



ATLANTA'S
JOHN MARSHALL
LAW SCHOOL

Externship Orientation

Practicing Professionalism in Legal Externships

Externship Orientation



What is an externship?

- ***For credit*** learning opportunities outside the classroom in placements such as the public defender's office, government agencies, law firms, corporations & nonprofits.
- Students **cannot** receive pay (unlike an internship which can be for pay or not for pay).
- First year classes must be completed to register for externships.

An externship is a class

- Register on Symplicity which is linked to the registrar
- There is a classroom component
- Grades consist of P/F/WF include coursework + field work
- Assignments are located on and uploaded to TWEN (ex: Fall 2014 Externship)
- There is a syllabus, midterm conferences
- Site visits
- Timesheets are submitted on Symplicity

Qualifications for Externship Program

- All 1L courses completed
- 2.0 GPA
- Good Standing with the law school

Purpose of Legal Externships

- Part of your legal education – gain hands on experience under attorney supervision & faculty guidance.
- Apply what you learn in the classroom.
- Build your portfolio of legal skills.
- Learning how to become a legal professional.
- Employers want: ***Practical experience.***

2 methods for securing a placement

- 1) Login to symplicity <https://law-ajmls-csm.symplicity.com>
- 2) Search for a placement
- 3) Apply during open period
- 4) If employer accepts you will receive an offer which you can accept or deny

Or

- 1) Secure your own placement
- 2) Record it in symplicity

Before you apply

- Have your resume reviewed by Career Services. They will help you develop a professional legal resume even if you already have a resume
- Develop a cover letter for each placement your apply to. No “To whom it may concern” letters.
- Have a good and short writing sample available.

Before you interview

- Research the offices and positions you are applying to.
- Know basic information about the type of work you will do.
- Prepare questions that will help you understand the position more.

Private Firm Policy

- Placements with private firms or attorneys are approved on a limited basis. Preference is given to private firms or attorneys that have a significant number of pro bono cases or work in specific areas. Preferred practice areas include immigration law; family law; alternate dispute resolutions; estates, wills and trusts; health law, entertainment and sports law; tax law; bankruptcy; criminal law and intellectual property.
- Supervising attorney must be in practice at least 5 years.
- Firm must certify **the externship meets the criteria of an internship program under the Fair Labor Standards Act .**

You have a placement

- Always say thank you (to everyone you applied to)
- You cannot quit or change your mind once you accept
- Update placement information into Symplicity
- Log onto TWEN and you are good to go

Learning how to become a legal professional

- Understanding the legal rules that apply to the practice of law i.e. Rules of Professional Conduct
- Understanding supervisor/supervisee roles
- Creating your professional image
 - Dress
 - E-Professionalism
 - Attitude/Behavior

Ethical Issues in Legal Externships



Overview of Ethical Rules

- Georgia attorneys are governed by the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct
- Official rules are available free online at <http://www.gabar.org/barrules/georgia-rules-of-professional-conduct.cfm>

Candor

- Rule 3.3 A lawyer shall not knowingly: make a false statement of material fact or law to a tribunal.
- Always, always, always tell the truth! (This includes things in your past that you are required to disclose prior to securing the externship.)
- More and more employers are conducting criminal background checks.

Competence

- A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client.
- Competence requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.
- If you don't know something.....ASK!

Confidentiality

Lawyer **shall not** reveal any information relating to the representation of a client.

(A good rule of thumb is do not discuss your externship work at all outside of the place you are working and only generally in the classroom with no client identifying information.)

Confidentiality:

What has to be protected?

- All information related to the matter, except what is “generally known”
- Personal information that the client would not want disclosed
- Information learned from the client as well as other sources
- Information acquired before representation begins and after representation ends
- Notes/memoranda that lawyer creates relating to the matter

Getting the Most Out of Your Experience Being a Professional



Interacting with Supervisors

- Assignment Clarification: What do you need to know about a project to increase the chance you will produce what the supervisor wants?
 - Deadline?
 - Jurisdiction?
 - What should be the final product?
 - How does this project fit into the larger picture of what the attorney is working on?
 - Who is my audience– will anyone else read what I give you?

Assignment Clarification c'd

- How will you use the information I gather?
- Do you already have a similar product or format that I could use?
- Are there specific resources you suggest I start with?
- Is there anyone with expertise in this area who I should talk to?
- Memorialize in a short email what you understand is your assignment.

Don't make the following mistake

- Student: *She looks too busy to be bothered and I don't want to reveal that I have no experience on this subject by asking questions.*
- Result: Student will spend time and resources on something that does not meet the attorney's purpose. Time wasted by both parties.

Completing the assignment

- Start with a Project Plan
- What are the issues or problems I'm trying to solve?
- What resources should I start with?
- Look for sources outside case law & statutes: think outside the box.
- Consider the mission and the client being served

Why might supervisors not explain?

- Attorney not thinking about the difference between a law student and experienced attorney.
- Lack of time.
- Know something so well that she doesn't realize others are not familiar or have level of knowledge.
- May not know what she wants! By asking questions, you may be refining and developing what needs to be done. Be Proactive!

Ask for feedback

- Let supervisor know you want to be supervised.
- Do not accept comments that do not make sense to you or a cryptic- good job.
 - Example: I would appreciate knowing why you eliminated the two cases and analysis from the memorandum. It would help me understand your reasoning so that I know what to do next time.
- Remind supervisor of your specific learning goals and express that you would like to accomplish your goals.

Concluding your externship

- Wrap up all unfinished projects with a memo to the file to update your work and what needs to be finished.
- Contact attorneys and other supervisors you've worked with to let them know your last day of externship, if applicable, progress report on projects.
- If you have multiple projects to finish, ask supervisor which one to prioritize and finish.

Concluding your externship c'd

- Check with supervisor about use of product as writing sample.
- Ask your supervisor, other attorneys and managers if they are willing to be your references.
- Continue to touch basis with anyone you would like to maintain in your network.

Looking and Behaving Like a Professional



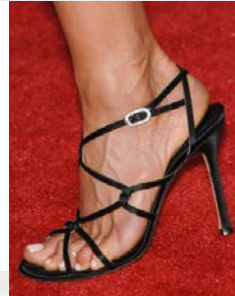
What to wear

- Dress appropriately for the legal office. Business attire is always a safe bet. (suit, tie, dress for court always)
- Do not dress down unless expressly told by your supervisor (no matter what others are doing)
- Women watch the neckline and hemline.
- Avoid wearing strong perfume and cologne.

What not to wear

- Casual clothing
- Evening apparel
- Lounge apparel
- Bright Clothing
- Low cut or revealing clothing

What not to wear c'd



Being a legal professional

- Respectful and courteous to **all** members of the office.
- Do not ask anyone to do work for you unless you've first cleared it with your supervisor.
- Set your hours with supervisor and stick with it. If something unexpected comes up, notify your supervisor. (Be early if you can)
- Never use internet for personal use.

Biggest complaints from supervisors

- Tardiness
- Missing deadlines
- Lack of assertiveness (waiting for assignments instead of asking for them)
- Failure to ask questions
- Attitude and Attire

Boundaries

- Maintain the student/supervisor relationship at an appropriate professional level
- Professional boundaries define effective and appropriate interaction. It protects **both** people.
- Both people are responsible for them.
- Setting boundaries include stating limits and expectations, maintaining consistency, respecting structure of relationship

Boundary challenges

- Challenging because of power differential
- Normal emotional reaction is to feel confused, ashamed, worried about consequences, uncertain if you perceiving situation accurately.
- Concerned about your reputation and future job potential. If it feels secretive in any way it is an important signal there is a potential problem.
- Most believe it won't happen to them and if it does that they can handle it.
- Not just sexual – over sharing, intrusiveness
- Happens to men and women

What to do

- Report the problem to us or appropriate authority right away.
- You have personal power – even though you are a student and don't feel like you have any!
- Even when you know yourself you don't know what the other person might do
- Personal power comes from –
 - Knowing yourself
 - Behaving like a Professional, including dress
 - Having self care skills

Our commitment to you

- We strive to provide a learning environment that maximizes the potential of each student.
- Take all complaints seriously.
- Conduct timely and appropriate fact-finding.
- Retaliation will not be tolerated.
- Enforce policies.

3rd Year Practice Certification

- Student must have completed 59 credits (grades must be in) Must receive letter from Dean's office (see Ms. Hernandez)
- Applies to students working for a government agency or appearing on behalf of an indigent client.
- *It does not apply to students working at private law firms representing clients for a fee.*

Clinics

- Immigration Clinic
 - 3rd years only
 - Must commit to both fall and spring semesters
 - Must complete immigration law class
 - Approval by Dean Turner, Professors Joe Rosen and Catholic Charities

Clinics

- Fulton County Family Law Intensive Externship Clinic
 - 3rd years only
 - Must commit to both fall and spring semesters
 - Must complete immigration law class
 - Approval by Dean Turner, Professor Olmos

Clinics

- Applications for both clinics due in the spring semester for the following school year.
- See Dean Turner for more information.

Contacts

Offices on 7th Floor

Renata Turner, Ass't. Dean of Pro Bono and
Experiential Learning

rturner@johnmarshall.edu

Bridgett E. Ortega, Ass't. Director of Pro Bono and
Experiential Learning

bortega@johnmarshall.edu

Natasha Berry, Externship Coordinator

nberry@johnmarshall.edu