Below you can find a very general breakdown of events and action items about which we receive questions pretty frequently. **Your BSAs will be emailing you about most if not all of the events and dates on this list.**

This is meant to be a helpful primer, not a list of obligations.

For some folks, this list might be a huge relief. For others, it might feel like way too much pressure. For the former, we’re glad and please email us with any further questions. For the latter, *throw this away*. We’re serious. Throw it away. We will remind you about this as the time comes, and this is always accessible via the digital resource library if you want to check it out again.

Generally, timelines work differently for students interested in private practice and public interest. For public interest students, they tend to be much more interest/organization dependent. The Office of Public Interest Advising (OPIA) can help you figure out what yours might look like based on what you want to do. The Office of Career Services (OCS) is there to help with private sector questions.

Because hiring timelines differ in the public and private sector, you might notice that starting in the second semester there are more action items for students interested in private practice than for those interested in public interest. Both OCS and OPIA hold interview programs. The Early Interview Program (EIP), OCS’s program, takes place starting in early August, though there is also “EIP Preview” in June. The Virtual Public Interest Interview Program (V-PIIP) takes place in September. As a result, many of the action items in the summer are geared toward private practice.

With that, here we go:

**August and September**

* Attend orientation and get to know fellow section members, first semester professors, and section BSAs.
* Focus on your coursework, develop individual study (and life) habits, and keep up with assigned readings as much as you can. Some folks like to go over readings in small groups before class. We know there’s a lot to do. Feel free to reach out to your BSA about strategies for keeping up with reading or taking notes.
* Go to the student organization fair! Even if you don’t feel like you want to get involved until second semester or 2L (which is a totally fine thing that many people do), it’s nice to get a feel for what activities are available. If you do want to get involved immediately, there are a ton of options, ranging from affinity groups like the Women’s Law Association and Black Law Students Association to Beeritas (yes, that is the beer club) to a parent and family group.
* You can also join a journal at the student org fair. Being a 1L on a journal generally means participating in a subcite. This is law school jargon for spending a Saturday eating bagels and checking the content of footnotes on articles. If that’s your jam, get it, but don’t feel obligated. Plenty of folks don’t join a journal. Others join two. If you’re considering a clerkship (more on that timeline below), know that many judges like to see journal experience.

**October**

* [Office of Career Services](https://hls.harvard.edu/dept/ocs/jd-students/recruiting-and-job-search/a-guide-to-the-job-search/timing/) (OCS) and the [Office of Public Interest Advising](https://hls.harvard.edu/dept/opia/job-search-toolkit/planning-your-job-search/1l-resources-timeline/) (OPIA) start allowing 1Ls to make appointments this month. You can meet with them to talk about what you might want to do over the summer. Look through their websites to find information about the job search. This does not mean that you have to start applications or anything else (they won’t even be accepted until December) but it’ll give you a chance to get a feel for when you might need to apply.
* Speak to upperclassmen and leverage online resources to select a January Experiential Term (JET) course and a spring elective.
* If OPIA and OCS indicate it’s appropriate, you might begin work on your cover letter and resume.
* Feel free to reach out to any 2Ls or 3Ls that worked at an organization or company that you find interesting.
* Work on and submit closed memo for LRW.

**November**

* If you prefer to study with other people, form a study group with fellow section members. Some students will also choose to study alone. Some students will also form informal study sessions closer to exam period if you feel that is more your style.
* Begin compiling notes and outlining in preparation for final exams. We recommend seeking advice from 2Ls and 3Ls to help you work out your own study schedule. Every person’s plan is different. You can find an online outline bank at toodope.org or hlsintel.com, or receive outlines through journals or other extracurricular groups. These outlines can be used as written or can be used as guides for creating your own outline. Hornbooks, which are basically summaries and study guides for different classes, can be helpful. They’re generally in the Coop and used copies are available on Amazon and from upper-level students.
* Continue working on your resume and cover letters for upcoming summer job applications.
* Work on and submit open memo for LRW.

**December**

* Download Exam4, the software you’ll use to complete your exams.
* Continue reviewing job postings and begin to submit your cover letters and resume as appropriate. Though many applications open on December 1 and submitting early may be key for some employers (e.g., DOJ), some organizations start to review applications much later in the spring. OCS and OPIA will likely have given you an idea about what your timeline might look like.
* If you’re apprehensive about the interview process or just want some practice, you can make an appointment with OCS or OPIA to discuss your networking plan and/or sign up for a mock interview.
* Attempt to schedule interviews over winter break if you will spend the vacation in the same place you hope to spend your summer.

**January and February**

* Return to campus for class over January term.
* Interview for potential summer jobs. But don’t worry if you begin interviewing later!
* If you’re interested in participating in EIP, attend networking events and receptions sponsored by law firms. Even if you aren’t interested in EIP, this can even just be a fun time to hang out with your friends during J-term!
* If you’re interested in public interest work, continue to attend events held by OPIA, including talks by visiting Wasserstein Fellows, who work in a variety of areas and can be great resources for students.
* Once your grades are available (usually around the third or fourth week in January), follow up on any outstanding job applications. Feel free to reach out to your BSA to discuss your grades. The importance of grades varies greatly – don’t assume your grades will make or break you.
* If there are any organizations you didn’t join first semester and want to join now, reach out to their leadership or attend a meeting.

**March through April**

* Continue job search efforts and check for job postings on CSM Symplicity and other online databases.
* Work on and submit brief with partner for LRW.
* Consider your career goals and select 2L courses, externships, clinical programs, and your pro bono projects to build relevant skills and to demonstrate a history of commitment to your desired practice area and career path.
* Be aware of deadlines for summer funding, including Summer Public Interest Funding (SPIF), Low Income Protection Plan (LIPP) and other fellowships and grants.
* If you are someone who likes to get started very early, this might be when you consider outlining for classes. Do not be surprised if you feel like you have much more time to study in the spring than in the fall, because of the way exam scheduling works out.
* Consider applying for the Board of Student Advisers, the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, or the Harvard Law Review if you’re interested, though the Harvard Law Review application process will occur after spring finals.
* Apply or run for leadership positions in student groups for 2L.
* Start to look for housing for summer employment.

**May**

* Take spring semester exams.
* If interested, do the Harvard Law Review write-on after exams end. You will have one week to edit an article they provide and write your own note. There will be info sessions on this, don’t worry.

**June and July**

* Engage with your summer employer, work hard, and build strong relationships. 1L employers are often key to securing future positions.
* Update your resume to include summer employment and activities.
* If you are interested in working in private practice:
  + Research EIP employers to determine your interests and geographic targets.
  + Speak with summer associates at firms of interest.
  + Sign up for a mock interview through OCS.
* If you are interested in EIP Preview, submit your initial bids in mid-June and watch out for interview.
* Watch out for additional information about submitting bids for full EIP and participating in interviews come August.
* If you are interested in public interest, begin thinking about V-PIIP and other applications.
  + Sign up for a call with an OPIA advisor.
  + Research potential employers and speak with HLS students who have worked for them.
* Receive spring semester grades (typically a week in the first half of June).
* Receive results for law review and BSA in mid-to-late July.

**August**

* Fill out the summer evaluation survey to help subsequent 1L students make summer employment decisions.
* Begin to submit materials for the V-PIIP program.
* If you are interested in firm work, participate in EIP.

**A Note on Clerkships**

Harvard is currently following the official clerkship plan, which means that professors are not to give you recommendations for clerkship applications until the June following your 2L year, and many judges have agreed not to accept applications until then. For more information, check out OCS’s [page on clerkships](https://hls.harvard.edu/dept/ocs/jd-students/career-exploration/judicial-clerkships/hiring-timeline/#hlsnav-hiring-cycle) and [The Bench Blog](https://blogs.harvard.edu/thebench/2018/06/07/class-of-2020-update/).