

Externships & Pro-Bono

EXTERNSHIPS/PRO-BONO

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1. EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES

I. GOALS & OVERVIEW

The Externship Program is designed to provide students with an opportunity to gain practical legal experience as part of their legal education. The overarching goals of the Externship program are consistent with and are designed to serve the goals articulated in the mission statement of the College of Law.

To that end, the Externship Program offers the opportunity to incorporate practice experience with discussion, critical thinking, reflection, and analysis. The purpose of the program is to help students in the following ways:

1. to develop the art of lawyering, including research, writing, analysis, interviewing, and communication of facts and information;
2. to identify professional goals and reflect on individual professional development;
3. to develop sensitivity to issues of professional responsibility, ethical problem solving, sensitivity to issues of lawyer well-being, stress management and resilience, and the role of the lawyer in providing access to justice in society; and
4. to develop awareness of meaningful career opportunities in public interest and governmental settings and to establish relationships in chosen fields of law.

II. POLICIES & REQUIREMENTS

The externships require students to perform substantive legal work to receive academic credit. All externships must be unpaid. Additionally, student externs must be supervised at their placement by a lawyer actively licensed to practice law in the state where the externship is housed. In addition to supervision at their placement, students are also supervised by a faculty member and are required to enroll in a one-hour graded course component for a part-time externship or a three-hour graded course component for a full-time externship. The course component includes class meetings, time-keeping assignments, reflective journals, and other assignments to further the experiential learning. The policies and requirements outlined below are designed to ensure a high-quality experience for students as they work toward their educational goals during their externship.

For academic planning purposes, **only one externship can be counted toward your total graduation requirement.** Further, students are required to complete at least 64 credit hours in courses that require attendance in regularly scheduled classroom sessions or direct faculty instruction, and externship placement credit does not count toward meeting the minimum 64 credit hour requirement. (See 'Academic Policies' - 'Study Outside of the Classroom' section of the College of Law Catalog.)

A. Externship Placements

Two general types of placements are available for students. First, students can pursue part-time externship opportunities in various Public Service Externships during the summer, fall, or spring terms. Second, students can pursue full-time externship opportunities with a federal judge, a federal agency, the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, or the West Virginia Legislature during the fall or spring terms.

If there is another externship opportunity that a student wants to pursue that is not on the list of approved sites, then the student may seek permission from the Dean or Dean's designee. All placements must be approved.

The Externship Program does not include work in the private sector, and no externships in private sector settings will be approved.

B. Field Placement Work and Credit Requirements

Work performed at the field placement for academic credit **must** be unpaid. Students must have adequate supervision, guidance, and training by a dedicated field supervisor at the site. The field supervisor **must** be a lawyer. Students may choose from three different externship types:

1. **Full-time Federal Agency Externship during the fall or spring semesters.** Externs must work full time (as defined by the site) over the course of the semester to earn 13 credits. Of those 13 credits, 3 are graded and 10 are pass/fail. The graded portion of the course is earned through enrollment in the full-time agency externship course. The pass/fail credits are earned through completing work assignments at the externship site. To qualify for this externship, students must have completed at least one year of law school, submit a letter of recommendation from a law school faculty member recommending the student for the externship, and be in the top 40% of their law school class (3Ls), or top 25% (2Ls).
2. **Full-time Federal Judicial Externship, West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Externship, West Virginia Legislative Externship during the fall or spring semesters.** Full-time judicial externs also earn 13 credits over the course of the semester. Of those 13 credits, 3 are graded and

10 are pass/fail. The graded portion of the course is earned through enrollment in the full-time judicial externship course. The pass/fail credits are earned through completing work assignments at the judicial externship site. To qualify for this externship, students must have completed at least one year of law school, submit a letter of recommendation from a law school faculty member recommending the student for the externship, and be in the top 25% of their law school class (2Ls) or top 40% (3Ls). For the West Virginia Legislative Externship, students must enroll in LAW 684, which is the Bill Drafting and Legislative Process course, in the fall semester. Students must enroll in the 1-credit externship course during the spring semester while they are enrolled in the 10-credit externship placement.

3. **Part-time Public Service Externship during the summer, fall, or spring terms.** Part-time Public Service Externship opportunities are available with a federal agency or a state agency, federal or state judiciary, legal services office, or other non-profit organization. Students may earn a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 6 credits. Of those, 1 is graded and the rest are pass/fail. Students can choose to earn a variable number of pass/fail credits -- between two (2) and five (5) site placement/field work credits during the summer session or during a fall or spring semester. Students will receive one (1) academic credit for every fifty (50) hours of placement work performed during the chosen academic term. Students are advised to consult with the field placement supervisor to create a suitable work schedule. To be eligible, students must have completed one year of law school and be in good academic standing. Sites may require a higher standard, however.

Placement/Field Work Credits	Total Hours of Work Required	Approx. Hours of Work Per Week	Total Credit Including Course Component
2	100	7	3
3	150	11	4
4	200	14	5
5	250	18	6

C. Externship Class Requirements

Students who are selected for a full-time Federal Agency externship will enroll in Law 655 (the graded course) and in Law 656 for field placement credit. Students who are selected for the full-time Federal Judicial or West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals externship will enroll in Law 780 (the graded course) and in Law 780A for the field placement credit. Students who are selected for the full-time West Virginia Legislative externship will enroll in LAW 653 (the graded course) and in LAW 656 for the field placement credit. Students who enroll in the part-time Public Service Externship course will register for Law 653 (the graded course) and Law 654 for field placement credit.

The externship courses will meet periodically on campus during the semester and, depending on the placement site, other course meetings will be arranged online or through distance-learning technology. During the field placement for each of the externship courses, students will be required to submit the following assignments to successfully complete the course requirements:

- reflective essays or journals related to field work;
- a class presentation on a topic that draws upon the externship experience;
- discussion topics to facilitate student communication and foster experiential learning;
- time sheets documenting hours and work performed;
- supervisor evaluations (including a mid-semester and final evaluation); and
- full-time federal judicial, full-time West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, and federal agency externs must write a substantive law-review style paper based upon an issue related to the externship placement and field work.

These assignments are designed to enhance the students' field experiences and are more fully described in the course syllabi.

III. STEPS FOR REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

A. Registration

Students must attend the externship information/registration session when announced. Students interested in the Externship Program must submit a resume, unofficial transcript, cover letter, letter of recommendation, and a letter stating the name and contact information of the supervisor at the placement. Upon approval, students will register for the appropriate externship courses.

B. Receiving credit

Students will submit weekly timesheets, attend all scheduled class meetings, and complete all course assignments.

Students must submit the signed Externship Supervisor Agreement available on the class eCampus site.

Students must complete all field placement work in a competent and professional manner in accordance with the relevant Rules of Professional Conduct.

Students must submit periodic and a final evaluation from their placement supervisors.

IV. FIELD PLACEMENT SUPERVISION

To be an approved field placement, students must have a primary supervisor at the field placement site that is licensed to practice law. The field supervisor at the chosen placement must agree to support the student's educational goals. While a student will often perform assignments for multiple

lawyers at an organization, the externship requires that one person is designated as the field supervisor and mentor for the student. The supervisor and student must meet at the beginning of the placement to discuss the student's learning goals and should meet at least once per week to review assignments and discuss questions. The supervisor will complete periodic and final evaluations to be submitted to the faculty supervisor by the end of the semester.

2. PRO-BONO

Student Services and Engagement promotes public service opportunities for law students, including opportunities for pro bono work. The term "pro bono" means "for the public good." In the legal profession, pro bono work refers to work that is performed voluntarily and free of charge. Pro bono service is the responsibility of all members of the legal profession. WVU's pro bono program allows law students to begin pro bono service now and encourages students to develop a lifelong commitment to pro bono work.

The WVU College of Law pro bono program partners with legal services organizations and community agencies to provide opportunities for law students to serve those in need. Pro bono projects will be designed to aid individuals or families of limited means; charitable, community and governmental organizations who provide assistance to those of limited means; and activities for improving the law, the legal system, or the legal profession. Pro bono work may not be for credit and will not include work done for a clinic or externship. All pro bono work must be approved by the Assistant Dean for Student Services and Engagement. If a student documents 25 or more approved pro bono hours during his/her law school career, he/she will be recognized with "pro bono" honors at graduation.

For more information about pro bono opportunities and guidelines, see the Pro Bono guidelines. If you have questions about or suggestions for a pro bono project, please see the Assistant Dean for Student Services and Engagement.