FAQs: Timing of 1L Summer Internship Applications

Recognizing the importance of the transition to law school, the Columbia Law School Career Advising Offices -- Social Justice Initiatives (SJI) and Office of Career Services (OCS) -- will begin offering one-on-one career counseling, summer internship advising appointments and application document reviews to first-year students after October 15.

This policy is similar to the guidance formerly provided by the NALP Guidelines (which was rescinded in December 2019).

See below for responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

I heard NALP guidelines are not in effect any more. What does this mean for the timing of my 1L summer internship applications?

Columbia Law School has chosen to adopt a policy that is similar to the former timelines provided by the NALP rules:

- October 15th: Students can begin meeting with career advisors to discuss the 1L summer job search and applications. [NOTE that Symplicity will open prior to this date to allow students to set up these appointments].
- December 1st: Students can begin sending out applications.
- SJI’s online resume & cover letter portal will function only after October 15th.

Why has CLS chosen to do this?

There are many reasons to do so, but in short, the goal is to support students as they transition to law school. Keeping to this timeline will also afford students time to learn about opportunities and think about what they want to do, and to create strong application materials.

Will employers wonder where our applications are?

Many employers expect that law schools will continue to abide by the old NALP timelines and will look for applications from 1L students after December 1st.

What resources will be available prior to Oct 15th? Can I access the Public Interest Job Search Toolkit prior to October 15th?

General resources are available on our websites. The 2019-20 version of the Public Interest Job Search Toolkit will be distributed in early October at the mandatory 1L career sessions, and is also available online on the SJI website.

Do I need to send all my applications on December 1st or can I wait until after exams?
• We strongly advise students to send applications in December. And, for popular organizations, we advise students to apply during the first week of December. However, do not compromise your attention to your courses, and do not send out poorly drafted materials!

• Some organizations post application deadlines on their websites. Be sure to check these and comply with them. If an organization has posted a deadline prior to December 1st, please speak with an SJI career advisor.

• NOTE: If you will be visiting a city over December break where you will be applying for summer internships, make sure to send your application in early December, include this information in your cover letter and suggest setting up a meeting during your visit.