



# **Legal Externship Student Handbook**

## **Introduction & Program Goals**

The primary objective of the externship program at the Catholic University Columbus School of Law is to enhance students' learning through practice, experience, and critical reflection.

Our program enables students to earn academic credit while advancing their legal training at field placements that students themselves select, subject to program approval. This structure encourages students to take advantage of the wide array of legal opportunities in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and gain practical experience that is tailored to their interests and professional goals. Through teaching methods such as reflective writing assignments, seminar or tutorial meetings, and oral presentations, externship program faculty members guide students in considering issues including:

- how to identify and pursue learning goals for their placement experiences;
- how to reflect upon experiences and apply what is learned to future problems;
- how to identify and navigate issues of ethics and professionalism;
- how to be guided by personal and professional values in determining the approach to take to the practice of law and the type of legal practice to pursue; and
- how to develop an effective supervisory relationship and build a professional network.

Placement supervisors support students in their fieldwork by offering hands-on guidance and ongoing feedback as students apply and build upon their substantive legal training and develop legal skills such as research, writing, legal analysis, investigation, interviewing, counseling, negotiation, problem-solving, communication, and advocacy.

In all of these ways, Catholic Law's externship program prepares students to become ethical, effective, practice-ready lawyers.

## **Our Program**

Catholic Law student externs complete their fieldwork across a wide range of practice areas and placement types, from Capitol Hill, federal agencies and courts, and national non-profit advocacy organizations, to state and local agencies, courts, prosecutor's and public defender's offices, and legal services organizations, to offices of corporate counsel and private practice.

The externship faculty and staff work to support student externs throughout their work experience and serves as the point of contact between the law school and externship site supervisors. Professor Christopher Ross oversees the program with the help of Deborah Hawkins.

The externship program begins with the externship approval process and enrollment in the Legal Externship course, as well as the Becoming a Lawyer course if this is the student's first externship for-credit. Once the semester begins, all externs in the Externship Course are responsible for completing externship course requirements, including submitting bi-weekly time logs documenting their fieldwork. At both the mid-point and end of the semester, site supervisors will submit electronic forms evaluating students to the Office of Academic Affairs. (During the summer, site supervisors will submit only one evaluation at the end of the semester). To ensure the quality of the academic experience, student externs are asked to evaluate their placements at the conclusion of the semester. Students in the online Becoming a Lawyer course will additionally engage in a series of reflective-learning exercises individually, in small groups, and with Professor Ross.

## **Identifying an Externship Placement**

Students interested in completing a legal externship should seek out experiences that best serve their specific professional development goals and interests.

Catholic Law students searching for externship opportunities are invited to consult 12twenty or [careers.law.edu](https://careers.law.edu), a job database regularly updated by the Office of Career and Professional Development. To obtain a 12twenty username and password, students should email the request to [jobs@law.edu](mailto:jobs@law.edu) including their name and class/graduation year.

### *Catholic Law Experiential Education Program*

We can aid students looking for an externship for credit experience. Professor Ross invites all students to contact him to discuss possible opportunities as well as how to ensure that a particular work site will advance professional goals. Students also are highly encouraged to participate in the annual Externship Fair, which is held in the Law School atrium early in the spring semester. The Fair enables students to network with employers and alumni and to learn about a wide range of externship opportunities in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. region.

### *The Office of Career and Professional Development*

The Office of Career and Professional Development ("OCPD") offers a variety of resources to students searching for externships. Students are invited to meet with Assistant Dean for Career and Professional Development Julie Dietrich and to consult the OCPD library of materials on conducting a successful job search, located both in materials available in the OCPD office suite and electronically on 12twenty.

## **Externship Approval Process**

Once a student has been offered an externship opportunity, two steps must be completed to receive approval to earn academic credit for fieldwork completed. **First**, the student must complete an [online approval form](#). Students can find this form by

clicking the “Legal Externship Application” link on the Catholic Law Legal Externship webpage. Professor Ross reviews applications and will approve proposed sites. To be eligible for academic credit, a legal externship must:

- Provide an opportunity for the student to complete substantive legal work directly;
- Be supervised by an assigned attorney;
- Provide work for the student that will be done on-site at the employer’s office and at other locations related to the work such as courts, agencies, meeting locations, etc.;
  - *Please note:* If an employer’s office operates on a hybrid schedule or is fully remote, a student may contact Professor Ross before submitting the externship application to seek approval for an arrangement that includes some off-site or remote workdays.
- Provide the student extern with an appropriate workspace and the tools necessary for effectively completing the work, such as a computer and phone;
- Communicate regularly with the law school during the semester about the student’s experience and performance.
  - Professor Ross will ask supervisors to complete electronic forms evaluating students’ performance at the mid-point and the end of the semester. (During the summer, site supervisors will submit only one evaluation at the end of the semester).
  - The externship program also periodically emails fieldwork supervisors with information about program requirements and may request a brief site visit.

An externship placement may be paid if permitted by the placement organization. Catholic Law does not require a placement to be paid and will not have any involvement in setting rates of pay.

**Second**, students must complete and have their site supervisors review and sign the “Site Supervisor, Faculty Supervisor, and Extern Agreement.” A copy is included in the appendix to this manual and is also available on the [Externship Program website](#). Once you and your site supervisor have signed the agreement, please email a copy to Deborah Hawkins, hawkinsde@cua.edu. Professor Ross will then sign the agreement as your faculty supervisor—a final copy will be uploaded to a Shared Google Drive folder assigned to you at the beginning of the semester.

Students who have fulfilled these application requirements will be given permission to register for the appropriate externship course(s). More details on course registration can be found below.

Note: Some externship placements require the law school to verify the student’s eligibility to serve as externs through the completion of a form. If you are asked to

complete such form by your placement supervisor, please email it to Professor Ross and Deborah Hawkins, or bring it to the Office of Academic Affairs, in suite 343.

*Deadlines for Requesting Credit for your Legal Externship Placement:* To be eligible to receive academic credit for their externship fieldwork, students must complete the required application and submit a signed Extern Agreement prior to the start of the semester in which they would like to receive credit. Because of the need for review and approval of proposed placements, **we cannot guarantee that students who submit placement requests after the first day of classes will be approved.**

To ensure that you have the opportunity to receive academic credit for a legal externship, we encourage you to plan ahead and complete these prior steps as soon as possible.

## Externship for Credit Registration Process

### ***Before the semester begins:***

**\*\*Important Note** – You will be given permission to enroll in the appropriate course or courses when (1) your externship application is approved and (2) the Extern Agreement sent upon approval of your application is signed by you and your site supervisor, and emailed to hawkinsde@law.edu to be signed by Professor Ross.

### ***First Time Externship for Credit:***

Students completing their first externship must take an academic seminar during the same semester in which they complete their fieldwork. Most students will take Becoming a Lawyer, a one-credit, online, asynchronous seminar. Students enrolled in certain programs or certificates may have other options, such as Becoming a Public Policy Lawyer or the Communications Law Practicum. Specific instructions will be sent during the application process.

First-time externs will:

1. Enroll in an academic externship seminar (Becoming a Lawyer, Becoming a Public Policy Lawyer, or the Communications Law Practicum) **and**
2. Enroll in the Legal Externship course (for 2 or 3 credits) to receive credit for your externship placement fieldwork.

Students completing the Securities and Exchange Commission Honors program register in the SEC course only, regardless of the number of externships completed. Students are required to attend a minimum number of brown bag or Commission events throughout the semester in addition to their fieldwork. Students who are unable to attend the brown bag or Commission events should consult with Professor Ross.

### ***Successive Externships for Credit:***

Students who have already taken an academic externship seminar with their first externship placement need not enroll in a second seminar. Instead, enroll in the Legal Externships course only (for 2 or 3 credits).

Students who are completing their second, third, or fourth legal externship will be assigned to the Supervised Fieldwork program within the Legal Externship course, which will entail periodic check-ins with Professor Ross and several brief reflective exercises about the placement

### ***Other Enrollment Considerations***

- Students may complete as many as four externships for credit prior to graduation.

- Because of the potential for competing time demands as well as ethical conflicts of interest, **students are not permitted to complete a clinic and an externship for credit during the same semester** without prior permission from Professor Ross. For the same reasons, **students are not permitted to complete two externships for credit during the same semester.**
- To ensure that students maximize their learning opportunities at externships, students generally cannot receive academic credit for fieldwork at the same site during more than one semester.
- Students who began working at an organization after enrolling in law school may seek externship credit for one semester at the organization if the placement otherwise satisfies the externship requirements listed above.
- Students who were previously employed by an organization before starting law school may only seek externship credit if they can demonstrate that they are assuming new duties or learning new legal skills. For example, a student may “detail” to their legal counsel’s office, to a compliance office, or to a different legal division of the employer on a full or part-time basis.






## Requirements to Earn Academic Credit for Fieldwork Hours

To successfully complete the Legal Externships course and receive academic credit for their externship fieldwork hours, all externship program students must do the following:

1. Complete the minimum number of fieldwork hours required for the number of credits selected.
  - Students who enroll in the Legal Externship course for 2 credits must complete a minimum of 100 hours of fieldwork, or an average of 6.66 hours per week for 15 weeks during the spring and fall semesters, and an average of 12.5 hours per week for 8 weeks during the summer.
  - Students who enroll in the Legal Externship course for 3 credits must complete 150 hours of fieldwork throughout the semester, or an average of 10 hours per week for 15 weeks during the spring and fall semesters, and an average of 18.75 hours per week for 8 weeks during the summer.
2. Provide timely, detailed documentation of your fieldwork hours using the time log template that will be sent to you at the beginning of the semester.

**Google Drive:** Professor Ross and Deborah Hawkins will share a Google Drive folder with you before the semester begins. This will give each student access to his or her individual folder. Each folder contains the following:

- A program calendar
- A time log requirement document
- A time log
- A sample time log
- A copy of the student's signed externship agreement

My Drive > Experiential Learning > Student Folder ▾	
Name ↑	Owner
 Fall 2022 Legal Ext. Program Calendar...	me
 Fall 2022 Legal Ext. Time Log Require...	me
 Fall 2022 Legal Externship Time Log ...	me
 Sample Legal Externship Time Log .xlsx	me
 Site Supervisor, Faculty Supervisor, an...	me

**Time Logs:** The time log template in your Google Drive folder is where you will document your fieldwork hours. The time log should be used as a living document and updated in real-time. Your time log should automatically tally students' total fieldwork hours to help you stay on track to meet your 100- or 150-hour minimum. A sample template is included in the appendix to this manual for reference.



Every two weeks, Professor Ross will review the time log and provide feedback, as necessary. Students can view time log due dates in the shared documents in the Google Drive and will also receive reminder emails in advance of deadlines.

### 3. Complete an Evaluation of the Placement

At the end of the semester, students must submit written evaluations of their placements using the online placement evaluation form, which will be sent to students via email.

### 4. Ensure that your supervisor submits an evaluation of your work.

Finally, we must receive written evaluations of students' work from their site supervisors. Professor Ross will email electronic evaluation forms to supervisors for this purpose near the mid-point and end of the semester. (During the summer, placement supervisors will be required to complete only one evaluation near the end of the semester). Students should confirm with their supervisors that they received the form and will submit it once students have completed their fieldwork hours. Supervisors typically discuss their feedback with students during both of these times.

## Contact Us

We are here to support you throughout your externship. We invite you to remain in contact with us to let us know how things are going and to discuss any questions or concerns. We wish you the best as you gain valuable practice experience this semester.

Christopher S. Ross  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
202-319-6783  
[rosscs@cua.edu](mailto:rosscs@cua.edu)

Deborah Hawkins  
Administrative Assistant  
202-319-6478  
[hawkinsde@cua.edu](mailto:hawkinsde@cua.edu)



# THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Columbus School of Law

## **SITE SUPERVISOR, FACULTY SUPERVISOR, AND EXTERN AGREEMENT**

Extern Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Supervisor Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Placement: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Supervisor: Professor Christopher Ross

The following are the minimum standards expected of site supervisors, faculty supervisor(s), and externs to receive academic credit. All externships will consist of two components: (a) a work experience under the supervision of the site supervisor; and (b) an academic component under the supervision of the faculty supervisor(s).

### **Site Supervisor's Agreement**

Thank you for your support, supervision, and mentoring of a law student extern. Please fill in the necessary information and add any comments on this form.

**1. Orientation:** The student extern will receive an orientation to the placement, including a discussion of office procedures, confidentiality, and other ethical obligations, an overview of the work and the expectations for the extern, and a discussion of the extern's professional and personal goals.

**2. A single primary supervisor:** The extern will have a single primary supervisor, who is a licensed attorney employed by the placement. In the event of the supervisor's extended absence, another supervisor will be assigned.

**3. Designated workspace:** The extern will have a designated workspace in the same location as the supervisor and access to the tools (e.g. desk, telephone, and computer) and support needed to complete assignments. Absent extraordinary circumstances, externs may not work remotely.

**4. In person:** Legal Externships for credit are expected to be completed in person. If there is the possibility that your externship will be partially remote, prior approval must be obtained from Professor Ross.

**5. Skills development:** The extern will be engaged in a substantial lawyering experience that includes multiple opportunities for performance, feedback, and self-evaluation.

**6. Assignments:** The extern will be assigned work that is similar to that of a law clerk or entry-level staff attorney, including exposure to a broad range of lawyering

skills. Assignments may include drafting documents and pleadings, researching and writing memoranda, interviewing clients and witnesses, and attending or observing meetings, conferences, negotiations, and court, legislative, or administrative proceedings.

**7. Limiting administrative work:** The extern will be given substantive assignments and will not be asked to undertake significant amounts of administrative work.

**8. Regular supervision meetings:** The supervisor and the extern will meet at least once per week to discuss the extern's assignments and experiences. The supervisor and extern also will meet at the midpoint and the end of the semester to discuss the extern's overall performance and evaluate the extern's progress in achieving his or her goals.

**9. Assignments and feedback:** The extern will be given clear deadlines for assignments and guidance on managing the workload. The extern will be provided regular, specific, individualized, timely feedback on each assignment.

**10. Mid-semester and final evaluations:** Both at the mid-point and at the end of the semester, the supervisor will complete a form evaluating the extern's work and return the form to the law school. A fillable pdf document or a link to an online form will be emailed to the supervisor for completion at the relevant times.

**11. Site visit:** The supervisor will participate in a brief site visit upon request.

### **Extern's Agreement**

I have discussed the above standards with my supervisor. I agree to follow directions, seek clarification and advice in a timely fashion, and comport myself with professionalism and integrity.

Students must complete 100 hours of work to earn 2 credits and 150 hours of work to earn 3 credits. It is expected that all work will be completed between the first and last day of classes and not during the reading or exam period.

Number of credits I seek for this externship: \_\_\_\_\_ (#), or the equivalent of \_\_\_\_\_ (#) total work hours. I understand that in order to receive the indicated credits I must work on average \_\_\_\_\_ (#) hours per week for \_\_\_\_\_ (#) weeks.

My supervisor and I agree that the start and end dates of my externship are:

**Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **End Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

If I complete the number of hours required for credit before my end date, I may be able to apply additional hours to the Pro Bono Program. Please see what counts as pro bono on the Law School's webpage. Students are not required to work during University holidays or breaks.

### **Faculty Supervisor's Agreement**

The faculty supervisor agrees to perform the following:

1. **Academic Requirements:** I will ensure that the student enrolls in an approved companion course to the externship placement. I will ensure that the law school's externship curriculum includes requirements (including readings, reflective papers or journals, presentations, and/or other assignments) designed to develop the extern's experience at the placement, including encouraging self-evaluation and reflection.

2. **Communication:** I will remain in regular contact with the externship site, the extern, and the faculty teaching externship courses to ensure the quality of the educational experience. I may conduct a brief site visit as appropriate.

3. **Availability:** I will be available as a resource should any concerns or issues arise.

4. **Evaluation:** I will evaluate the extern's performance at the externship based, inter alia, on the extern and supervisor evaluations, timely and thorough completion of time sheets and other course requirements, as applicable, and professionalism. Based on this evaluation, I will determine whether credit should be granted for the extern's fieldwork. In most cases, an extern will complete a separately credited companion academic seminar during the semester in which the extern completes his or her fieldwork. In such cases, the faculty member teaching the companion course will evaluate the extern's academic performance in the course according to the evaluation criteria outlined in the course syllabus.

We have reviewed this document and agree to act in accordance with these expectations.

**Student Extern Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervising Attorney Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bar Admission/Status:** I am currently an active member of the (state) \_\_\_\_\_ Bar.

**Faculty Supervisor Signature** (Professor Christopher Ross): \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for participating in the CUA Law Externship Program. Please call or email Christopher Ross, Clinical Assistant Professor, to discuss any questions, comments, or concerns at 202-319-6783 or rosscs@cua.edu.*

## Legal Externship Time Log Requirements

Each student must complete and submit time logs documenting their field work to receive credit for their fieldwork. All time logs are reviewed by Professor Christopher Ross for completeness. Write one- or two-sentence descriptions for each time log entry. Students must update the time logs in their Google Drive externship folder every two weeks (or every week during summer semesters). The deadlines for time log submission are posted on the Legal Externship Program Calendar. Students will receive a reminder email reminder 2 days before time logs are due.

***For the Summer 2025 semester, time logs will be due by 11:59 pm on:***

- Time Log for Week 1 - Sunday, June 1, 2025
- Time Log for Week 2 - Sunday, June 8, 2025
- Time Log for Week 3 - Sunday, June 15, 2025
- Time Log for Week 4 - Sunday, June 22, 2025
- Time Log for Week 5 - Sunday, June 29, 2025
- Time Log for Week 6 - Sunday, July 6, 2025
- Time Log for Week 7 - Sunday July 13, 2025
- Time Log for Week 8 - Sunday, July 20, 2025

### ***Time log Submission Requirements***

- Use the template available in your Google Drive externship folder.
- Include hours worked each day and a summary of legal work done for that day.
  - The description of your work should be a concise description of the task or tasks you are working on.
  - If a task lasts longer than an hour, as many do, you may copy the description between cells of the spreadsheet.
  - Review the time log sample in your Google Drive or at the end of this manual for examples of how to write time entries.
  - You may also wish to review [this blog post](#) on writing legal time entries. While written for billable time worked in a law firm, the principles are applicable here.
- Submit every two weeks (or one week during summer semesters) by accessing your Google Drive folder and then completing the appropriate time log tab due for that week (e.g., Week 1, Week 2)
- Include a running semester total at the bottom of each time log – the Google Sheet should do this automatically.

- Semester Totals need to be at least 100 hours to earn 2 credits and 150 hours to earn 3 credits.

### ***Time log Grading***

After each two-week submission period, Professor Ross will review your time log for compliance with the requirements listed above, and will provide any necessary comments in the first tab of your time log spreadsheet.

### ***Time log Questions***

Q: Can I count lunch as hours towards my externship for credit?

A: No, please only count time spent working on legal projects for your employer, unless it is a working lunch. Please specify so in your time log submission.

## Sample Time Log

*(this sample log is also available in your Google Drive)*

Externship Placement Time Log					
Name of Extern:	Sam Student				
Name of Organization:	District Court				
Date	Time In	Time Out	Hours	Lunch Break (working or non-working):	Description of each task (please describe each task separately):
Monday 1/10	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	1.00		Draft Response to pro se defendant who seeks remedy under state law
	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	1.00		Continue drafting Response to pro se defendant who seeks remedy under state law
	11:00 AM	12:00 PM		non-working lunch	
	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	1.00		Draft Response to pro se defendant who seeks expungement of criminal record
	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	1.00		Continue drafting Response to pro se defendant who seeks expungement of criminal record
	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	1.00		Revise response letter to request for expungement of criminal record based on law clerk comments; revise response letter to request seeking state law remedy
	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	1.00		Attend arraignment and plea deal - guilty plea to two counts of criminal charges. (1) money laundering, (2) extortion
	4:00 PM	5:00 PM			
Tuesday 1/11	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	1.00		Attend motions hearing in a civil case. Class action plaintiffs allege violation of anti-kickback statute in 'scheme' between title company and lender. Defendants (lender) are filing a motion to dismiss for (1) statute of limitation has run; (2) failure to state a claim.
	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	1.00		Attend sentencing hearing. Defendant plead guilty to participation in a money-laundering scheme. Because he worked with the government to expose other co-conspirators, he was given a more lenient sentence of 25 months.
	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1.00	working lunch	The law clerk has asked me to prepare a write-up on the case regarding lack of personal jurisdiction. In case it turns out that the defendant is subject to personal jurisdiction in this state, she wants to see if the Plaintiff's amended complaint will survive a 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss. My task is to put together the 10 counts in the amended complaint, lay out the elements of each cause of action, and see if they are met in the amended complaint (and also look at how the defendant has replied).
	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	1.00		Continue write-up on personal jurisdiction
	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	1.00		Write-up how the judge should respond to the inmate who wants to reduce the amount being taken from his pay by the Bureau of Prison.
	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	1.00		Continue write-up on pay reduction. Ultimately, the Court does not have the authority to hear the case because he has not exhausted his administrative remedies.
	<b>Weekly Hours =</b>			<b>12.00</b>	
	<b>Running Semester Total F</b>			<b>12.00</b>	