profit Organization  
123 N. Avenue  
Denver, CO 80808

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a 1L student at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, writing to apply for a fall externship with Non-Profit Organization. My observations of the systematic injustices suffered by those without means prompted me to attend law school. Working as an extern in your office will allow me to benefit from your mentorship in this area and help me meaningfully contribute to the Denver community.

I know that I am the best candidate for this position. I have strong legal research and writing skills that I will continue to refine when I extern for Government Agency this summer, and I have prior experience working with attorneys from when I was a Legal Assistant at The Law Firm. I am also very passionate about environmental work, which will help me be successful as a student extern at Non-Profit Organization.

I look forward to learning more about this opportunity, discussing my candidacy with you, and enhancing the important work performed by Non-Profit Organization. Professor T. Bluebook highly recommended that I contact you regarding my substantial interest in non-profit work. I have enclosed my resume and references.

Sincerely,

J. First Year

# COVER LETTER DRAFT – AFTER INITIAL FEEDBACK

## J. FIRST YEAR

123 S. Street • Denver, CO 88888 • (303) XXX-XXXX • emailaddress@email.edu

May 12, 2023

[Insert Name of Specific Contact]

Non-Profit Organization

123 N. Avenue

Denver, CO 80808

[Insert Contact's Email Address]

Re: [Insert Subject Line]

Dear [Insert Name of Specific Contact]:

I am a 1L student at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, writing to apply for a fall externship with Non-Profit Organization. My observations of the systematic injustices suffered by those without means prompted me to attend law school. Working as an extern in your office will allow me to benefit from your mentorship in this area and help me meaningfully contribute to the Denver community.

I know that I am the best candidate for this position. I have strong legal research and writing skills that I will continue to refine when I extern for Government Agency this summer, and I have prior experience working with attorneys from when I was a Legal Assistant at The Law Firm. I am also very passionate about environmental work, which will help me be successful as a student extern at Non-Profit Organization.

I look forward to learning more about this opportunity and discussing my candidacy with you. Professor T. Bluebook highly recommended that I contact you regarding my substantial interest in non-profit work. I have enclosed my resume. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Insert Signature]

J. First Year

Enclosure: Resume

**Commented [YK1]:** Address your letter to the specific contact or person responsible for hiring, and identify them in the address block. Confirm the spelling of the recipient's name, their pronouns, and title.

**Commented [YK2]:** If sending your materials via email, we suggest identifying the contact's email address here.

**Commented [YK4]:** Instead of starting your letter with a standard sentence (e.g., I am a 1L student applying for . . . ), start with an eye-catching sentence about why you are interested in the position or by noting any connections you may have (such as the connection with Professor T. Bluebook).

**Commented [YK5]:** Keep in mind that the primary theme of the letter should be about what you can contribute to the employer – your skills and strengths – not what the employer can do for you.

**Commented [YK6]:** Remember that you are a student building your career on a solid academic and practical foundation – avoid phrases that could come across as pompous or unsubstantiated. Instead, demonstrate confidence and competence through use of simple, straightforward language.

**Commented [YK7]:** Can you expand upon this experience and the transferrable skills that will help you succeed in this role with Non-Profit Organization?

**Commented [YK8]:** We suggest using a “show, not tell” approach. Rather than saying that you are very passionate about environmental work, use specific examples to show that you are passionate about environmental work.

**Commented [YK9]:** Can you be more specific about how your passion for environmental work will help you succeed?

**Commented [YK10]:** Currently, all of your sentences in this paragraph start with “I”. Consider varying your sentence structure to maintain a good flow to your letter and keep the reader interested.

**Commented [YK12]:** See above comment about noting connections in your introductory paragraph.

# **Appendix C**

## Sample List of References

# J. First Year

Denver, CO • (303) XXX-XXXX • emailaddress@email.edu

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## REFERENCES

### **Professor T. Bluebook**

University of Denver Sturm College of Law  
2255 E. Evans Avenue  
Denver, CO  
80208 303-  
XXX-XXXX

referenceemail1@referenceemail1.com

Professor Bluebook is my Lawyering Process (legal writing) professor.

### **Stare Decisis, Managing Attorney**

The Law Firm  
123 W. Street  
City, MO 12345  
123-XXX-XXXX

referenceemail2@referenceemail2.com

Stare Decisis is the Managing Attorney of The Law Firm, where I worked as a Legal Assistant prior to attending law school.

### **Cherry Creek III**

Environmental Corps  
P.O. Box 98765  
City, AZ 54321  
321-XXX-XXXX

referenceemail3@referenceemail3.com

Cherry Creek III was my direct supervisor at Environmental Corps from May 20XX to March 20XX.

# **Appendix D**

## Sample Cover Sheet

# J. First Year

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## WRITING SAMPLE

This writing sample is an excerpt from a memo I submitted for my first-year legal writing course. My professor critiqued a previous draft of this assignment, and this version incorporates those suggestions.

I worked with a partner on this assignment, so I have included only the portion of the analysis section that represents my individual work. Please let me know if you would like to see the entire assignment or additional writing samples.

### *Background Facts:*

[Insert a brief summary of relevant background facts. Remember to be mindful of any confidentiality considerations and, if using a memo or other writing sample from a current or prior work experience (or which you prepared for a client), ask permission to use the writing sample and be careful not to expose confidential information].