

Non-Clinic, For-Credit Summer Externships (Also Called “Summer Legal Placements”) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Which students can earn credits for externships?

Any student who has completed the first year of law school may do one non-clinic externship before graduation. By contrast, students who do clinical placements (including clinical externships – i.e., placements outside the law school) must have completed at least three semesters before their externship. Clinical externship placements are available, by lottery, each semester and in the summer.

How many non-clinic externships can I do?

Only one non-clinic externship during your law school career, regardless of the number of credits. In addition, students may take no more than a total of 20 hours of course work for law school credit in clinic, non-clinical externships, and non-law courses combined. This rule applies to joint degree candidates as well as to other students.

How do I find a non-clinic externship?

Students must, on their own, find and secure externships at a government or non-profit agency that has a summer program for law students or that takes on law students to do legal or policy work in the summer time. The agency must agree to the conditions under which academic credit is awarded. The Career Services Office has resources to help with the search, and there are websites to help, as well. Some of these are: <http://www.law.uiowa.edu/academics/legalexternships.php>; www.pslawnet.org; www.idealists.org; www.equaljusticeworks.org. In addition, Symplicity (the Career Services software) has postings for positions that may qualify for externships.

Can I get credit for these externships?

Students can get academic credit, but all for-credit externships are subject to approval by the faculty curriculum committee. There are two versions of for-credit, non-clinic externships: the three-credit **“summer legal placement”** and the **“up-to-six credit externship.”**

What are the requirements for the three-credit externship?

The three-credit **“summer legal placement”** requires students to spend at least 150 on-site hours and is graded pass/fail. Students must attend an orientation session in May, and complete a series of writings over the summer (weekly reports and the like, for which writing credit is not available). Students earn their academic credit under the direction of a faculty member who is assigned to do extern supervision as a summer school teaching assignment. Enrollment may be limited based on the number of externship sections offered in summer school.

What are the requirements of the six-credit externship?

The **“up-to-six credit externship”** bases the number of credits on the number of hours spent on-site. It requires students to find their own faculty supervisor and to write a 20-40 page research paper. The one or two academic credits earned by writing the paper are graded and counted toward the faculty-supervised writing requirement. The academic credits earned for hours spent on-site are graded pass/fail.

Since an on-site visit by a faculty member is required, some long-distance or international placements awarding four to six credits may not be approved.

Do I pay for these externships? Can I get paid for them?

Since students earn academic credit, students must pay summer school tuition, pro-rated based on the number of credits. Students who pay tuition are also eligible for financial aid to pay tuition and partial living expenses. While the work at the placement must be uncompensated to get credit, qualifying students may accept Equal Justice Foundation stipends or other grants to apply toward externship expenses.

What is the time line for obtaining an externship?

Application packets are available on the College's web site at <http://www.law.uiowa.edu/academics/legalexternships.php>. One hard copy of your completed application must be submitted to Career Services by April 1, 2012. If it is incomplete on April 1 for some reason not attributable to you (for example, you are waiting for an agency supervisor's résumé or site approval), the application packet should be submitted with a statement of why it is incomplete, what is yet left to be done, and when the full packet will likely be completed. Students who must secure their own faculty supervisors (for an externship greater than 3 credits) are likewise strongly encouraged to secure one as soon as possible.

Can I do these kinds of placements without earning credit?

Yes. Students may certainly opt to volunteer, receiving neither money nor credit, at government and non-profit agencies. No approval or supervision by the law school is necessary, though we appreciate knowing where you have done your externship and learning about the experience. Students should log onto Symplicity and enter the information about the externship under the summer employment tab in their profiles.

Who can I ask for help?

The Career Services Office has information about some sites where students have had externships in previous years. Students are encouraged to set up an appointment in the Career Services Office to explore possibilities that meet their interests. In addition, students may look for externship possibilities that meet their interests on the websites listed above.

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