LAW 478 – EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM: 3 or 6 Credits

COURSE DESCRIPTION, EXTERNSHIP TYPES, ELIGIBILITY AND DEADLINES

An Externship is an opportunity for students to earn academic credit by working, without pay, under the guidance of a practicing attorney or judge. The program allows you to be exposed to different areas of practice or courts, learn an area of substantive law, develop practical lawyering skills, and build a direct understanding of a lawyer’s role and her or his professional responsibility. The Externship Program is divided into two components: field work and a reflective component that consists partly of class attendance, and partly of on-line work through TWEN. Students are required to attend the classroom sessions, complete the on-line assignments on TWEN, and produce a final, reflective paper. In addition, students submit weekly timesheets and any work produced at the externship site (in compliance with attorney-client privilege obligations).

Externship Types and How to Find an Externship: Externships are available for judicial, government, non-profits, corporate (in-house) or private placements. The Externship Professor maintains a comprehensive list of Externship placements to date which can be a starting place when searching for placement options. You may also set up an appointment with the Externship Course Professor, Professor Gwynne Skinner, to discuss externship possibilities. Students may also develop their own externship placements with the approval of the Externship Professor. If you’re potential host organization/firm has not participated in the WUC program before and would like more information, ask Professor Gwynne Skinner, gskinner@willamette.edu, to send an informational letter to your potential host supervisor.

Location of Externship: Within local driving distance during the Fall and Spring terms; worldwide during the Summer term. Summer term out-of-state or country students are required to attend the live classes via appropriate technology.

Terms: Fall, Spring or Summer

Eligibility for Part-time Externship:
  1. Completion of the equivalent of 2 full-time semesters of legal study.
  2. Successful completion of Legal Research and Writing.
  3. Student in good standing. Additional GPA requirements or specific course pre-requisites may be required by host organizations.
  4. OJIN criminal background check.
  5. Secure an externship within two weeks before the start of the first class.
  6. Note: You must be enrolled in the Externship Seminar during the term in which you are completing your externship hours. In other words, a student cannot enroll for a spring externship and complete the extern hours over the summer or in the fall.

If I Do a Part-time Externship Now, Can I Still Have a Full-time Externship Later? Yes. Students who have previously had a part-time externship are eligible for the full-time externship program, subject to the graded credit requirement for graduation, see the Student Handbook, Section III(6)(a).

Application Deadline: Deadlines vary by host organization. Some overseas and out-of-state applications are due as far as 6 to 9 months before the relevant semester. However, many can be applied for within 30 to 60 days before the relevant semester. For example, the Oregon Tax Court and Appellate Courts require...
students to apply in the fall for summer externships and spring for fall externships. Check the Past Externship list to learn more about deadlines.

**Credit, Grading and Registration Requirements**

**Grading:** Honors, Credit or No Credit.

**Course Components for 3 and 6 hour credit:**
1. 3 credits – 104 hours of Field Work, 6 credits – 260 hours of Field Work;
2. Attend Class as outlined in the syllabus;
3. Required TWEN assignments;
4. Readings from the textbook “Excellence in the Workplace: Legal and Life Skills”, and other sources;
5. Final 10-page reflective paper, and weekly time keeping;
6. Submit work-product materials at the end of the semester:
   Because some externships, such as judicial clerkships, may not allow you to use your work product because of confidentiality issues, letters from judges attesting to the quality and amount of work you completed during your externship are acceptable for the course work product requirement;
7. Arrange and site meetings as required with your assigned Externship Site Visitor and your Externship Attorney Supervisor (either in person or over the telephone, depending on location).

**Warning:** This is not a complete list of course requirements. **If you enroll in the course, please read the current term’s course syllabus.**

**Process for Enrolling in the Course, Waitlist and Confirmation Letters**

1. Review externship options; consider the requirements and location;
2. **Application Materials:** Schedule an appointment with Professor Gwynne Skinner to review options and application materials. Most organizations require a resume and cover letter. Additional materials may be required by the extern host organization;
3. Apply for and secure a placement;
4. Enroll in the externship course through the normal registration process;
5. Once you are enrolled in the course, you will remain on the wait list until you have 1) secured an externship if one has not been secured, and 2) passed an OJIN check (Oregon criminal background check);
6. Contact Bev Ecklund, becklund@willamette.edu, as soon as you have been accepted by a host organization. Bev will send your host supervisor and you a confirmation letter which explains the program expectations and includes the Supervisor-Student Agreement that you both must sign and return, and the Field Activities List that is reviewed with your supervisor.
7. **Summer only:** Before leaving campus, out-of-state or out-of-country students will need to coordinate with WITS to ensure that the technology requirements (software, webcam, and land phone line) are met in order to attend class live online.
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Can I Get Paid For My Externship Hours?**

No. Under accreditation standard 306 of the American Bar Association, externs must not receive any compensation. Compensation includes not only wages, but also any stipend, scholarship or award proffered to the Extern for tuition, travel, living expense, or any other purpose. This policy does not preclude normal financial aid, or scholarship. Many of our host organizations invite our students to continue to work for them in paid positions, and you are free to do that so long as there is a clear distinction between your paid and unpaid work. *To be clear: no hour for which you are paid can be counted towards academic credit.*

**Can I Convert My Paid Job Into An Unpaid Externship or Take the Same Externship Twice?**

No. The purpose of the Externship program is to allow students to “try out” different types of practice areas or to be exposed to new areas of law while gaining practical experience. If you are already working in a position, you are already gaining practical experience. Caveats: if you feel that you will be able to gain additional experiences in your position as an extern that are not available to you as a paid law clerk or you will be working for a different supervisor, in a different department or at a higher level of responsibility in the second externship with the same host organization, please consult with the Externship Professor.

**Can I Fulfill My Professional Skills Writing Requirement With An Externship?**

Yes. You can fulfill your Professional Skills Writing Requirement (also known as the second year writing requirement) through the Externship Program. It requires approximately 20 pages of original work product created during your extern placement. The 20 pages can include a variety of work types. For example, acceptable work may include legal memos, motions, research, and client letters. Unacceptable work product includes work that is more than 10% not your own or only requires you to fill in blank forms, such as DUII expungements.

Some externships, such as judicial clerkships, may not allow you to use your work product because of confidentiality issues. Letters from Judges attesting to the quality and amount of work you completed during your externship are acceptable to fulfill the course work product requirements only, but not the Professional Skills Writing Requirement. If you want to use the externship for your writing requirement, you must have an externship that allows you to use your work product.

**Can I Extern Out-Of-State or County?**

Yes, for the summer term only, as long as you are being supervised by a licensed attorney in that jurisdiction who has no history of professional misconduct, and that person has been approved by the Externship Professor. However, the law school is not obligated to approve every externship opportunity proposed, regardless of location. The ABA requires periodic site visits, even for externships out-of-state and country. *Please note:* even if you are out-of-state or country, you are required to attend the classroom component using appropriate technology, typically Adobe Connect.

**Extern Supervisors Must be Attorneys in Good Standing**

Students must be supervised at the host organization by an attorney in good standing with a state bar (or the equivalent) and with no disciplinary record. Both the extern and the attorney supervisor will be required
to sign an agreement regarding the minimum standards expected of each party.

**EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM STAFF, PROFESSORS AND SITE VISITORS**

**Externship Program Staff & Professors:**
- Gwynne Skinner, Associate Professor of Law, gskinner@willamette.edu
- Bev Ecklund, Career & Professional Development Coordinator, becklund@willamette.edu