

## STUDENTS AND OSCAR

### Overview

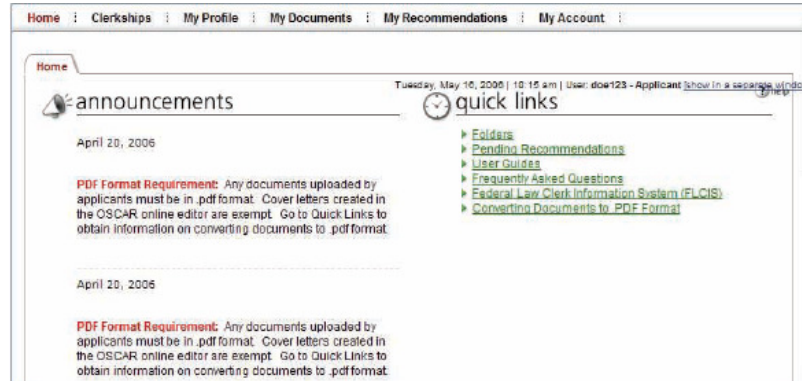
OSCAR is an online database funded by a grant through the Administrative Office of the US Courts. OSCAR offers a complete database of federal judges as well as an internet-based application system permitting applicants to file their federal clerkship application materials online to designated judges. OSCAR is now active for current students to register on and begin using.

Here is a synopsis of the steps involved:

- Start by registering in OSCAR and reviewing the User Guide
- Research judges and their application requirements
- Identify all potential recommenders within OSCAR
- Upload your documents in PDF format
- Build your applications within OSCAR for each judge. This is when an automatic email will be sent to your identified recommenders for that application.
- Your recommender will submit a letter of recommendation to Henry Bishop that will be uploaded into OSCAR.
- Finalize your application.
- On September 7, 2010, the applications you've finalized in OSCAR will be dispersed to your identified judges.

### Initial Login

OSCAR can be found at <https://oscar.uscourts.gov>. Select the applicant registration tab on the right-hand side of the page in order to register for the first time. If you have questions or require help with any of the OSCAR application process please contact [lawcareers@stthomas.edu](mailto:lawcareers@stthomas.edu). When you initially log on, you'll see a screen that looks like this:



You'll need to update your profile before beginning.

### Some Good First Steps

- ❖ Search for clerkships and research each judge's requirements under "Judges."
- ❖ Practice uploading documents in PDF format and building your law grade sheet.
- ❖ List all of your possible recommenders under the "My Recommendations" tab.
- ❖ Review the OSCAR Applicant User Guide found at <http://www.oscar.dcd.uscourts.gov/applicant-resources>.

### Research Judges

You can search for judges by court type, location, clerkship availability, etc. You can do this from the OSCAR homepage (before logging in), or once you are in the OSCAR module. Learn the different application requirements for each judge.

## Update Recommender List

Go to the My Recommendations tab to identify all potential recommenders. Using the dropdown menu, select a recommender you would like to add to your list and click Add to My Recommenders. Do this for each faculty member from whom you may request a recommendation. If you would like to use a recommender that is not on this list, please alert CPD so that we can work with them to upload their recommendation letters.

## Uploading Documents

Like in Symplicity, you will work in the My Documents module to upload all of your application materials. Existing documents that you upload must be converted to PDF format first.

- **Resumes.** It is recommended that you use basic standard fonts in application documents prior to converting to PDF format. Also, avoid formatting resumes that list the employers, employment location and or employment dates to the far right margin. Be sure to open your PDF resume document before uploading it to ensure that the formatting is correct.
- **Writing Samples.** As with other applications, writing samples should generally be 10-15 pages, include the same heading as your resume and cover letter, and showcase the best example of your writing. Convert to PDF before uploading.
- **Cover Letters.** You have 2 options for uploading cover letters to OSCAR:
  - Upload existing PDF files.
  - Create cover letters in the online editor: If you choose to enter a cover letter online, you may use the mail merge fields for the judges' addresses. There is no cover letter limit in the online editor.
- **Grade Sheets.** All grade sheets must be manually typed in to OSCAR to ensure that they are done in the correct format.

### ***Converting Documents to PDF Format***

1. Install a PDF converter. If you have Adobe Professional, this includes a PDF converter. (For your convenience this software is available on Computer #1 in the Resource Room). If you only have Adobe Acrobat Reader, then you can download the CutePDF Writer for free at [www.cutepdf.com](http://www.cutepdf.com).
2. Once installed you'll notice under your printer options CutePDF Writer.
3. Open your the document you would like to convert.
4. In the browser screen go up to File. Select Print.
5. When the Print Screen appears under Printer Name select CutePDF Writer (as opposed to whatever default printer normally is selected). Hit Print.
6. The PDF file will generate. Name it and save it accordingly.

### ***Text for "Grading System Description" (to paste into OSCAR)***

The grading system for the University of St. Thomas School of Law is as follows:

A (Excellence) 4.0 quality points  
A- 3.7 quality points  
B+ 3.3 quality points I Incomplete  
B 3.0 quality points R Registered, no credit  
B- 2.7 quality points S Satisfactory  
C+ 2.3 quality points W Withdrawal  
C (Minimal Performance) 2.0 quality points  
C- 1.7 quality points  
D+ 1.3 quality points  
D (Unsatisfactory) 1.0 quality points  
D- 0.7 quality points  
F 0.0 quality points

First year classes (except for Lawyering Skills) must have a class average that falls between 2.75 and 2.85. All Second and Third Years courses that have 45 or more students enrolled must have a class average between 2.95 and 3.05. Faculty for all other upper level courses (with less than 45 students) are encouraged to use these guidelines, but it is not mandatory.

- School: Select University of St. Thomas School of Law – Minneapolis from the drop-down menu.
- Grading System Description: Paste the text to the right in this box. This will explain the UST grading policies.
- Session: Type in the semester for which you are adding the grades.
- Order: Type in the number that identifies where on the list this semester will appear.
- Course: Fill in the course name, professor, grades and credits appropriately. You may use the comments box for awards or distinctions from that particular class.
- Narrative: You may use this to comment on any awards or distinctions from the semester.
- Add courses and sessions as appropriate, then click on Upload to upload your grade sheet.
- NOTE: Save your grade sheet periodically to ensure you don't lose any work

A few reminders for uploading documents:

- ❖ OSCAR has a 300kb file size limit for any document uploaded to the system.
- ❖ Most of the steps of the application process include directions, but for more detailed directions or further information, refer to the User Guide under Quick Links on your homepage.
- ❖ Your documents must be correctly identified (i.e., as “cover letter” or “resume”) or you will not be able to build your applications.

## Build Applications

- Log in to OSCAR and select the “Judges” tab. Find the judge you’d like to apply with and click his or her last name. You will be taken to a screen summarizing what documents the judge requires as part of the application process.
- Click the button on the bottom of the right box titled “Build an Application.”
- On the next screen, select which documents you’d like to include in the application for this particular judge. Make sure to indicate which recommender(s) you’d like to use for this application.
- After selecting all relevant documents and identifying recommender(s) then click Create Application. This does not submit or finalize your application, it just initiates the process.

You will be taken to a screen where you can verify the details of your application.

- If everything is correct – at least for the time being – click Confirm. Your application is not yet finalized. **\*\*Note: It is not until you actually create an application for a specific judge that we will be able to upload your recommendation letters.. By just selecting a recommender under “My Recommendations” on the top toolbar your recommender will NOT have access to this application. Every recommendation letter is specific to the particular judge. So **DO NOT** delay in building your applications.\*\***

- After submitting an application and before midnight on September 7<sup>th</sup> you can update or delete any application because it has not yet been released to the judge. Upon deletion of an application you will be able to reapply to that judge prior to the application deadline. To see your applications, go to Judges – Applications.
- Once you are completely finished with an application, click FINALIZE to complete the application. Neither you, nor CPD, nor OSCAR will be able to edit your application when this is done. **If you do not finalize your applications, they will not be released to the judges on September 7, 2010.**

**Build an Application** ☰

*\* indicates a required field*

**My Documents:**  
Select documents you have uploaded in My Documents Section

**Cover Letter [new]:**  
[select] ▼

**Resume [new]':**  
[select] ▼

**Writing Sample [new]:**  
No Writing Samples found!  
[select] ▼

**Law Grade Sheet [new]:**  
[select] ▼

**Other Grade Sheet [new]:**  
No Other Grade Sheets found!  
[select] ▼

**Letters of Recommendation:**  
You can add or remove recommendation requests until the application has become visible to the judge.  
Click [Add Another Recommender] to add an additional recommendation request for this application.

**Recommender**  
[select] ▼

**+ Add Another Recommender**

**Create Application**

## **Recommendations**

- To view the status of your recommendation letter requests go to the “My Recommendations” tab on the top toolbar. From here you can view the people that you designated as your recommenders.
- You can also check the status of the letters by selecting the “Status of Recommendation Letters” tab. It will show all of the recommendations that you have requested and whether the letters have been completed or not.
- **It is your responsibility to request letters from your recommenders.** They will submit their letters to Henry Bishop, who will upload them to OSCAR, but we will trust that you have communicated this request with the professors directly.