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## INTRODUCTION

No LL.M. has ever said to us, “In retrospect, I should not have started my job search process so early in the year.” Quite the contrary. Each year there are students who tell us that they regret missing chances to connect with potential employers or to learn more about practice areas of interest because they had not turned their attention to their own career development until late fall, mid-winter, or early spring. We know that your LL.M. courses are demanding, and that the importance of performing well academically in your fall semester cannot be overstated. Still, given the rich resources and unique opportunities available here in Washington, D.C., and the limited period of time you will spend in your LL.M. program, we believe it would be a serious mistake not to direct *some* of your attention towards your own professional development from the moment you arrive at Georgetown Law.

Making and following a plan of action is one of the best ways to simplify a complex undertaking like a job search. A well-thought-out plan not only helps you to take all relevant details into consideration, but also breaks a potentially overwhelming mission into a smaller number of manageable steps – and manageability is crucial if you are to successfully juggle academic and professional endeavors. Our mission here in Graduate Career and Professional Development is not only to enrich the number and quality of job opportunities available to you, but also to empower you and to give you the resources you need to forge your own unique path in the law. We have therefore developed these Personal Planning Tools to help you create workable plans that will allow you to devote healthy attention to your career development – attention that will pay dividends later in the year, and benefit the rest of your career.

The **Personal Career Action Plan**, or PCAP, is designed for developing your personal career road map. It will help you put into words your vision for your career by helping you identify your career values and goals, and from there it will help you define specific action steps you can take – in both the short- and long-term – to move closer to that vision.

The **Personal Marketing Tool**, or PMaT, builds upon the personal insights offered by the PCAP to help you identify which of your specific skills and interests make you most valuable to potential employers. The PCAP will help you get a clearer picture of your whole professional self, the PMaT will help you to make choices about how to present the best parts of that self to the world.

We encourage you to complete the exercises and worksheets contained in these pages. Your first pass through the PCAP and the PMaT should take no more than an hour or two (although you may wish to revisit them as you discover more about yourself and your chosen field over time). It will provide a lot of useful information that will make your professional development efforts more efficient and effective. After completing what you can of the PCAP and the PMaT on your own, schedule an appointment or stop by our office during Drop-In Hours to meet with one of the career advisors in Graduate Career and Professional Development to discuss any elements that remain unclear to you, and to talk about effectuating the goals you have articulated.

We can help you set goals and generate action steps relevant to your career aspirations, whether you have a specific idea of what you want to do or you are simply in the information-gathering stage. We can also work with you to develop your self-marketing tools – from your resume and cover

letter to your “Elevator Speech” and interview skills – so that you make the most of every opportunity to make a great first impression.

In addition to providing career advising, recruiting programs and job listings, we also offer educational programming, resources and networking opportunities to help you gain the information you need to make informed career decisions. We are here to help you. Please come see us!

Sincerely,

***Caroline T. Springer***, Esq., Director

***Mary (Molly) Scott***, Esq., Assistant Director

***Aman Kahlon***, Esq., Assistant Director

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## PERSONAL CAREER ACTION PLAN

### What is a Personal Career Action Plan (PCAP)?

Think of the Personal Career Action Plan or PCAP as your own personal career road map. It puts into words your vision for your career and identifies goals and action steps you can take – in both the short- and the long-term – to move closer to that vision.

Although we have included a framework for your PCAP here, it can be put into any format that works for you. This is for you! The most important thing here is to document your intentions. ***Studies regarding goal achievement show that those who articulate their goals in a concrete manner (writing, typing, using a vision board) are much more likely to achieve them.***

The framework we suggest for the PCAP is inherent to its purposes, which are reflected in its name:

- *Personal* – This is not a generic set of instructions, explaining how anyone can succeed as a [fill-in-the-blank] lawyer. Rather, by starting with a thoughtful **values self-assessment**, the PCAP is tailored to your particular needs and strengths.
- *Career* – Notwithstanding the importance of taking into consideration one’s personal values and qualities, it is unrealistic to make plans for success in any endeavor without a thorough understanding of what goes into such success. Thus, your self-assessment will include an honest **evaluation of your strengths and weaknesses in the specific competencies** which are known to correlate with success in a legal career.
- *Action* – The PCAP is a tool to help you get from where you are to where you want to be. Progress and inaction are inherently incompatible. The only way this tool can work for you is if it lays out specific steps for you to take – and then you take them! Setting goals is an essential step in creating and taking ownership of your career. Thus, the core of the PCAP is your creation of **a list of SMART Goals** that set forth the incremental progress you want to make and the steps you need to take to make it.
- *Plan* – Together, the values and competencies assessments will help you to determine **long-term goals for the coming year**, and the list of SMART goals will provide the path you can take to reach those goals – forming a single integrated plan.

## PERSONAL AND CAREER VALUES

Before you start your job search, it is imperative that you have a clear understanding of your personal values and your career values. Your personal values identify principles, actions and objectives that matter the most to you and are essential parts of your life. Your career values should be based upon your personal values and should identify the environments, activities, goals and rewards that will contribute to your career happiness, including salary and benefits, acknowledgment, challenge, development of new skills, security and accomplishment.

Honoring your values is part of the foundation of a satisfying and successful career, and so clarifying those values deserves both your attention and your time. Bear in mind that the PCAP is meant to be a document you create for *yourself*. Do not worry about the opinions of other people or about the

values you feel you are “supposed” to have. Instead, be honest with yourself. It is better to acknowledge an area in which you have little interest than to find yourself working and suffering in a job in which that area is crucial.

Values identification is a task you will want to revisit regularly, because your values may change over time. It is especially useful now as you prepare to develop your career plan as an LL.M. candidate. The following exercises will help you to identify your particular personal and career values, so that you can take them into account in fashioning your career goals.

## **I. Open-Ended Values Exploration**

One way to uncover your personal and career values is by thinking about the stories you can tell or would like to be able to tell about yourself. These stories can provide a way for you to get at your potentially elusive values by tying them to more easily identifiable accomplishments, experiences or aspirations. Consider the questions below, and try to answer them in as much detail as possible. Look for patterns, common elements or themes that will help you identify your personal and career values:

- How do I measure my success as a person and as a professional?
- What are the necessities – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, etc. – that I need to live a rewarding life?
- Which of my previous jobs have I enjoyed the most, and why?
- What are my greatest strengths?

- What are my most significant weaknesses?
- Do I enjoy working alone or as part of a team? What kinds of people do I find easiest or most difficult to work with?
- What salary level is important for me to obtain, and why?
- What energizes me about the field of law I am studying at Georgetown Law?
- Who are my heroes, and what do I admire about them?
- What milestones have I reached in my career path, and what milestones do I aim to reach in the future?

## II. Specific Value Choices

Your answers to the questions in the previous section should help you to attain a clearer vision of what you consider truly valuable in your life in general and, more specifically, in your work. Look at your responses to the Open-Ended Values Exploration as if someone else had written them. What patterns do you see? There may be some things you have always known about yourself, and other things that you realize only with this new perspective.

Identifying specific value choices, based in part on instinct and in part on a rational examination of your Open-Ended Values Exploration, will be of tremendous help in selecting a career path that makes sense to you. With an awareness of the career values that are most important to you, you will be better positioned to compare alternative career paths and to set your long- and short-term career goals.

Below is a list of value choices often associated with career choices. Identify the ones of importance to you. You may choose simply to place a check mark next to those you feel are significant, or you may assign a value (e.g., a number indicating high (3), medium (2), or low (1) significance) to each choice. Feel free to add other value choices that you feel are important but which do not appear below:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Advancing a cause
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adventure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attention to detail
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being an expert in your field
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being the first to attempt or succeed at something
- \_\_\_\_\_ Compensation (salary and benefits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Creativity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoying day-to-day work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Face-to-face interaction with other people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fame, awards, or other recognition
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fast-paced environment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Feeling respected for your work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flexibility in the work structure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having a clear understanding of what is expected of you

- \_\_\_\_\_ Helping other people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Immersing yourself deeply in a complex project
- \_\_\_\_\_ Influencing others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Intellectual stimulation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Job security
- \_\_\_\_\_ Learning from skilled mentors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Location of the position
- \_\_\_\_\_ Long-term stability and security
- \_\_\_\_\_ Managing people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Managing systems
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtaining a leadership position
- \_\_\_\_\_ Opportunities for advancement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Opportunities to grow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Overcoming challenges
- \_\_\_\_\_ Travel opportunities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Using your skills and education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Variety
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work-life balance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Working alone
- \_\_\_\_\_ Working as part of a team
- \_\_\_\_\_ Working under pressure
- \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Now, looking over the values that you have marked above as important to you, choose up to five that comprise your *most important* career value choices. You can base this determination on any combination of logic and emotion that makes sense to you, but try to incorporate all of the information you have gleaned from this exercise:

**My Top Five Career Value Choices**

My first Career Value Choice is

My second Career Value Choice is

My third Career Value Choice is

My fourth Career Value Choice is

My fifth Career Value Choice is

These five values make up the core group that you can refer to when considering any career path or a job opportunity. Ask yourself, "How well does this opportunity satisfy my values?"

## ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC LAWYERING COMPETENCIES

Identifying your own personal and career values is an important step in the creation of your PCAP, because knowing these values can help you make decisions about the direction in which you wish to take your career. However, choosing a destination does not automatically provide you with a route to reach it. You need to explore what it takes to succeed in your chosen journey.

Some of what you will need will be the academic knowledge you learn over the course of your LL.M. program. You can also meet and speak with people working in your chosen field; they can tell you what skills and experiences helped them advance in their careers. (Note that over time you may want to revisit and adjust your PCAP, taking any new information into account.)

You can also consider your strength in characteristics common to successful attorneys. University of California-Berkeley professors Marjorie Shultz and Sheldon Zedeck have isolated 26 specific competencies that successful lawyers appear to possess. These competencies range over a variety of skill areas, including thinking and reasoning, communication, organization, relationship-building, and self-management.

On the next two pages, you will see a chart setting forth all 26 of these lawyering competencies, followed by explanations of the meanings of each one listed. Take a few minutes to read through the chart and the explanations, then think objectively about how well you have developed each competency. To minimize the chances of under- or overestimating your competence, consider not just how you feel about each one, but how others appear to perceive you as well. As with the Values Exploration, try not to be influenced by what you think others might think, or by what levels of competency you feel you *should* have. This competencies assessment is solely for your own benefit, and you do not need to share it with anyone else. Furthermore, by honestly identifying areas of relative weakness, you provide yourself with the best opportunity to work to develop more strength in those areas – if you decide that that would be important to your career goals.

Once you have given some thought to these lawyering competencies, complete the chart by indicating where you think you are in terms of development in each competency. This will help you when formulating your PCAP to make decisions about which areas of personal growth you will want to target over time in order to advance towards your career goals.

## I. Lawyering Competencies Self-Assessment

Instructions: Each of the 26 competencies listed below has been identified as common to successful attorneys. (For more detailed explanations of each of these competencies, please see the list on the following pages.) Under each competency:

- Circle “1” if you have little expertise, experience, or facility with the competency.
- Circle “2” if you feel you have developed the competency somewhat, but still see room for growth.
- Circle “3” if you feel this is a competency in which you are strong.

	Organizing & Managing Own Work 1 2 3	Self-Development 1 2 3	Stress Management 1 2 3	
Creativity/Innovation 1 2 3	Passion & Engagement 1 2 3	Integrity/Honesty 1 2 3	Diligence 1 2 3	Practical Judgment 1 2 3
Able to See World Through Eyes of Others 1 2 3	Influencing & Advocating 1 2 3	Organizing & Managing Others 1 2 3	Evaluation, Development & Mentoring 1 2 3	Community Involvement & Service 1 2 3
Problem Solving 1 2 3	Strategic Planning 1 2 3	Providing Advice & Counsel / Building Relationships 1 2 3	Networking & Business Development 1 2 3	Developing Relationships within the Legal Profession 1 2 3
Writing 1 2 3	Questioning/ Interviewing 1 2 3	Listening 1 2 3	Speaking 1 2 3	Negotiation Skills 1 2 3
	Fact Finding 1 2 3	Researching the Law 1 2 3	Analysis & Reasoning 1 2 3	

## 26 LAWYERING EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS

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1. **Able to See the World Through the Eyes of Others:** Understands positions, views, objectives, and goals of others.
2. **Analysis and Reasoning:** Uses analytical skills, logic, and reasoning to approach problems and to formulate conclusions and advice.
3. **Community Involvement and Service:** Contributes legal skills to the community.
4. **Creativity/Innovation:** Thinks “outside the box,” develops innovative approaches and solutions.
5. **Developing Relationships within the Legal Profession:** Establish quality relationships with others to work toward goals.
6. **Diligence:** Committed to and responsible in achieving goals and completing tasks.
7. **Evaluation, Development, and Mentoring:** Manages, trains and instructs others to realize their full potential.
8. **Fact Finding:** Able to identify relevant facts and issues in case.
9. **Influencing and Advocating:** Persuades others of position and wins support.
10. **Integrity and Honesty:** Has core values and beliefs; acts with integrity and honesty.
11. **Listening:** Accurately perceives what is being said both directly and subtly.
12. **Negotiation Skills:** Resolves disputes to the satisfaction of all concerned.
13. **Networking and Business Development:** Develops productive business relationships and helps meet the unit’s financial goals.
14. **Organizing and Managing Others (Staff/Colleagues):** Organizes and manages others’ work to accomplish goals.
15. **Organizing and Managing (Own) Work:** Generates well-organized methods and work products.
16. **Passion & Engagement:** Demonstrates interest in law for its own merits.
17. **Practical Judgment:** Determines effective and realistic approaches to problems.
18. **Problem Solving:** Effectively identifies problems and derives appropriate solutions.
19. **Providing Advice & Counsel & Building Relationships with Clients:** Able to develop relationships with clients that address client’s needs.
20. **Questioning & Interviewing:** Obtains needed information from others to pursue issue/case.
21. **Researching the Law:** Utilizes appropriate sources and strategies to identify issues and derive solutions.
22. **Self-Development:** Attends to and initiates self development.
23. **Speaking:** Orally communicates issues in an articulate manner consistent with issue and audience being addressed.
24. **Strategic Planning:** Plans and strategizes to address present and future issues and goals.
25. **Stress Management:** Effectively manages pressure or stress.
26. **Writing:** Writes clearly, efficiently and persuasively.

## SETTING LONG- AND SHORT-TERM GOALS

Now that you have identified your core career values and assessed your level of development in the key competencies that are known to correlate with success in the practice of law, you can use what you know about yourself to plan your long- and short-term career goals.

### I. Long-Term Goals

Your long-term career goals form what might be called a “mission statement” – a description of where you would like to see yourself professionally at some point in the future. For purposes of the PCAP, you will want to identify goals you can achieve in the next year, while you are able to take advantage of the resources Georgetown Law has to offer. In order to get to that point, you may want to start by envisioning more distant goals, such as where you see yourself professionally in five or 20 years, and then working backwards.

Because the ultimate use of the PCAP is to help you best direct your attention and efforts to career development over the course of the academic year, consider your purpose in joining the LL.M. program as a natural starting point. If that purpose was very specific, you may already have a workable long-term goal in mind upon which to build your PCAP. If your purpose was rather vague, however – say, “to get a legal job” – then now is the time to refine it. Vagueness is an enemy of goal setting. If you cannot focus on a specific desired endpoint, you will have no way of knowing if the path you are following will actually take you there.

To achieve the necessary focus, consider your general long-term career goals in light of your values self-assessment. Your own values form a touchstone that helps you determine the goals that will bring you the greatest personal satisfaction and professional success. Refer to your values to help you make choices between different alternatives among all the possible outcomes that fall within the boundaries of your general career goals. You may find it helpful to start with your broadest, longest-term goals, and then work backwards, making your goals more specific and well-defined as your time frame shrinks, so that you end up articulating some fairly specific aspirations to aim for over the coming year.

You may find that your professional goals influence, and are influenced by, other types of goals in your life – personal, material, spiritual, etc. – and you should feel free to think about these influences as well.

Finally, note that, while learning more about yourself and your own values helps you set these long-term goals, so does learning more about possible outcomes. Take advantage of the resources available here at Georgetown Law to uncover what it is like to work at an accounting firm versus a law firm, or why some people practice tax planning instead of tax controversy, or how some graduates have built a successful career after starting in an international organization or a boutique law firm. Gather the information you need to be specific about alternative outcomes, so you can, in turn, be specific about the goals you want to set for the coming year.

<u>Long-Term Goal(s):</u>	5 to 20 years from now	1 to 2 years from now
Professional		
Personal		
Material		
Spiritual		
Societal		
Other		

## II. Short-Term Goals

Having articulated your long-term goals for the coming year, you can start developing the short-term goals that will form the basis for the “action” in your Personal Career *Action* Plan. While long-term goals are important – they provide you with a sense of vision and purpose – short-term goals will provide the real meat of your PCAP, because they will help you specify exactly what actions to take over the coming year. Each of your short-term goals will provide you with some specific asset or ability that will move you closer to your long-term goal. In setting your short-term goals, it helps to consider yourself in relationship to your long-term goal, from different perspectives:

- Do you need to develop specific skills to reach your long-term goal?
- Do you need to make contact with specific people or entities?
- What kinds of relationships can you foster (with colleagues, mentors, potential employers, etc.) to lay the groundwork for your long-term goals?
- Do you need to learn how to present yourself if opportunities arise?

Consider all the elements that will help bring you closer to your long-term goal, and make a plan of how to pursue each one.

Short-Term Goal(s) for the academic year:					
Goal	<b>Specific:</b> What exactly will you do to accomplish it?	<b>Measurable:</b> How will you know you have completed it?	<b>Achievable:</b> Is it realistic that you can do this?	<b>Relevant:</b> How does this goal promote your long-term goal?	<b>Timely:</b> By when will this goal be completed?
<i>Example:</i>  Develop contacts at ten largest law firms in Washington, D.C.	Arrange informational interviews with at least one Georgetown Law alumnus in each firm	Checklist: keep track of each firm and who spoke with at each	Yes: LL.M. graduates are receptive; there are many at each large firm	Will familiarize me with Washington, D.C., market; introduce me to potential employers	Set goal for 6 weeks – one interview every 4 days or so

To pursue these goals most effectively, you need to set short-term goals that are **SMART**:

- **Specific** – You must define your goal as specifically as possible, to enable you to pursue it effectively.
- **Measurable** – Your goal must have a definitive end point, so you can know you have reached it.
- **Achievable** – Do not waste time and breed frustration by selecting goals you are unlikely to achieve.
- **Relevant** – Make sure your short-term goal actually advances your long-term goals.
- **Timely** – When setting your short-term goals, be sure to include a time element; goals with no due date tend to be pushed back indefinitely.

If you can identify a finite number of **SMART** short-term goals, each of which advances you closer to your long-term goal, then you will know the actions you need to undertake under your Action Plan, and you can be confident that those actions will move you forward in your personal career development.

Short-Term Goal(s) for the academic year:					
Goal	<b>Specific:</b> What exactly will you do to accomplish it?	<b>Measurable:</b> How will you know you have completed it?	<b>Achievable:</b> Is it realistic that you can do this?	<b>Relevant:</b> How does this goal promote your long-term goal?	<b>Timely:</b> By when will this goal be completed?

## PERSONAL MARKETING TOOL

The PCAP is a *strategic* tool; it is designed to help you select long-term goals that are suitable to your skills and interests, and then to map out achievable steps to take in the short term that will move you steadily down your long-term path. But once you have mapped out a set of short-term goals, how can you pursue them most effectively and successfully? For this, you need *tactical* tools – tools that focus on specific situations and that provide specific means to address those situations.

One important situation you will face over and over again during the career planning and job search processes is presenting yourself to those who can advance your career interests. In the same way that businesses market their goods and services to make them as appealing as possible to the people who really matter – potential customers – you too must find ways to market yourself as appealing as possible to the people who will really matter to you – potential employers and those who can help you identify and learn more about them. The information you gleaned from the PCAP may be helpful in this regard, but, as we pointed out in the instructions, the PCAP self-assessment is meant to encompass both your strengths *and* your weaknesses. It includes information that you may not want to share with the rest of the world. Thus, we offer the Personal Marketing Tool, or PMA<sup>T</sup>, as a more focused, tactical tool to help you make wise choices about how you will market yourself in the course of your job search.

### I. Assessing Your Skills

Employers often ask students what skills they have that will benefit the employer's organization. It is important to answer this question honestly and in positive terms that relate to the organization. Constructing a persuasive answer will depend in part on how well you know the employer. The more research and inquiry you have done, the better you will know what skills that particular employer is looking for. At the same time, you need to know and be able to articulate exactly which of those skills you possess. Only when you have a clear and precise understanding of your own skills will you be able to effectively market those skills to employers. This, marketing begins with self-assessment.

Self-assessment becomes more manageable when you break skills down into three parts:

- a. Self-Management Skills,
- b. Functional or Transferable Skills, and
- c. Work-Content Skills.

### **a. Self-Management Skills**

The list on the facing page sets forth personality traits or self-management skills. These are the types of positive personal attributes that employers look for in the people they hire. These are not skills acquired in school or a summer job, but are innate talents and abilities. Examples are how well you get along with other people, how confident you are, how efficient you are, and whether you are optimistic or enthusiastic. Go through this alphabetical list of traits and circle the ones that you believe you possess. Think about how these traits might be useful in a future job. Consider which qualities you think will make you a successful attorney. Highlight those traits in your communications.

As discussed in a later section, functional skills like research and writing are certainly important to employers, but they are not the only traits that may persuade an employer to hire you. Being able to succinctly and convincingly describe your self-management skills can give you an additional edge. Employers recognize the effects and benefits of charismatic personality traits and productive work habits, and will give such demonstrable talents the kind of weight they will give to functional skills.

## Self-Management Skills

academic	decisive	industrious	realistic
accountable	dedicated	informal	reflective
accurate	deft	innovative	relaxed
active	deliberate	intellectual	reliable
adaptable	dependable	introspective	resolute
adept	detail-oriented	inventive	resourceful
adventurous	determined	light-hearted	respectful
aggressive	dextrous	logical	responsible
alert	diplomatic	loyal	responsive
ambitious	discreet	mature	secure
analytical	dominant	meticulous	self-confident
anticipatory	driven	moderate	self-controlled
articulate	dynamic	modest	sensible
artistic	eager	motivated	sensitive
assertive	easygoing	objective	serious
broadminded	economical	observant	sincere
businesslike	effective	open	sociable
calm	efficient	optimistic	sophisticated
capable	empathetic	organized	spontaneous
careful	energetic	original	stable
cautious	enthusiastic	outgoing	steady
cheerful	fair-minded	painstaking	strong-minded
clear-thinking	far-sighted	patient	successful
clever	firm	perceptive	supportive
collaborative	flexible	persevering	tactful
communicative	forceful	planning	tenacious
competent	formal	pleasant	theoretical
competitive	frank	poised	thorough
confident	friendly	polite	thoughtful
conscientious	generous	positive	tolerant
conservative	genuine	practical	tough
considerate	goal-oriented	precise	trusting
consistent	good-natured	problem-solving	trustworthy
cool	helpful	progressive	unaffected
cooperative	honest	prudent	understanding
courageous	imaginative	purposeful	versatile
creative	imperturbable	quick	visionary
curious	independent	quiet	warm
daring	individualistic	rational	wise

## **b. Functional or Transferable Skills**

Functional skills are considered the most traditional skills that employers seek. These are skills you have acquired from your past experiences. They are sometimes referred to as “transferable skills,” because while you might learn, develop, or demonstrate them in one particular setting, the elements that make such skills valuable can be transferred from one setting to another.

You can demonstrate functional skills to an employer by giving concrete examples. For example, if you were active in a campus organization, you can talk about the planning skills that enabled you to run the organization smoothly or the problem-solving skills you used when you decided how to handle different situations facing the group. You can point to the results that you achieved that demonstrate that you can put the skills to effective, productive use. Even though, in some cases, the specific results you achieved may not seem to have a direct connection to the kind of legal work you are hoping to do, this need not be an obstacle if you are prepared to articulate the relevant similarities. For example, if you can point to an incident in which, as leader of a campus organization, you convinced a food vendor to cater your charitable fundraising event for a nominal fee in exchange for primary sponsorship publicity, you can explain that this demonstrated the kind of negotiating skills that will make you an effective legal representative in the field of mergers and acquisitions.

Thus, it does not matter that you have not performed these transferable skills in a legal context. What makes them transferable and valuable is that you can use them in different situations. You possess the skills; it is up to you to convince employers that you can use those skills in a way that will benefit them.

Take a look at the alphabetical list of functional skills on the next page and decide which ones you possess. Think of ways to prove by example how you acquired these skills and how they relate to the practice of law. Consider how they make you qualified for the positions you are seeking. You may think of other functional skills, not listed, that you have acquired through education, work experience, or volunteering. Do not hesitate to add these other skills to your list, and prepare to establish their value to potential employers as well.

Review the list before every interview you attend or cover letter you write. Research and find out as much as you can about the work done at the specific employer you are preparing to meet or contact, and then select from your list of demonstrable transferable skills the ones that are likely to be the most useful and valuable to that employer. Then, be sure to articulate that you possess those skills, that you can point to specific results that prove that you can wield those skills effectively, and that those same skills will enable you to achieve worthwhile results for that employer. Chances are, the employer will be impressed by your self-awareness and ability to demonstrate why you should be hired to fill the position.

## Functional Skills

ability to handle great variety of tasks simultaneously	execution and follow-through	prioritizing tasks
ability to move into totally new situation on one's own	explaining concepts	problem identification
abstracting information	financial planning and management	problem solving
achieving substantial results with limited funds	forecasting	project design and programming
accounting	foreign language skills	promoting, planning and implementing
adept at confronting others	group facilitating	proofreading
advising	implementing decisions	public relations
analyzing quantitative data	influence and persuasion	public speaking
arbitration	information gathering	rapid manipulation of numbers
budget administration	informing	recordkeeping
budget development	innovating	researching
chairing meetings	inspiring trust	retrieving data
classifying and organizing data	interpersonal relations	scheduling
coaching	interviewing	scientific investigation
conflict management	inventing	scientific writing
coordinating operations	investigation	selling
counseling	keen memory for detail	sophisticated mathematical abilities
creating visual displays	leadership	speech writing
crisis intervention	lecturing	summarizing
critiquing	liaison skills	supervising effectively
data processing	listening intently & accurately	systemic goal setting
data research	managing people	teaching
data synthesis	mediation	team-building
debating	mentoring	technical reading and interpretation
decision-making	negotiation	testing
delegating responsibility	oral/visual/written communication	thinking quickly
developing ideas and programs	organizing data	training
developing rapport	organizing people	translating
diagnosis	organizing programs and conferences	troubleshooting
directing	perceiving and defining cause and effect relationships	understanding legal concepts
editing	poise in public appearances	visualizing concepts
entrepreneurship	policy interpretation	working well under stress
	policy-making	working with abstract concepts

### **c. Work-Content Skills**

Work-content skills are those that relate to a specific field or type of legal practice. Examples of work-related skills include knowledge about the most recent changes in the tax code or how to apply for Social Security benefits on behalf of an indigent client.

In the previous sections, we provided comprehensive lists of well-recognized self-management and functional skills to help you consider and identify the ones that you possess. Here, it would be impossible to list all or even a large portion of the possible relevant work-content skills you might possess, because they vary so widely from field to field and from employer to employer. Therefore, to generate your list of work-content skills, think back to all the situations in which you could have learned or developed such skills, and methodically review each situation to recall all the work-content skills you acquired or used there. Go through your LL.M., J.D., or other university transcripts and consider every class listed. What relevant knowledge did you get from each class? List all of the positions you have ever held – work positions, volunteer positions, memberships in organizations, etc. – and determine what work content skills you learned or developed in each. Revisit these lists from time to time – you will often find that, on second or third consideration, you will recall additional relevant work content skills. Develop a comprehensive written list of all work-content skills that might be important to some employer in your chosen field.

Of course, in order to judge which work content skills might be important to employers, you do need to become aware of the work-content skills relevant to the practice area in which you want to practice. The best ways to develop this awareness are to actually work in the field, and to talk to others who have been working in the field. One of the chief benefits of internships and externships, is the opportunity to do both. If you already have worked in the practice area for which you are applying, you will want to review all of the specific or technical skills that you observed during your tenure. If you have not yet worked in the field, or if you want to develop an even better understanding of its relevant work-content skills, volunteering, informational interviewing, and participation in organizations specific to your field (e.g., attending presentations by the D.C. Bar Section of Taxation) are other effective means to learn about work-content skills.

As you learn more about actual practice in your field, you may realize that certain work-content skills you had dismissed as irrelevant may actually have value. More importantly, you will get a clearer sense of exactly why certain work-content skills are considered valuable to certain employers. As a result, you will be better prepared to explain in your cover letters and interviews, why the work-content skills you possess are exactly the ones that would make you a successful employee.

Be able to articulate to the employer your special knowledge or expertise in his or her area. Your work-content skills can you give an edge over your competition.

**Work-Content Skills**

From employment:

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From education:

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From volunteering and other activities:

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## II. Summary of Your Self-Management, Functional, and Work-Content Skills

While you will want to maintain and continue to expand the comprehensive lists of self-management, functional, and work-content skills you have generated in the previous sections, so that you have maximum flexibility to market your full range of skills to any potential employer, it is important that you develop a sense of priority among the skills. Knowing which of your skills are the most valuable is an important part of developing your personal brand. For example, when developing your 30-second “Elevator Pitch” – the quick speech you use to introduce yourself to new contacts and potential employers – you cannot afford to try to list every possibly relevant skill you possess. You must select the ones that will make you appear the most appealing to the largest portion of those in your field with whom you wish to connect.

Review your comprehensive lists. Take into account which skills you know you are strongest in **and** which skills you know are most sought-after in your field of practice, write down the five most valuable skills in each category below. Use the 15 skills you come up with as part of the basis of your Elevator Pitch. Furthermore, memorize this list of 15 skills, and be prepared to speak at a moment’s notice about how you have demonstrably put any one of those skills to effective use and could do the same with an employer in your field. If you do this, you will always be prepared to speak confidently and authoritatively about what makes you the perfect candidate.

Write your five most valuable self-management skills here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Write your five most valuable transferable skills here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Write your five most important work-content skills here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_