

THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA



Columbus School of Law

Legal Externship Student Handbook

The primary objective of the externship program at the CUA 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 develop an effective supervisory relationship and build a professional network;
- 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 identify and navigate issues of ethics and professionalism.

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, CUA Law's externship program prepares students to become ethical, effective, practice-ready lawyers.

Our Program

CUA 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 Office of Experiential Curriculum works to support student externs throughout their work experience and serves as the point of contact between the law school and externship site supervisors. Director Bryan McDermott oversees the program with the help of Heather Doerr.

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, externs are responsible for completing externship course requirements and 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 Experiential Curriculum (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.

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.

CUA law students searching for externship opportunities are invited to consult [Symplicity](#), a job database regularly updated by the Office of Career and Professional Development. To obtain a Symplicity username and password, students should email the request to jobs@law.edu including their name and class/graduation year.

The Office of Experiential Curriculum

The Office of Experiential Curriculum is here to provide assistance to students looking for an externship for credit experience. Director Bryan McDermott invites all students to contact him to discuss possible opportunities as well as how to ensure that 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 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 Tonya Gaskins and Associate Director Nikki Ingram 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 Symplicity.

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 CUA Law Legal Externship webpage. Director Bryan McDermott 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: Students may not receive credit for work completed remotely or off-site from site supervisors and attorneys;
- Be unpaid (with the exception of reimbursement for reasonable expenses such as transportation costs);
- 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.
 - The Office of Experiential Curriculum 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 Office also periodically emails fieldwork supervisors with information about program requirements and may request a brief site visit.

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 [Externships Program website](#). Once you and your site supervisor have signed the agreement, please email a copy to Heather Doerr at doerr@cua.edu. Director Bryan McDermott will then sign the agreement as your faculty supervisor and will email you and your site supervisor a final

copy for your records.

Students who have fulfilled the application requirement will then be granted 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 provided with verification/volunteer forms by your externship placement please bring them 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 by the Office of Experiential Curriculum, **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

Students completing externships must complete an academic seminar during the same semester in which they complete their fieldwork.

Before the semester begins:

****Important Note** – The externship application must be submitted and approved and the Extern Agreement completed and signed by you and your site supervisor, and emailed to doerr@cua.edu to be signed by Director Bryan McDermott before you will be granted permission to enroll in the Legal Externships course.

First Time Externship for Credit:

Enroll in an academic externship seminar (Becoming a Lawyer, Becoming a Public Policy Lawyer, or the Communications Law Practicum) **and**

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 Director Bryan McDermott.

Enroll in the Legal Externships course only (for 2 or 3 credits). Students who are completing their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th legal externship will be assigned to the Supervised Fieldwork program within the Legal Externship course, and will receive an email before the start of the semester identifying their faculty supervisor and providing a syllabus detailing the academic course requirements.

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**

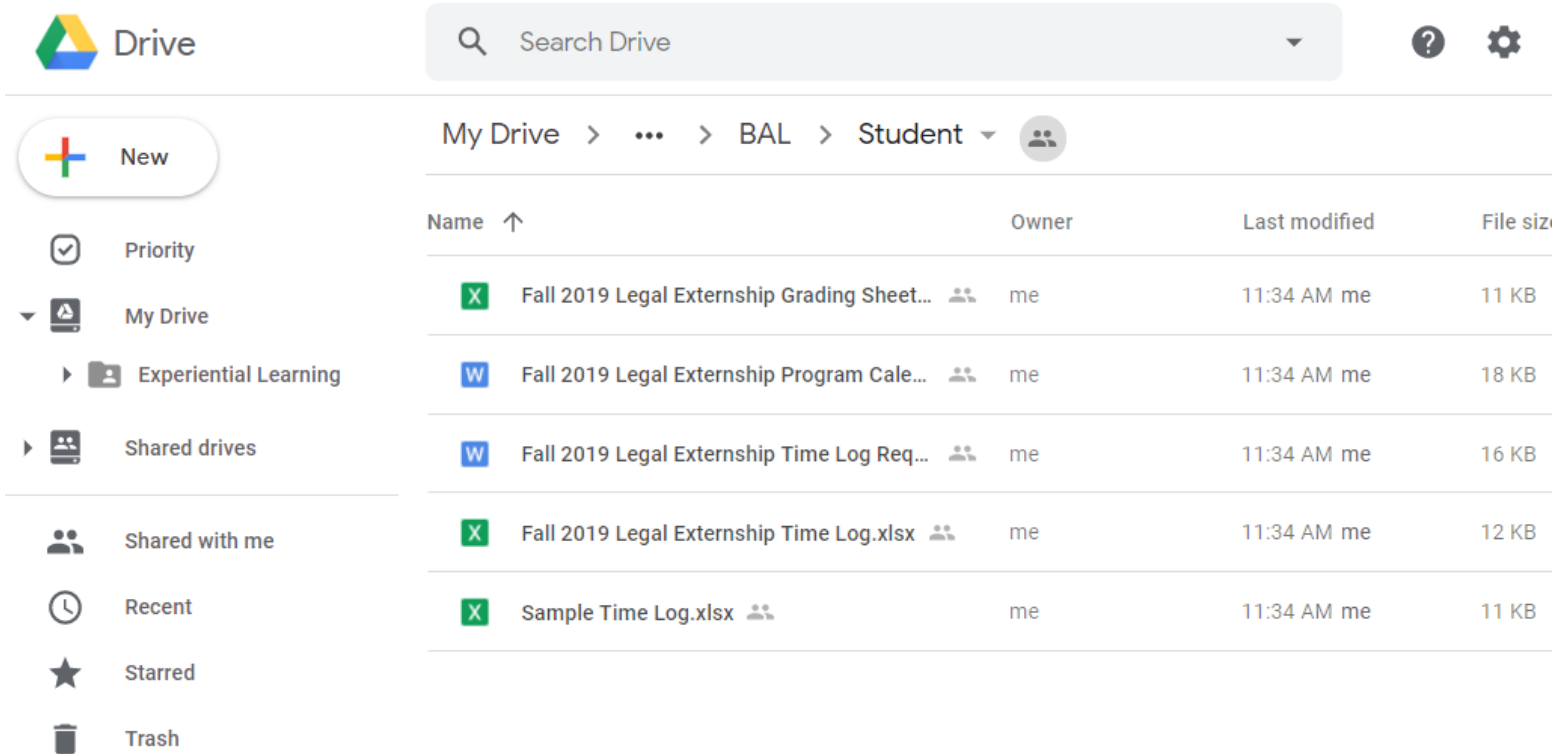
same semester without prior permission from the Director of the Experiential Curriculum. For the same reasons, **students are not permitted to complete two externships for credit during the same semester.**

- 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.

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 120 hours of fieldwork, or an average of 8 hours per week for 15 weeks during the spring and fall semesters, and an average of 15 hours per week for 8 weeks during the summer.
 - Students who enroll in Legal Externships for 3 credits must complete 180 hours of fieldwork throughout the semester, or an average of 12 hours per week for 15 weeks during the spring and fall semesters, and an average of 22.5 hours per week for 8 weeks during the summer.
2. Provide timely, detailed documentation of your fieldwork hours using the Externship Program time-log template.



The screenshot shows the Google Drive interface. The top navigation bar includes the Drive logo, a search bar, and help/settings icons. The left sidebar shows navigation options: New, Priority, My Drive (with sub-folders for Experiential Learning and Shared drives), Shared with me, Recent, Starred, and Trash. The main content area shows a breadcrumb path: My Drive > ... > BAL > Student. Below the path is a table of files:

Name	Owner	Last modified	File size
Fall 2019 Legal Externship Grading Sheet...	me	11:34 AM me	11 KB
Fall 2019 Legal Externship Program Cale...	me	11:34 AM me	18 KB
Fall 2019 Legal Externship Time Log Req...	me	11:34 AM me	16 KB
Fall 2019 Legal Externship Time Log.xlsx	me	11:34 AM me	12 KB
Sample Time Log.xlsx	me	11:34 AM me	11 KB

Google Drive: The Office of Experiential Learning office will share Google Drive access before the semester begins. This will give each student access to his or her individual folder. Each folder contains the following:

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

Time Logs: At the beginning of the semester students should receive a copy of the time log template into their personal file on the Gdrive. The time log should be used as a living document. **Students should update one time log in real time so that each week is added to one document.** Every two weeks, Director Bryan McDermott will review the time log. The time log template should automatically tally students' total fieldwork hours. The time log template is included in the appendix for your reference. Students can view time log due dates in the shared documents in the Gdrive 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 emailed to students by the Office of Experiential Curriculum.

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

Finally, we must receive written evaluations of students' work from their site supervisors. The Office of Experiential Curriculum 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

The Office of Experiential Curriculum is 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.

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Director for Academic Affairs
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Administrative Assistant
Student Affairs Coordinator
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Columbus School of Law

SITE SUPERVISOR, FACULTY SUPERVISOR, AND EXTERN AGREEMENT

Extern Name: _____ Semester/Year: _____

Site Supervisor Name & Title: _____

Placement: _____

Faculty Supervisor: Bryan McDermott

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

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

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. No compensation: The extern will not receive compensation for her or his work, except for reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses related to the externship.

10. Fee-generating matters: Where the extern is assigned work on fee generating matters, the extern's time will not be billed, and the work assigned will further the extern's legal education.

11. 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.

12. 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.

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 with the (state) _____ Bar.

Faculty Supervisor Signature (Bryan McDermott): _____

Date: _____

Thank you for participating in the CUA Law Externship Program. Please call or email Bryan McDermott, the Director of Experiential Curriculum, to discuss any questions, comments, or concerns at 202-319-5996 or mcdermottb@law.edu.

Legal Externship Time Log Requirements

Each student has an obligation to complete and submit time logs documenting their legal work at placements in order to receive credit for their fieldwork. All time sheets are reviewed by Bryan McDermott, Director of Experiential Curriculum for completeness. Write one or two sentence descriptions for each time log entry.

Students must update their time logs in the google drive externship folder every two weeks. The deadlines for time sheet submission are posted on the Legal Externship calendar as well as below. Students will receive a reminder email reminder 1 day before time logs are due.

✓ **For the Spring 2020 semester, time logs will be due by 11:59 pm on:**

Time Log # 1- Sunday, January 19th, 2020

Time Log # 2- Sunday, February 2nd, 2020

Time Log # 3- Sunday, February 16th, 2020

Time Log # 4- Sunday, March 1st, 2020

Time Log # 5- Sunday, March 15th, 2020

Time Log # 6- Sunday, March 29th, 2020

Final Time Log # 7- April 12th, 2020

✓ ***Time log Submission Requirements***

- Use the template available in your google externship folder.
- Include hours worked each day and a summary of legal work done for that day.
- Submit every two weeks by accessing your google drive folder, timesheet log and then on the appropriate time log due for that week (i.e. time log # 1, 2, 3...)
- Include a running semester total at the bottom of each time log
- Semester Totals need to be at least 120 hours to earn 2 credits and 180 hours to earn 3 credits

✓ ***Time log Sample***

- Can be found in your google drive folder.

✓ ***Time log Grading***

- Within a week of submission, Director Bryan McDermott will review the time log for compliance with the applicable time and legal work requirements and provide commentary in the Legal Externship Grading Sheet.

✓ ***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.

Contact Heather Doerr at doerr@cua.edu

