



EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Externships or field placements allow students the opportunity to integrate the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom with the practical experience of on-the-job training. Unlike an internship, an externship allows a student to receive academic credit as they continue to learn outside of the classroom. The Externship Program at John Marshall Law School (JMLS) offers students a variety of field placements to enhance their legal education. Students who participate in the Externship Program gain the practical experience and confidence necessary to embark on a successful legal career.

Mission

The Externship Program's mission is to provide students with quality field placements that develop professional and practical skills while providing the academic support needed to ensure a successful and meaningful on-the-job performance.

Externship Goals

Students must complete an individual goals sheet at the beginning of the semester listing their educational goals from the externship. The goal sheet must be signed by the supervising attorney and returned to the Externship Director. The weekly timesheets will be used to monitor whether the goals are being met.

The goals of the Externship Program are to:

1. Provide professional skills instruction in the following areas:
 - a. problem solving;
 - b. legal analysis and reasoning;
 - c. legal research;
 - d. fact investigation;
 - e. interviewing and counseling;
 - f. negotiation; and
 - g. organization and management.
2. Provide students with opportunities to develop their written and oral communications skills by:
 - a. drafting pleadings, legal memoranda and correspondence;

- b. drafting transactional documents; and
 - c. representing clients in formal and/or informal judicial and administrative proceedings.
3. Instill fundamental values of the legal profession by:
- a. acquainting students with the rules governing attorney conduct in their jurisdictions;
 - b. enhancing students' abilities to recognize, address and resolve ethical issues in context; and
 - c. emphasizing the lawyer's responsibility to:
 - i. provide competent representation;
 - ii. promote fairness and justice;
 - iii. engage in an on-going process of professional growth and development.
4. Develop professional practice standards by encouraging students to:
- a. invite critique by supervisors and peers;
 - b. engage in thoughtful self-assessment; and
 - c. reflect on and extrapolate from placement experiences and observations.
5. Promote students' understanding of the roles played by the various "actors" in the judicial system.
6. Promote students' understanding of the psychological and sociological factors that may affect an attorney's ability to be an effective counselor and advocate for his or her clients.
7. Provide opportunities for examining the application of legal doctrines learned in the classroom to the resolution of "real world" legal problems.
8. Expose students to importance of public service and the need for equal access and competent legal representation to all.

Course Description and Requirements

Second and third year students are assigned to work at pre-approved field placements under the supervision of judges or practicing attorneys in corporate legal departments, government agencies, and public interest agencies. Field placement work is supplemented by classroom sessions. The classroom sessions are conducted on TWEN.

Students are given assignments and discussion topics include goal setting, ethical issues, client confidentiality, getting useful feedback from supervisors, and work-place challenges.

A. Credit Hours

Students in the program must earn a minimum of two and no more than six credit hours per semester.¹ That translates into a minimum of 94 hours a semester or approximately 6.7 hours a week to a maximum of 282 hours or 20 hours a week.² Students must record their hours on a weekly timesheet signed by the supervising attorney. The timesheets also require a brief synopsis of the work performed each week.

B. Grading

Externships are graded as Pass/No Credit/Fail.³ Grades are based on classroom participation and the supervising attorney's assessment of the student including but not limited to the student's work habits, work quality and professionalism. Students who are terminated or asked to leave a placement because of unprofessional or inappropriate behavior will fail the externship.

Note that no more than twelve (12) externship pass/fail credit hours will be applied to the credit requirements for a J.D.

C. Withdrawal

A student may withdraw from an externship only with the permission of the Externship Director and the Associate Dean. Since withdrawal from an externship may also mean withdrawing as counsel in a case, the rights of the client(s) affected will be a paramount consideration. JMLS Academic Code § 502(d).

¹ Some out-of-state externships may require more credit hours in a semester. Students must get prior approval from the Associate Dean before participating in such placements during the fall or spring semesters.

² Based on a 14-week semester.

³ See Section 501 of the Academic Code for a definition of "pass," "no credit," and "fail."

Student Eligibility

Students must have completed all required first year courses, be in good academic standing and have at least a 2.00 GPA **prior** to enrolling in the Externship Program.⁴ After the field placement interview, students must be accepted by the field placement supervising attorney. Students are not allowed to receive any monetary compensation from the field placements, with the exception of reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses such as parking. Students accepting placements that will involve litigation must be eligible to practice under Georgia's Third-Year Practice Act, which requires a student to be regularly enrolled and in good standing in a law school in this state and to have satisfactorily completed at least two-thirds of the requirements for the first professional degree in law, a J.D. or its equivalent, in not less than four semesters or six quarters of residence. A Dean's Certificate will be sent to the supervising attorney for students practicing under the Act once the requisite credit hours and GPA are verified by the registrar.

Field Placements

All field placements must be approved by the Externship Director. Placements will be approved if they meet the educational goals and objectives of the Externship Program. JMLS has a non-exhaustive list of placements available to students on the JMLS website. These placements have been approved and expect to have JMLS students contact them for externships.

If a student is interested in a placement not on the list, they must complete a Placement Approval Request form and submit it to the Externship Director. The Director will contact and visit, if necessary, the office to approve it for the Externship Program.

In order to be approved, a placement must:

- Be a judicial clerkship or with a governmental agency, corporate legal department or a legal non-profit agency;
- Meet the educational goals of the Externship Program; and
- Provide direct supervision by a practicing attorney.

⁴ First year students are eligible after the summer between their first and second year.

Placements with private firms or attorneys are allowed only if the firm or attorney has pro bono cases referred from a legal service provider or the court. Students are allowed to work only on the non-profit cases or assignments.

Please note that while a paralegal or secretary may give you an assignment from an attorney, students cannot undertake projects assigned or supervised by non-lawyers. Neither law school policy nor the ABA regulations permit students to earn academic credit for photo-copying, typing or answering the telephone. While you may be asked to do one or all of these activities periodically, they cannot be a regular part of the placement experience. Students cannot earn credit for time traveling to and from their placement. However, time spent with the supervising attorney traveling to interviews, depositions, hearings or trainings can be counted toward their required credit hours. Supervisors are encouraged to take students with them to practice-related activities outside the office. *Students who feel that they are not given appropriate assignments should contact the Externship Director immediately.*

Registration/Selection Procedures

1. Complete and submit pre-registration form with preferred placements, along with a resumes and cover letters addressed to each office the student is applying to.
2. Director submits resumes to the placement's supervising attorney.
3. Attorney contacts Director with names of students selected for an interview. Director contacts students selected.
4. Student contacts placement to schedule interview.
5. Placement's supervising attorney contacts Externship Director with offers
 - a. Director contacts student with offers
 - b. Student declines or accepts by contacting the Externship Director and placement supervisor
6. Register for Externship Class (660-3)

7. Supervisor and student coordinate dates and times of employment. If a student has not heard from the supervisor three weeks before the beginning of the semester, they should contact the attorney for the start date and time.

EXTERNSHIP PRE-REGISTRATION AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Fall Semester - MARCH

Spring Semester - OCTOBER

Summer Semester - JANUARY

NOTE: Students who do not participate in the above interview cycle may still register for an externship. However, they are responsible for securing a field placement. If the field placement is not already approved, the placement must be approved by the Externship Director before the student can register for the class.

Student Conduct

Students must conduct themselves in accordance with the John Marshall Law School Code of Student Responsibility at all times during their externship. Students must be honest in reporting their work hours and conduct themselves professionally at all times. Students who fail to comply with these conduct requirements shall be in violation of the JMLS Disciplinary Rules and shall face disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion.

Student Safety

Students are advised to use caution and common sense when traveling to and from their externship site and while working. Students should not go to crime scenes or places outside of the placement office to interview or serve clients or witnesses without a supervising attorney. Students should also avoid giving personal information to clients and witnesses. At all times students should be mindful of their surroundings and exercise caution.

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of John Marshall Law School not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, disability, race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, marital status, or sexual or affectional preference in its educational programs, admissions policies, employment policies, or other school administered programs. *Students should contact the Externship Director immediately if they feel that they are being harassed or discriminated against.*

Westlaw/Lexis Policy

Please note that students are not allowed to use their Westlaw or Lexis accounts to conduct research for their externship. For more details contact Prof. Turner.