



OSCAR Glossary

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A

ACCESS DATES

Access dates refer to the time when law school students can access OSCAR by creating a new account. For information on access dates, see https://oscar.uscourts.gov/federal_law_clerk_hiring_pilot.

ACCESSIBLE MODE

OSCAR's accessible mode disables select interface enhancements to ensure users of assistive technologies have full and equal access to all aspects of this website.

ACTIVE JUDGE

Judges are listed as either Active or Senior in OSCAR. Active judges are in full-time service of the court and maintain a full caseload. The judge's status is viewable in the judge, chambers staff, and system administrator interfaces only.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES COURTS (AO)

The Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AO) provides oversight, governance, and management of the OSCAR Program Office to include the program funding, program governance through the OSCAR Working Group, design/development of the OSCAR system, program support service operations, program communications, and training.

ALTERNATE GRADUATION DATE (AGD)

The AGD condition applies to students who are in dual degree programs, part-time law students, and winter graduates. Students with an AGD will be granted different access dates to OSCAR upon confirmation from their law school administrator.

ARCHIVING

The OSCAR Program Office archives closed positions and their associated applications on a yearly basis and notifies all users prior to the archiving activity taking place. For judges and chambers staff, archived positions and their associated applications are moved to the Archives tab of the Applicants List.



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AVAILABLE POSITIONS

The “Available” tag is shown next to a position in the Positions tab and indicates that a position is accepting applications.

B

BANKRUPTCY APPELLATE PANEL (BAP) LAW CLERK

Bankruptcy Appellate Panel (BAP) law clerks provide legal advice and assistance to BAP judges authorized to hear appeals of bankruptcy court decisions.

BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

A [bankruptcy judge](#) is a judicial officer of the United States District Court and exercises jurisdiction over bankruptcy matters. Bankruptcy judges are appointed for 14-year terms.

BAR MEMBERSHIP PREFERRED

Judges, staff attorney offices, and courts can identify in the position posting if they prefer to receive applications from applicants who have bar membership.

BATCH OPTIONS

Batch Options is a menu of operations that apply to all selected items on the displayed list (e.g., Mail Selected and Save Selected as Excel).

C

CAREER LAW CLERK

Career judicial law clerks are appointed for four or more years. The minimum length of the commitment that a judge expects is indicated on the position announcement. Career law clerks are eligible to participate in all benefit programs offered to judiciary employees, including health, dental, vision, and life insurance coverage, retirement benefits, judiciary supplemental benefit programs, and the Thrift Savings Plan. OSCAR identifies career law clerk positions in the system as “career law clerk-chambers.” For more information, see https://oscar.uscourts.gov/qualifications_salary_benefits#benefits.

CHAMBERS STAFF ACCOUNT

Judges can create additional OSCAR accounts tied to their own accounts for staff within their chambers. These accounts can be assigned different system rights to control the user's level of access.



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CIRCUIT CODES

Circuit codes identify which circuit a judge or staff attorney's office resides. The code can be found in the profile of the judge or staff attorney office.

CIRCUIT JUDGE

A [circuit judge](#) is a United States Court of Appeals judge. Judges serving on the United States Court of Appeals are nominated by the President of the United States and are confirmed by the United States Senate. Circuit judges have lifetime tenure.

CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Under a provision in the appropriations bill passed in December 2009, appropriated funds may not be used to pay compensation to noncitizen employees with duty stations in the continental United States, unless they qualify under one of the following exceptions:

- U. S. Citizen.
- Lawful permanent resident who is seeking citizenship as outlined in 8 U.S.C. § 1324b(a)(3)(B).
- Person admitted as a refugee or granted asylum who has filed a declaration of intention to become a lawful permanent resident and then a citizen when eligible.
- Person who owes "allegiance to the United States" (e.g., nationals of American Samoa, Swains Island, and Northern Mariana Islands, and nationals who meet other requirements described in 8 U.S.C. § 1408).

The appropriations law requirements apply to anyone appointed into a paid position within the judiciary in the continental U.S. The appropriations law requirements do not apply to employees with a duty station in Alaska, Hawaii, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands, nor do the requirements apply to unpaid volunteers.

Judiciary offices must obtain concurrence from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Office of General Counsel, to appoint an individual who is not a U.S. citizen.

In addition to the above appropriations law, The United States Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), mandates all federal government agencies in the continental U.S. comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) which states that federal government agencies must hire only U.S. citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States.

For additional information regarding the employment of non-United States citizens, call the Office of General Counsel at the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts at (202)-502-1100 or see https://oscar.uscourts.gov/citizenship_requirements.



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CLASS RANK

Applicants must select their class rank when registering for an OSCAR account and setting up a profile. To ensure accuracy, OSCAR law school administrators must certify the class rank system for their law schools (does not rank, ranks, or partial rank). Once this is set, applicants will only have access to the selected class rank system of their law school in OSCAR. **Note:** The class ranking system in OSCAR is set by the OSCAR Working Group of judges and law school representatives.

- **Does Not Rank:** Applicants from law schools that do not rank will not be able to select any option other than *School Does Not Rank* when they create their profile. To ensure equitable treatment of applicants from schools that do not rank, OSCAR is configured so that a search on any percentage ranking will return all applicants from those schools. These applicants will be identified in a search result by the words *School Does Not Rank* in the class rank column.
- **Ranks:** Applicants from law schools that rank must select their class rank from a pull-down menu that includes options in 5% increments from 5% to 50%, 50% and below, and the selection *Not Yet Ranked*.
- **Partial Rank:** Applicants from law schools that partially rank will have the option of selecting their class rank percentage, *Not Yet Ranked*, or *I Am Not Ranked*. Ranked applicants from schools that partially rank will be returned with a search on a percentage ranking; unranked students will not (although they will show up in other types of searches). Additionally, some students from schools that rank or partially rank may not yet have an official class rank. These students will not appear in the results by searches by class rank and will be identified in the results of other searches by the words *Not Yet Ranked*.

CLERKSHIP TYPE

This field identifies the clerkship type in posting a position since OSCAR accommodates judges, staff attorney offices, and courts hiring law clerks and staff attorneys. Options include term law clerk–chambers, career law clerk–chambers, temporary law clerk–chambers, pro se law clerk, death penalty law clerk, and BAP law clerk.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR JUDICIAL EMPLOYEES

Ethics and Judicial Codes of Conduct that apply to all employees of the Judicial Branch except Justices; judges; and employees of the United States Supreme Court, the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, the Federal Judicial Center, the Sentencing Commission, and Federal Public Defender Offices. See www.uscourts.gov/rules-policies/judiciary-policies/code-conduct/code-conduct-judicial-employees.



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CONFIRMATION NUMBER

In addition to a confirmation email, applicants will receive a confirmation number for each finalized application and for any application updates to a finalized application. This number indicates that the application was successfully delivered to the appropriate judge or staff attorney office account.

COURT UNIT ADMINISTRATOR (CUA)

An administrator account available to a court for managing their law clerk recruitment; court unit administrators can perform many functions in OSCAR on behalf of the judges in their court.

CUSTOM TAGS

OSCAR provides a feature to create custom tags with names and colors of your choice. Custom tags can be used to help label and organize positions or applicants.

D

DEATH PENALTY LAW CLERK

The death penalty law clerk provides legal advice and assistance to judges in death penalty habeas corpus matters.

DELETE ACCOUNT

An applicant or a law school administrator can delete the applicant's OSCAR account. Deleting the account will withdraw any active applications, delete application documents, and archive the account. The applicant should delete the account if access to OSCAR is no longer needed.

JUDICIAL DIRECTORY

OSCAR provides a directory of judges and staff attorney office lists for all law schools.

DISTRICT CODE

Each district court is assigned a district code that is comprised of a two-letter abbreviation for the state followed by the abbreviation for the particular district (e.g., NYS=New York Southern). Applicants can search for positions by district code.

DISTRICT JUDGE

A [district judge](#) is federal judge nominated by the President of the United States and confirmed by the United States Senate who serves in one of the 94 United States District Courts (89 in the 50 states). The number of judgeships allotted to each district is set forth in Title 28 of the U.S. Code, Section 133.



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E

EXPIRED POSITIONS

The “Expired” tag is shown next to a position in the Positions tab and indicates that a position’s deadline for receiving applications has past and applicants can no longer apply.

F

FEDERAL LAW CLERK HIRING BEST PRACTICES

The Federal Law Clerk Hiring Best Practices establishes the voluntary guidelines for judges when recruiting and hiring clerkship applicants. See <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/hiring-practices>.

FEDERAL LAW CLERK HIRING PLAN

The Federal Law Clerk Hiring Plan was established by the Ad Hoc Committee on Law Clerk Hiring. For information, see https://oscar.uscourts.gov/federal_law_clerk_hiring_pilot.

FILLED POSITIONS

The “Filled” tag is shown next to a position in the Positions tab and indicates that a judge or staff attorney office has marked a position filled.

G

GENERATE PACKET

Generate Packet is a Batch Options function available to judges, staff attorney offices, and courts that compiles and generates PDF files of selected applicants and application documents. Requested packets become available for download on the Printable Application Packets tab under the Applicants section of the main navigation menu.

H

HELP

Click Help in the left navigation when logged into your account to access OSCAR help - a searchable,



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indexed help resource. Non-judiciary users can also easily access our Customer Service Portal (<https://oscar-uscourts.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portals>).

HELP ARTICLES

Help articles provide step-by-step instructions that assist in performing specific functions within OSCAR. Access help articles by clicking Help in the left navigation of your OSCAR account.

HISTORY

Applicants can view their account history, including a log of account activity in OSCAR, under Profile > History.

J

JUDGE STATUS

The judge status in OSCAR identifies if a judge is [Active](#) or [Senior](#).

JUDGE TYPE

Judge types in OSCAR include circuit, district, bankruptcy, and magistrate judges. Applicants and law schools have access to the judge type field when searching for positions.

L

LAST RUN (REPORTING)

Administrator users with access to the reporting function can click the last run button to view the last run of a report.

LAST UPDATED

The date listed to the right of each applicant in the Applicants List or position in the Positions List indicates when the application or position was finalized or updated.

LAW SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Law school administrators have certain administrator capabilities in OSCAR allowing them to manage their school's applicant and recommender accounts, manage their law school profiles, certify class rank, and run reports.



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M

MAGISTRATE JUDGE

A [magistrate judge](#) is a judicial officer of a district court who conducts initial proceedings in criminal cases, decides criminal misdemeanor cases, conducts many pretrial civil and criminal matters on behalf of district judges, and decides civil cases with the consent of the parties.

MAIL

Mail is a Batch Option for administrators, judges, staff attorney offices, and courts to send email via OSCAR to a group of selected recipients.

MAIL WIZARD

The mail wizard is used to create and send mass emails within OSCAR. For example, judges can use this feature to send email to their applicants.

MERGE CODES

Merge codes are used to customize a single email for multiple recipients. The merge codes/fields are placeholders for information stored in the OSCAR database that will be filled in when the email is sent. For example, when creating a recommendation letter in the OSCAR online editor, recommenders can use the merge field [judge_name], and OSCAR will replace the merge code with the last name of the recipient judge.

MESSAGE IDENTIFIER

The message identifier is the label given to a saved email template. It is similar to the subject of the email, but it will not be viewable to the recipient. Users may want to enter the same label in both fields.

MY STATISTICS

OSCAR displays a card labeled My Statistics on the home page for applicants and recommenders. My Statistics provides a count of total finalized applications, total draft applications, pending recommendation requests, etc.



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N

NEXT SCHEDULED RUN (REPORTING)

Administrator users with access to the reporting function can assign reports to automatically run at specified intervals. The date and time of next scheduled run is shown in the column of the same name.

NOTIFICATION PREFERENCES

Users can set their notification preferences under Profile > Notification Preferences to select how they want to be notified of system notifications (e.g., document update requests, new applications, pending recommendation requests, etc.).

O

OSCAR

The Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (OSCAR) is the web-based system for law clerk and staff attorney recruitment that is maintained by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. This program is a centralized resource for notice of available positions, position application information, and employment information.

OSCAR WORKING GROUP

The OSCAR Working Group of judges and law school representatives identify current process and system issues, develop recommendations for the new requirements or enhancements, represent the issues in setting priorities and assessing system implications associated with policy issues and decisions, and promote orderly transparent federal law clerk recruitment and hiring practices.



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P

PASSWORD REQUIREMENTS

OSCAR requires all user accounts to have a password that contains:

- At least 8 characters (20 maximum)
- At least one number
- At least one lowercase letter
- At least one uppercase letter
- At least one special character (e.g., !, @, #, \$)
- No spaces

PASTE AS PLAIN TEXT

Use the Paste as Plain Text button to copy and paste text into OSCAR's online editor tool to remove formatting commands created by word processing software.

POSITION STATUS

Positions posted in OSCAR can have a status of available, expired, or filled. Applicants cannot submit applications to positions with a status of expired or filled. A position will show the status of expired if the judge or staff attorney office who posted the position takes no action before the close date passes.

POSITION TERM

The position term is the duration of a staff attorney position created by a staff attorney office. Options include 6-month, 1-year, 18-month, 2-year, 3-year, 4-year, or permanent.

PREVIOUS VERSION (REPORTING)

Administrator accounts with access to the reporting function can select the previous version button to view previously generated reports.

PRINTABLE APPLICATION PACKET

OSCAR compiles selected applicants and their application documents into printable, downloadable documents for judges and staff attorney offices. Requested packets become available for download on the Printable Application Packets tab within the Applicants List.

PRO SE LAW CLERK

The pro se law clerk provides legal advice and assistance to the court about prisoner petitions and complaints.



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Q

QUALIFIED TAG

OSCAR automatically tags applicants in a judge's applicants list as Qualified if they meet all the requirements as selected in the position posting.

R

RECOMMENDER

In OSCAR, any individual who submits electronic letters of recommendation on behalf of an applicant is termed a recommender. Recommenders do not register for accounts themselves, but rather the accounts are created by the action of either an applicant or a law school. The first time that a recommender is identified in OSCAR by any applicant, the system will send an automatically generated email to the recommender with a secure link to fill the recommendation request. Recommenders have the option create a password for future use and to receive automatic email notifications from OSCAR regarding new or pending requests for letters of recommendation.

REGEN REPORT (REPORTING)

Administrator accounts with access to the reporting function can select to regenerate an existing report. Regenerating an existing report will rerun it to include the latest data.

RENEWABLE

Judges and staff attorney offices can designate a position as renewable, meaning that it can be extended beyond its original term. This designation is viewable to applicants in the position details.

REPLY TO

Email address that an applicant can respond to when an email is sent from the Mail Wizard tab within a judge or staff attorney office account.

REQUEST DOCUMENT UPDATE

Request Document Update is an item in the Batch Options menu for judges, staff attorney offices, and court unit administrators. Requesting a document update will send an email to selected applicants with a request for them to update their applications with a specific document. OSCAR displays a status code of "RU" for request update.



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S

SAVE

Click the Save button to save your work and remain on the current page.

SAVE AS EXCEL

Save an entire list, selected items, or the current page as an Excel file.

SAVED SEARCH

Create a saved search with filters and search criteria selected in your search bar. Your saved searches remain available and can be selected for reuse.

SCHEDULING (REPORTING)

Administrator users with access to the reporting function can schedule reports to run at specified intervals by selecting the “Scheduling” option.

SCHOOL ADMINS

From this tab, law school administrators can manage accounts for their law school and delete unused accounts.

SENIOR JUDGE

Judges are listed as either Active or Senior in OSCAR. A [senior judge](#) is one who, after attaining the requisite age and length of judicial experience, acquires senior status. A senior judge retains the judicial office and may cut back his or her workload by as much as 75 percent, but many opt to keep a larger caseload. The judge's status is viewable in the Judge, Chambers Staff, and System Administrator interfaces only.

SPECIALIZED WORK EXPERIENCE PREFERRED

Judges, staff attorney offices, and courts can identify in the position posting if they prefer to receive applications from applicants with any of the following specialized work experience: appellate, bankruptcy, death penalty, habeas, immigration, patent, prison litigation, pro se, and social security.

SPECIALTY COURT

Bodies within the judicial branch of government that generally address only one area of law or have specifically defined powers (e.g., United States Court of Federal Claims, United States Court of International Trade, and United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims).



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STAFF ATTORNEY OFFICE (SAO)

The Staff Attorney's Office is a central legal staff in the U.S. Court of Appeals, serving the court at large rather than individual judges. The office has approximately 60 to 70 attorneys, including career supervisory staff attorneys and staff attorneys who serve staggered two-year terms. The principal task of the office is to assist in the disposition of appeals through the preparation of legal memoranda.

STAFF ATTORNEY OFFICE (SAO) STAFF ACCOUNT

A staff attorney office user with administrator rights can create additional OSCAR accounts for their staff. These accounts can be assigned different system rights to control the level of access.

STATUS (APPLICATIONS)

Judges and staff attorney offices can view an application's status from the Applicants List. OSCAR displays four different icons for application status:

- F – Finalized application (no updates)
- U – Application updated by applicant or recommender
- W – Withdrawn application
- RU – Judge or SAO requested an update of one or more application documents

STATUS (JUDGES)

Judges are listed as either Active or Senior in OSCAR. The judge's status is viewable in the Judge, Chambers Staff, and System Administrator interfaces only. See [Active Judge](#) and [Senior Judge](#).

SUBMIT

Click the Submit button to save your work and return to the previous page.

SYSTEM TAGS

OSCAR provides system tags that users can select from to label positions (e.g., "Interested") or applicants (e.g., "Good Resume").

T

TEMPLATE TYPE

Recommenders can create recommendation letters, save them as a template for future use, and identify the template as either judges or staff attorney offices.



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TEMPORARY LAW CLERK

Occasionally, emergency situations require a judge to obtain additional law clerk assistance for a limited period and with a specific termination date. This is a temporary appointment. If the appointment is for one year or less, the law clerk will not be eligible for health, dental, vision and life insurance coverage, retirement, participation in the judiciary flexible spending accounts, or the Thrift Savings Account. A temporary law clerk appointed for more than one year is eligible for health, dental, vision and life insurance coverage, and participation in judiciary supplemental benefit programs, but is not eligible to participate in the retirement system or the Thrift Savings Plan. All temporary law clerks are subject to social security deductions. If the expiration date of the appointment does not extend to the end of the calendar year and the law clerk has fewer than four years of service with the Federal Judiciary, he/she will not be eligible to enroll in the Health Care Reimbursement Account the last year of the appointment.

TERM LAW CLERK

Term appointments are the most common. Term federal judicial law clerks serve on an appointment limited to a total of four years, but are generally one or two years in duration. Some judges appoint term law clerks for eighteen months. The length of the term for a position listed in the OSCAR system is indicated in the "term dates" field in the position announcement. Term appointment law clerks are covered by Social Security and are eligible for health, dental, vision and life insurance coverage, and participation in judiciary supplemental benefits programs. If, however, the expiration date of the appointment does not extend to the end of the calendar year, and the law clerk has fewer than four years of service with the Federal Judiciary, he/she is not eligible to enroll in the Health Care Reimbursement Account the last year of the appointment. Term law clerks are not eligible to participate in the federal employee retirement systems or the Thrift Savings Plan. OSCAR identifies term law clerk positions as "term law clerk-chambers."

TERMS OF USE

The [OSCAR Terms of Use](#) identify the conditions in which a user agrees to access and make use of OSCAR.

U

UPDATE APPLICATION

Click to update and save changes to an application.



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V

VERIFICATION OF DATA

Section on the applicant profile requiring applicants to confirm all information is accurate and true to the best of the applicant's knowledge. In addition, applicants must certify the accuracy of information in any application updates to finalized applications.

VIEW PRINTABLE LIST

On the Applicants List, the judge or staff attorney can view a selected list of applicants in the browser window that can be printed.

W

WITHDRAW

The withdraw button in the applicant interface under Applications withdraws an application from consideration. The application will display as withdrawn within the judge or staff attorney office account. Applicants cannot reapply or resubmit an application for the position once an application has been withdrawn. Law school administrators also can withdraw applications via the Clerkship and Staff Attorney Applications tabs.