



WHITTIER LAW SCHOOL

EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Policies and Procedures Handbook

(Revised 5/26/2011)

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, public interest organizations, private firms and companies. 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.

I. EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

Student Eligibility

Students who have completed one academic year of study, at least nineteen (19) units and are in good academic standing, are eligible to enroll in an externship. Students cannot participate if they are on Academic Notice or Probation. Certain types of externship placements, like placements with private firms, 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. III - How to Find an Externship). Some 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 Professor Deirdre Kelly prior to registration. Students must comply with the School's externship application deadlines (*see infra* Sec. IV - 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 law firms, companies and organizations listed with Professor Deirdre Kelly. Externship placements not on these lists are usually not approved.
- **Supervision.** All externs must be supervised by an attorney with at least two years of practice experience.
- **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 and work throughout the entire semester.
- **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 earning 2 units (excluding the lawyering skills class) must work 120 hours.
- **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. **The minimum credit that is approved for most externship placements is two(2) units (not counting the Lawyering Skills class).** Additionally,

students must work a minimum of 8-12 hours per week. Students must work the entire semester and cannot “front-end” hours to satisfy their hours requirement before the semester ends.

Students participating in a ***Full-Time Judicial Externship*** may earn up to a maximum of eight (8) units of externship credit toward graduation. 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 or other externship, 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.

II. 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. 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.

Update Your Resume and Cover Letter – work with the Career Center to update your resume and create a cover letter.

Research Placements

- **Professor Deirdre Kelly** will have the list of private firms, companies and organizations which have expressed an interest in participating in, and have been approved by, the private externship program. Contact her for a list of these placements. Generally placements not on the approved list are not eligible for externship credit.
- **Internet.** The Internet has a wealth of information on legal employers. Many organizations' websites have weblinks that lead to other related entities. **Be sure to research the firm you are applying to so that you will be familiar with the type of work it does!**

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.

Individual Appointments – Professors Deirdre Kelly and Barbara Nichols are 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 Professors Kelly or Nichols.

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 have not heard back within a week or two of sending your materials, follow up with a phone call. While some externship placements require students to apply directly to the organization, others participate in a centralized process whereby students submit materials to Professor Kelly. Please contact her to determine where to submit your resume and cover letter.

III. EXTERNSHIP APPROVAL AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Externship Application Forms – Once a student has discussed the proposed externship placement with the Professor Kelly and has received an offer from a site, s/he must complete the applicable Externship Application Form(s), which are available on-line under the link for the Registrar’s Office – FORMS.

- *Initial Externship Application Form*- 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* – 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.

Externship Application Deadlines – Students must secure an externship offer and submit a fully completed Externship Application Form to Professor Kelly by the deadline established for each semester. Contact Professor Kelly to determine these deadlines, but students usually submit resumes approximately 2 months prior to the start of the semester in which they want to extern.

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 three times per week*** after submitting their Application

Form, and throughout the semester. 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).

No Drop - If a student is selected for an externship and accepts the offer, he or she will not be able to withdraw the commitment except for compelling reasons. To obtain permission for withdrawal, the student must immediately, upon the knowledge of such compelling reasons, petition in writing to the Director of the Externship Program prior to the commencement of the externship. The petition must specify the compelling reasons for withdrawal. Failure to petition and receive approval (which is given in extraordinary circumstances) will result in a failing grade for the externship and Lawyering Skills class; and may also jeopardize the student's chances of being considered for a future externship placement. Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to withdraw an acceptance to go to another placement.

IV. EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

<p>Professor Deirdre Kelly Externship Director 714-444-4141 - Extension 305 714-444-3250 (fax) dkelly@law.whittier.edu</p>
<p>Professor Barbara Nichols Assistant Externship Director 714-444-4141 - Extension 307 714-444-3250 (fax) bnichols@law.whittier.edu</p>
<p>Maria Harris Clinical Program and Externship Assistant 714-444-4141 - Extension 303 714-444-3250 (fax) mharris@law.whittier.edu</p>