



UNIVERSITY  
*of* VIRGINIA

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SCHOOL *of* LAW

EXTERNSHIPS

# Externship Manual

## **\*\*POLICY ON REMOTE (VIRTUAL) EXTERNSHIPS\*\***

**Part-time externships must be in person.** If the placement organization shifts to virtual work for all its regular employees because of health concerns (such as the emergence of another virulent COVID variant), the student will be permitted to work virtually for as long as regular employees continue to work virtually.

**Full-time externships must be in person.** However, to the extent that the placement organization permits its regular employees to work virtually for part of the work week, the extern may work for virtually for no more than 20 percent (one day out of five) of their work hours. We strongly encourage full-time externs to work in-person the full work week. Furthermore, if the placement organization shifts to virtual work for all its regular employees because of health concerns (such as the emergence of another virulent COVID variant), the student will be permitted to work virtually for as long as regular employees continue to work virtually.

## THE UVA LAW EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Law School's externship program connects traditional academic learning and abstract legal thinking with the practice of law, and helps students adjust to their roles as professionals, become better problem-solvers, develop interpersonal and professional skills, and establish mentoring relationships and professional networks. Externs master self-directed learning, define and pursue learning goals, and learn how to learn from direct observation of and experience in the practice of law. (See section III.C. of the the Law School's *Academic Policies*.)

### A. OVERVIEW

The UVA Law Externship Program allows students to work for a semester at a domestic or international government or nonprofit organization for credit. Externships combine substantial, practical legal work with academic inquiry through readings, reflective journal entries, response papers and, in the case of UVA Law in DC, a weekly seminar. Externs learn to work under close supervision, receive feedback from the supervisor at the placement organization and a Law School faculty member, and engage in self-assessment.

To qualify under the program, externships must consist of in-person legal work in a professional setting under the direct supervision of an attorney on-site at the host organization.

UVA Law offers four types of externships. Part-time externships; full-time individualized externships; and full-time externships based in Washington, D.C. in the fall semester, known as UVA Law in DC -- are for one semester, and offer a graded (directed study) component and a non-graded (field experience) component, which qualifies as a professional skills class. Part-time externships are for 4 credits (1 graded, 3 Satisfactory (S)/Unsatisfactory (U)); both types of full-time externships are for 13 credits (3 graded, 10 S/U). J-Term externships are three weeks long and are for 2 credits (1 graded, 1 S/U).

Research papers for UVA Law in DC and individualized full-time externships may fulfill the Upper-Level Writing Requirement.

Summer work does not qualify for externship credit. Nor does work for a for-profit entity or paid work.<sup>1</sup> Externships substantially similar to available clinical offerings also do not qualify for externship credit. For example, working for public defenders in Central Virginia would not qualify for externship credit where the Law School's clinics place students in those offices.

Students may do no more than one externship in a semester, and no more than two externships total. Students may do only one full-time externship, including UVA Law in DC.

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<sup>1</sup> Students may seek an exception to the prohibition on paid externships, with permission from the director of externships, if they obtain a placement at a federal agency that pays its externs, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission or the White House.

## **B. ELIGIBILITY**

Eligibility for externships is limited to second-semester 2Ls and 3L J.D. students in good standing. First-semester 2Ls may extern parttime with the permission of the director of externships. LL.M. students are not eligible for externships; transfer students are not eligible for full-time externships. Only in exceptional circumstances will a full-time externship be approved for a student's third semester.

## **C. EXTERNSHIPS AND NON-CLASSROOM CREDITS**

Academic credits earned for externships count as non-classroom credits, except the seminar portion of the UVA Law in DC program. Students who have taken clinics, supervised research, law review, or moot court, or plan to do so following an externship, must ensure that they will have the necessary credits to graduate if they enroll in an externship.

Of 86 law school credits required to graduate, 64 must be in classroom courses--so, if you plan to obtain exactly 86 credits, no more than 22 may be non-classroom credits. (Non-classroom credits are tracked in a student's SIS account (Academic Requirements report section).

- Part-time and J-Term externships: all credits count as non-classroom credits.
- Full-time individualized externships: all 13 credits count as non-classroom credits.
- UVA Law in DC: 10 out of the 13 credits count as non-classroom credits.

Any questions regarding non-classroom credits should be directed to the Student Records Office.

## **D. EXTERNSHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS REQUIREMENTS**

All externships are professional skills courses and confer the following number of skills credits:

- Full-time and UVA Law in DC externships: 10 professional skills credits
- Part-time externships: 3 professional skills credits
- J-Term externships: 1 professional skills credit

## **E. COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES BY PLACEMENT ORGANIZATION**

Externs may not earn a salary or receive other compensation for the work they perform at their placement. However, with permission from the director of externships, they may receive compensation if they obtain a placement at a federal agency that pays its externs, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission or the White House. Students may receive reimbursement from their placement if (1) it is for work-related travel or other directly work-related expenses; (2) the expense was required by the placement organization; and (3) the student submits documentation substantiating the expenses to the director of externships before the end of the student's externship.

## F. APPLYING FOR EXTERNSHIP CREDIT

The externship application process has two distinct tracks.

- A student must apply for a field placement (see “Finding an Externship”).
- Separately, a student must apply for academic credit (see “Application Requirements”).

Because of the varying schedules of placement organizations, **the placement need not be confirmed at the time of the application for academic credit**. In other words, the student need not have secured a position with a placement before applying for academic credit, although the student should have submitted an application or applications.

Given the time needed to find a placement and, in the case of full-time individualized externships, to develop a research topic and find a faculty advisor, students should begin their applications early in the semester prior to the one in which they hope to extern.

### 1. Application Requirements

#### a. Part-time Externships

To apply for a part-time externship, a student must submit the following to [externships@law.virginia.edu](mailto:externships@law.virginia.edu) no later than **March 31** for the following fall semester and no later than **October 31** for the following spring semester:

- A brief memorandum that:
  - Describes the proposed placement(s), the legal work that the student will perform there under the supervision of an attorney, and the student’s educational objectives in doing the externship; and
  - Provides information on the status of the student’s application to the placement(s) or, if available, an acceptance letter from the placement.
- Current resume
- Transcript (an unofficial transcript will suffice)

*Applicants should submit these documents together in a single PDF.*

## **b. Full-time Individualized Externships**

To apply for a full-time individualized externship, a student must find an [eligible faculty member](#) to be their advisor on a substantial research paper and submit the following to [externships@law.virginia.edu](mailto:externships@law.virginia.edu) no later than **March 31** for the following fall semester, and no later than **October 31** for the following spring semester:

- A brief memorandum that:
  - Describes the proposed placement(s), the legal work that the student will perform there under the supervision of an attorney, and the student's educational objectives in doing the externship; and
  - Provides information on the status of the student's application to the placement(s) or, if available, an acceptance letter from the placement.
- A detailed proposal for a substantial academic research paper.
  - The paper should be a scholarly examination of an issue or problem that is relevant to the work of the proposed placement organization.
  - The proposal must include a brief, preparatory background reading list (*not* a bibliography for the paper) developed in consultation with the faculty advisor. The list should include approximately a half-dozen works, covering both the general subject area of the externship as well as one or two readings on professionalism or legal problem-solving (a suggested list of the latter is available from the director of externships).
  - The student should work closely with the faculty advisor to focus the proposal and to assure the topic has academic merit.
  - The proposal must be a minimum of 900 words and include a research plan, developed with a resident faculty member who will serve as faculty advisor.
  - The student must include a signed letter from the faculty advisor confirming that he or she has discussed the proposed externship with the student and has agreed to serve as the faculty advisor; to monitor progress on the research project and establish a schedule for drafts; and to grade the final research paper.
  - Current resume
  - Transcript (an unofficial transcript will suffice)

*Applicants should submit these documents together in a single PDF.*

### c. UVA Law in DC

To apply for a UVA Law in DC externship, a student must submit the following to [externships@law.virginia.edu](mailto:externships@law.virginia.edu) no later than **March 31** for the following fall:

- A brief memorandum that:
  - Describes the proposed placement(s), the legal work that the student will perform there under the supervision of an attorney, and the student's educational objectives in doing the externship; and
  - Provides information on the status of the student's application to the placement(s) or, if available, an acceptance letter from the placement.
- A statement of interest explaining why the student wishes to do the externship and how the externship will build on the student's academic and work experience.
- Transcript (an unofficial transcript will suffice)
- Current resume

*Applicants should submit these documents together in a single PDF.*

### d. J-Term Externships

To apply for a J-Term externship, a student must submit the following to [externships@law.virginia.edu](mailto:externships@law.virginia.edu) no later than **October 31** for the following January:

- A brief memorandum that:
  - Describes the proposed field placement(s), the legal work that the student will perform there under the supervision of an attorney, and the student's educational objectives in doing the externship; and
  - Provides information on the status of the student's application to the placement(s) or, if available, an acceptance letter from the placement.
- Current resume
- Transcript (an unofficial transcript will suffice)

*Applicants should submit these documents together in a single PDF.*

## **2. Approval of Externships**

An externship must be approved for the student to receive academic credit.

The Curriculum Committee approves full-time individualized externships. The Director of Externships, in consultation with the Curriculum Committee, approves UVA Law in DC externships, part-time externships, and J-Term externships.

Final authority for decisions on externships rests with the Curriculum Committee.

## **3. Required Acknowledgement by Placement Organization**

After a student has received approval for externship credit, the Director of Externships must receive a signed letter from the attorney supervisor at the placement. The letter must be on the organization's letterhead and state the following:

- that the student has been asked to be an extern for the semester, and the start and end dates for the externship;
- that the student will be working under the direct supervision of a named attorney or attorneys;
- that the work will provide substantial lawyering experience, including opportunities for performance of legal skills;
- *[for full-time and UVA Law in DC externships:]* that the student will complete a minimum of 455 hours (or an average of 35 hours per week) of work over the course of the semester **OR**
- *[for part-time externships:]* that the student will complete a minimum of 130 hours of work (or an average of 10 hours per week) over the course of the semester **OR**
- *[for J-term externships:]* that the student will complete a minimum of 105 hours of work (or an average of 35 hours per week) over the course of the January term;
- that the supervisor will provide the extern with frequent and regular feedback and will complete a written evaluation at the end of the externship; and
- that the supervisor acknowledges the Director of Externships will conduct at least one check-in with the supervisor and the extern by telephone or in person, as appropriate.



## G. FINDING AN EXTERNSHIP

Students are responsible for obtaining their externship placements.

Opportunities for externships exist at almost all local and federal government offices, as well as at almost all nonprofit organizations that conduct legal work or have lawyers on staff.

The Public Service Center website has numerous online resources a student can consult in searching for potential externship opportunities. In particular, students interested in federal or local government offices (including public defender offices) should look at the *Arizona Guide*, which lists internship opportunities. For nonprofit and public interest organizations, students should look at the PSJD website, which does not list internships, per se, but provides contact and other information about these organizations, <https://www.psid.org/home>. Students may also wish to consult a counselor in the Public Service Center for further suggestions and ideas.

There is a complete list of organizations that are currently hosting or have previously hosted UVA law externs available on the externships [webpage](#). This information is not exhaustive, however, and students are strongly encouraged to investigate opportunities at any other organizations where they might want to extern. The externships webpage also has a link to a list of previous UVA Law externs who would be happy to talk to students interested in pursuing an externship.

Students may also seek advice about potential placements from the Director of Externships or other faculty members.

## **G. ACADEMIC AND WORK REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. All Externships**

#### **a. Credit and Grading**

Externs must complete all requirements for both the field experience and academic components of the externship.

To obtain a grade of Satisfactory for work at the placement, the extern must complete the required number of hours by the last day of classes (*not* the last day of exams) for that semester, as well as submit timesheets substantiating their hours. Failure to fulfill these requirements may result in an Unsatisfactory grade for the field placement portion of the externship.

The extern's grade in the directed study component will be based on the extern's written work and the faculty advisor's and/or externship director's evaluation. *Failure to meet deadlines (including for timesheet submission) will negatively affect the grade for the directed study component of the externship.*

#### **b. Initial Discussion with Attorney Supervisor**

During the first week of the externship, externs must meet with their attorney supervisor at the placement and discuss the following:

- The function of the agency, office, or organization;
- The nature of the legal work and extern's role in the office;
- Relevant office policies and the chain of command;
- Ethical requirements, in particular the confidentiality rules governing the extern's work;
- Best methods for communication between the extern and the attorney supervisor; and
- The extern's work schedule

#### **c. Professional Conduct**

Externs must comport themselves in a professional manner during the externship. Thus, externs must be prompt; diligent; meet deadlines; remain fully engaged; dress appropriately; demonstrate respect for others, including clients, colleagues, and support staff; behave in an ethical manner; and comply with the rules of professional conduct of the relevant jurisdiction.

The University of Virginia Honor Code applies to externs at their placements to the same extent it applies while on grounds at UVA.

## **2. Part-Time Externships**

### **a. Field Experience Component: Work at Placement**

Part-time externs must work at the placement for a minimum of 130 hours, or an average of 10 hours per week, over the course of the semester. Externs may work additional hours, but no additional academic credit will be granted. Pro bono credit may be available for any extra hours.

Externs must record their work at the placement in detail on timesheets provided by the externship program and submit them weekly to [externships@law.virginia.edu](mailto:externships@law.virginia.edu).

### **b. Directed Study Component**

For the directed study component, part-time externs will be required to:

1. Complete assigned readings;
2. Submit five reflective journal entries of at least 850 words each;
3. Complete two response papers of at least 900 words each; and
4. Write a final report of at least 1,500 words.

Details will be available on the course Canvas pages.

### **c. Site Visit**

The Director of Externships will conduct separate on-site visits (or the equivalent, e.g., via telephone) with each extern and their supervisor at least once during the semester.

### **d. Attorney Supervisor Evaluations**

At the end of their externships, externs must provide their placement supervisor with the externship evaluation form, to be completed by the end of the semester.

### **3. Full-Time Individualized Externships**

#### **a. Field Experience Component: Work at Placement**

Full-time externs must work at least 455 hours (or an average of 35 hours per week) at their placement over the course of the semester. Federal or state holidays and other leave, including sick leave, do not count towards the minimum hours required. Externs may work additional hours, but no additional academic credit will be granted. Pro bono credit may be available for any extra hours.

Externs must record their work at the placement in detail on timesheets provided by the externship program and submit them weekly to [externships@law.virginia.edu](mailto:externships@law.virginia.edu).

#### **b. Directed Study Component: Professionalism and Professional Identity**

Full-time externs must complete the following:

1. Five journal entries of at least 850 words each;
2. Two response papers of at least 1000 words each; and
3. A 1500-word final report.

The Director of Externships will provide these assignments; details will be available on the course Canvas pages.

#### **c. Directed Study Component: Research Paper**

Under the guidance of their faculty advisor, externs must complete a substantial research paper of at least 7,500 words on an approved topic relevant to the organization's work. Externs must submit at least one draft to their advisor before submitting the final paper. The paper may fulfill the Upper-Level Writing Requirement.

#### **d. Site Visit**

The Director of Externships will conduct separate on-site visits (or the equivalent, e.g., via telephone) with each extern and their supervisor at least once during the semester.

#### **e. Attorney Supervisor Evaluations**

At the end of their externships, externs must provide their placement supervisor with the externship evaluation form, to be completed by the end of the semester.

#### **4. UVA Law in DC**

##### **a. Field Experience Component: Work at Placement**

UVA Law in DC externs must work at least 455 hours (or an average of 35 hours per week) at their placement over the course of the semester. Federal or state holidays and other leave, including sick leave, do not count towards the minimum hours required. Externs may work additional hours, but no additional academic credit will be granted. Pro bono credit may be available for any extra hours.

Externs must record their work at the placement in detail on timesheets provided by the externship program and submit them weekly to [externships@law.virginia.edu](mailto:externships@law.virginia.edu).

##### **b. Directed Study Component**

For the directed study component of UVA Law in DC, externs will be required to:

1. Attend and participate in a weekly evening seminar in D.C.;
2. Complete assigned readings;
3. Submit five reflective journal entries of at least 850 words each;
4. Complete two response papers of at least 900 words each;
5. Write and make a class presentation on a substantial research paper of at least 6,000 words; and
6. Write a final report of at least 1,500 words.

Further details will be on the course Canvas pages.

The research paper may fulfill the Upper-Level Writing Requirement.

##### **c. Site Visit**

The Director of Externships will conduct separate on-site visits (or the equivalent, e.g., via telephone) with each extern and their supervisor at least once during the semester.

##### **d. Attorney Supervisor Evaluations**

At the end of their externships, externs must provide their placement supervisor with the externship evaluation form, to be completed by the end of the semester.

## 5. J-Term Externships

### a. **Field Experience Component: Work at Placement**

J-Term externs must work an average of 35 hours per week for 3 weeks for a total of 105 hours. The hours must be worked after January 1 and before the spring semester begins. Externs may work additional hours, but no additional academic credit will be granted.

Externs must record their work at the placement in detail on timesheets provided by the externship program and submit them weekly to [externships@law.virginia.edu](mailto:externships@law.virginia.edu).

### b. **Directed Study Component**

The directed study component of the J-term externship requires that externs:

1. Complete assigned readings;
2. Submit two reflective journal entries of at least 500 words each;
3. Write one response paper of at least 750 words; and
4. Write a final report of at least 1,000 words.

Further details will be on the Canvas course page.

### c. **Site Visit**

The Director of Externships will conduct separate on-site visits (or the equivalent, e.g., via telephone) with each extern and their supervisor.

### d. **Attorney Supervisor Evaluations**

At the end of the externship, the extern must provide the supervisor at the placement with the externship evaluation form, to be completed by the second week of February.

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*For further information, contact Professor Sprightley Ryan, [asryan@law.virginia.edu](mailto:asryan@law.virginia.edu)*