

WHITTIER LAW SCHOOL



EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

2006-2007

I. INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides students with an overview of the policies and procedures relevant to Whittier Law School's Externship Program. An externship is a law-related placement outside the Law School, where students perform and observe legal work under the guidance of a supervising attorney or judge and earn academic credit. Externships provide practical training that complements classroom study in a wide range of practice settings, including government agencies, the courts and public interest law firms. Externs gain valuable "real world" experience and exposure to diverse legal environments.

The Law School Externship Program has several educational goals for students, including: 1) training students in lawyering skills; 2) acquiring insight into the workings of various aspects of the legal system and profession; 3) encouraging a sense of professional responsibility; 4) developing students' abilities to reflect on and learn from their experience; and 5) facilitating students' career planning.

II. EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

Student Eligibility

Students who 1) have completed one academic year of study and at least nineteen (19) units; and 2) are in good academic standing, are eligible to enroll in an externship. Certain types of externship placements carry additional prerequisites (as set forth in the Law School's Academic Rules and Regulations, this Handbook, and placements' own requirements).

Externship Placement Requirements

- **Students Find Placements.** Students are responsible for securing their own externship placement (*see infra* Sec. IV - How to Find an Externship). A few externship opportunities require students to submit applications to the Law School, and not directly to the employer. Students arrange with the placement the appropriate schedule and number of hours to be worked during the semester.
- **Externship Approval.** All externships must be approved by the Externship Director prior to registration. Students must comply with the School's externship application deadlines (*see infra* Sec. V - Externship Approval and Registration Procedures).
- **Enrollment Limits.** Enrollment in the Externship Program may be limited in order to ensure appropriate faculty supervision and a high-quality educational experience.
- **Appropriate Placements.** Students may seek externship placements with government offices, judicial chambers, and non-profit entities. The Law School typically does not approve externships in the private, for-profit sector. Limited exceptions to this restriction

are made for students pursuing the International and Comparative Law or the Intellectual Property Law Certificates (*see infra* Private Sector).

- **Repeat Placements.** Students who have completed one externship semester and would like to enroll in a subsequent externship are strongly encouraged to seek a placement with a different legal organization than the one where they have previously worked. A repeat placement will be approved only if the student moves to a different unit of the legal organization, or if the new semester's work will be substantially different and more complex, and the student will assume greater responsibilities.
- **Supervision.** All externs must be supervised by an attorney with at least two years of practice experience, or by a judicial officer.
- **Substantive Work.** Externship must involve legal or law-related work, such as legal services, advocacy, or public policy.
- **No Compensation.** Students cannot be paid, either by the Law School or an outside source, for academic credit externships. However, students may receive reasonable reimbursement for work-related out-of-pocket expenses.
- **Semester Time-Frame.** The timing of externships must conform to Whittier's academic semesters - Fall, Spring or Summer. Externs must begin work at their placements during the first week of the relevant semester's classes.
- **Certified Student Status.** Students who have completed, or are currently enrolled in, Civil Procedure and Evidence may apply to the California State Bar's Practical Training of Law Students Program, which certifies students to provide legal services, such as participating in hearing and trials, under the supervision of an attorney. Some externship placements require or recommend that students become Certified. Application materials for Certified Status are available in Student Services or on the State Bar's website – www.calbar.ca.gov (click on "Attorney Resources," then "Practical Training of Law Students"). The "Declaration by Dean of Law School Form" should be submitted to the Registrar's Office. It takes *up to three weeks* for the State Bar to approve an application after receipt of a complete packet.

Externship Units and Course Requirements

- **Externship Credit Calculation.** Students are required to work sixty (60) hours at the externship site for each unit of externship credit earned. For example, a student engaged in externship work over the course of twelve (12) weeks during a semester must work approximately five (5) hours per week to earn one (1) unit of credit.
- **Maximum and Minimum Externship Units.** A maximum of six (6) units of externship academic credit, in addition to the one (1) unit for the Lawyering skills course, may be

applied toward graduation. During the Fall and Spring semesters, two (2) externship units is the minimum credit that will be approved for most externship placements.

Students participating in a Full-Time Judicial Externship may earn up to a maximum of eight (8) units of externship credit toward graduation (*see infra* Full-Time Judicial Externships). Eligible students who secure a qualifying Full-Time Judicial placement for a semester subsequent to having already earned one (1) or more regular externship units may use the remainder of the eight (8) units for the judicial placement. Eligible students who secure a qualifying judicial placement for fewer than eight (8) units may use the remainder of the eight (8) units during a subsequent semester's externship.

- **Lawyering Skills Course.** Students must enroll in the one (1) unit Lawyering Skills classroom course concurrently with their *first* externship placement. If a student already has completed Lawyering Skills in conjunction with a clinic, the course need not be repeated. Lawyering Skills provides students with the opportunity to explore a variety of practice-related subjects including supervision strategies, applied ethics, bias in the legal system, workplace skills, and lawyers' diverse roles.
- **Lawyering Skills and Externship Course Requirements and Grades.** Lawyering Skills and Externships are graded on a Credit/No Credit basis. In addition to required attendance, preparation, and participation in the class, all Lawyering Skills students are required to maintain an hours log of their placement work, as well as to submit reflective journals, memos and writing samples. At the conclusion of the externship, students complete an evaluation of their externship site and supervisor, and ensure that their supervisor submits an evaluation of the student's work. Externs who are not required to enroll in Lawyering Skills complete a similar set of written assignments as part of the Advanced Externship course. All externship participants must complete the required hours at their placement and perform their field placement work in a satisfactory manner.
- **Center/Certificate Credit for Externships.** The Law School's specialization programs (international and comparative law; intellectual property; criminal law; and children's rights) have their own limits on the number of externship units that may be applied toward the particular concentration. Please consult the relevant program's rules for details. In order to earn specialization credit, externship work must be primarily or exclusively in the applicable program's substantive area. A student's request for Certificate/Center credit may be re-evaluated at the conclusion of the externship.

III. EXTERNSHIP PLACEMENT CATEGORIES

Government Offices – Many government placements are in the criminal justice system, with the District Attorney's, Public Defender's, or City Prosecutor's Offices. A variety of other government agencies, at the federal, state and local levels, offer opportunities that focus on specific areas of law, such as immigration, tax, labor, or health law. Government placements

may provide litigation, transactional and/or policy-making experiences.

Not-For-Profit Agencies – Many students choose to extern at a variety of general and specialized legal aid organizations that offer direct client services. Other public interest entities focus on impact litigation and/or public policy work on a range of issues from anti-discrimination to children's rights.

Judiciary – Students may work for members of the bench or for court research attorneys in general trial courts, as well as in specialized tribunals, such as Juvenile Courts, Immigration Courts and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Judicial system externships primarily focus on research and writing.

Full-Time Judicial Externships – Students with a cumulative grade point average of 85 or above are eligible to apply for placements with the local California appellate or federal bench. Some Full-Time Judicial Externships require special application procedures.

Private Sector – *Only* students enrolled in the CICL or IP Certificate Programs are eligible to seek externships with a limited number of private, for-profit companies and law firms. The following additional restrictions apply:

- Students must have completed successfully at least one core Certificate course.
- The externship assignments at the private entity must relate to the applicable Certificate's area of expertise.
- In the IP area, a list of private sector IP externship sites is available in the CCR Clinic, in the Career Services Office (CSO), and on the IP Society TWEN website. The entities on this list are the *only* private sector IP locations where students may apply to extern.
- CICL Certificate students who are interested in a private sector externship must contact the Externship Director prior to securing a placement. Private practice immigration law placements will not be approved.

Non-Local Externships – During the summer, externships may be approved outside of the local Southern California area, depending on the uniqueness of the opportunity and available resources. Students seeking to extern outside the local area should contact the Externship Director well in advance of the summer so that the proposed placement can be adequately investigated. First-time externs who are required to enroll in Lawyering Skills must petition the Lawyering Skills course instructor to fulfill the course's requirements through an independent study format.

IV. HOW TO FIND AN EXTERNSHIP

Plan in Advance – Begin the process of researching and applying for externships *at least one semester before* you plan to extern. Federal courts, federal agencies and national non-profits generally require the greatest amount of lead time. Some government offices require many weeks and even months to process security clearances. Many externship placements, particularly for the summer, have early application deadlines and fill their slots well in advance.

Define Objectives – The first step in externship research is to think about and prioritize individual goals: Do you want to explore a new area of law practice? Add to existing strengths or experience in a substantive area? Develop a particular set of lawyering skills? Pursue experience that may facilitate finding a job?

Specific Experiences – Next, consider what types of experiences you would like to have during the externship: Are you interested in research and writing? Client contact/interviewing? Courtroom experience? Policy analysis? Fact investigation? Negotiation? You should look for externship placements, or divisions within a particular entity, that will provide the kind of work you want to engage in.

Research Placements

- **Externship Directory.** The 3-volume Externship Directory, available in the CCR Clinic and in Career Services, provides information on a wide range of externship placements. *A listing in the Directory does not guarantee that the placement will be approved in a future semester.* The Directory includes an Index (which is also available on the Law School's Externship Program webpage), which lists placements by practice area. The Directory also contains former externs' evaluations of specific sites and supervisors. A student who recently externed at a particular placement can offer helpful insights.

Students are not limited to the listings in the Externship Directory, and may pursue other opportunities in the public and private non-profit sectors. If seeking an externship with an organization that is not listed in the Directory, students must provide contact information to the Externship Director at least *one-and-one-half months* prior to the desired externship semester so that the appropriateness of the placement can be evaluated.

- **Career Services Office and CSO Webpage.** The CSO has numerous directories where potential externship sites may be found, including a binder with literature from potential externship placements. The CSO's webpage on the WLS website has weblinks to numerous government and public interest entities. Externship opportunities may also appear on Lawmatch, CSO's job search on-line program.
- **Postings.** Current externship opportunities also may be posted outside the Clinic.

- **Internet.** The Internet has a wealth of information on legal employers. Many organizations' websites have weblinks that lead to other related entities.

Externship Information Sessions – These small-group sessions are scheduled regularly during the academic year and provide an opportunity to learn more about the Externship Program and ask specific questions. Sign-up in the CCR Clinic.

Individual Appointments – The Externship Director is available to discuss your particular externship objectives and provide guidance. In order to ensure a productive counseling session, you should first read this Handbook and the Registration Bulletin section on externships, attend a group externship information session, conduct research to develop ideas of placements that are of interest, and prepare a resume. Appointments may then be scheduled with the Externship Director or another appropriate individual. Mary James, the administrative assistant in the CCR Clinic, can schedule these meetings.

Applying for Externships – Applicants should fine-tune their resume and cover letters. The Career Services Office is available to help with resume preparation and mock interviews. Learn about the work of each externship site to which you are applying and tailor your application accordingly. Check each entity's application procedures and requirements and follow them. If you do not know whether an entity accepts law student externs, or what materials to send, call and ask. If you have not heard back within a week or two of sending your materials, follow up with a phone call. While most externship placements require students to apply directly to the organization, some participate in a centralized process whereby students submit materials to the Externship Director. Some agencies, such as the Orange County District Attorney's and Public Defender's Offices, conduct externship interviews on-campus and require applications to be submitted through the CSO. For further job search guidance, consult the CSO's Career Planning Manual, available on-line on the CSO's webpage and in the Career Services Office.

V. EXTERNSHIP APPROVAL AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Externship Application Forms – Once a student has discussed the proposed externship placement with the Externship Director and has received an offer from a site, s/he must complete the applicable Externship Application Form(s), which are available in the Student Services area and will be available on-line sometime during fall of 2006.

- *Initial Externship Application Form* (beige) - to be filled out by students applying for their *first* Law School externship. Students in this category must concurrently enroll in the Lawyering Skills course (unless the student already has completed Lawyering Skills in conjunction with a clinic).
- *Advanced Externship Application Form* (salmon) – to be filled out by students who have completed Lawyering Skills in conjunction with an externship or a clinic, but have

not used all six (6) of their available externship units of credit. Such students need not repeat Lawyering Skills.

➤ *Full-Time Judicial Externship Application Form* (purple) – to be filled out by qualifying students enrolling in an externship with a local appellate or federal court. If this is the student's *first* externship, Lawyering Skills is a requirement.

➤ *Private Sector Externship Application Form* (light blue) – to be filled out by CICL or IP students applying to extern in the for-profit sector.

Externship Application Deadlines – Students must secure an externship offer and submit a fully completed Externship Application Form to the Externship Director (either directly or through Mary James) by the deadline established for each semester. ***Externship Application Form deadlines are approximately two (2) to three (3) weeks prior to the start of the relevant semester. The deadlines will be strictly enforced.*** Students wishing to ensure approval in time for Spring Registration Week should submit their Application Forms at least two (2) weeks prior to that registration period.

Externship Application Approval and Course Registration – Students should allow up to two (2) weeks for approval of their Externship Application Form. Students are required to check their Whittier Poets email account ***at least twice per week*** after submitting their Application Form. Applicants will be contacted by email if there are questions or problems with their Application. Students will receive a copy of the approved Application Form in their student mailbox. Once the externship placement is approved, the Registrar will register the student in the appropriate Externship course and in Lawyering Skills (if applicable).

VI. EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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