



UNIVERSITY
of VIRGINIA

SCHOOL *of* LAW

EXTERNSHIPS

Externship Manual

November 2020

THE UVA 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.

A. OVERVIEW

The UVA 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, research papers and guided 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 host organization and a Law School faculty member, and engage in self-assessment.

To qualify under the program, externships must consist of legal work in a professional setting under the direct supervision of an attorney on-site at the host organization. Remote externships – i.e., virtual, or off-site work at a placement -- are currently permitted.

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

The UVA externship program offers four types of externships. The first three -- 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 (academic) component and a non-graded (field placement) component, which qualifies as a professional skills class. Part-time externships are for 4 credits (1 graded, 3 credit/no credit); both types of full-time externships are for 13 credits (3 graded, 10 credit/no credit). The fourth type of externship is a J-Term externship, which is three weeks long and takes place in January between the two semesters. The J-Term externship is for 2 credits (1 graded, 1 credit/no credit).

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.

See Appendix A for a table summarizing the different types of externships and their requirements. Also see the Frequently Asked Questions section on the [externships webpage](#).

B. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for externships is limited to J.D. students in good standing.

First-year students and LL.M. students are not eligible for externships, and transfer students are not eligible for full-time externships.

Students may do externships in the fourth, fifth or final semester of their law school career. Only in exceptional circumstances will a full-time externship be approved for a student's third semester.

C. NON-CLASSROOM CREDITS AND THE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS REQUIREMENT

Academic credits earned for externships count as non-classroom credits, with the exception of the seminar portion of the UVA Law in DC program, as noted below. Students who have taken clinics, received academic credit for 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 the 86 law school credits required for graduation, no more than 22 may be non-classroom credits.

- Part-time externships 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: 9 out of the 13 credits count as non-classroom credits, *except* for students seeking admission to the New York bar, in which case 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.

All externships meet the professional skills requirement.

D. COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES BY PLACEMENT ORGANIZATION

Students may not earn a salary or receive other compensation for the work they perform at their placement organizations. Students may, however, receive reimbursement from their placement organizations if (1) the reimbursement is for travel or other directly work-related expenses; (2) incurring the expenses 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.

E. APPLYING FOR EXTERNSHIP CREDIT

The externship application process has two separate tracks.

1. First, a student must apply for a field placement (see below, “Finding an Externship”).
2. Second – and apart from applying to the placement – a student must apply for academic credit in accordance with the requirements below.

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 host organization 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 member to advise them on their paper, students are urged to 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 no later than the **November 15** for the following spring semester, or **April 15** for the following fall semester:

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(s) to the organization(s) to which the student is applying or, if available, an acceptance letter from the placement.

Current resume

Transcript (an unofficial transcript will suffice)

NOTE: please submit all these documents in a single PDF

b. Full-time Individualized Externships

To apply for a full-time individualized externship, a student must submit the following to externships@law.virginia.edu no later than **October 15** for the following spring semester, or **March 15** for the following spring semester:

- A brief memorandum that:
 - Describes the proposed field placement (or placements, if applicable in a case where the student has not yet received acceptance from a qualifying organization), 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 any proposed placement organization or, if available, an acceptance letter from the placement organization.
- 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 a faculty member. 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 proposal must indicate which paper option the student has chosen (see section 3.d. on page 10).
- 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 the research project, directed readings, and written products under a schedule established in advance; and to grade the written products.
- Current resume
- Transcript (an unofficial transcript will suffice)

NOTE: please submit all these documents 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 no later than **March 15** for the following fall semester:

- 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 a placement organization (or organizations, if the student applies to more than one) 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

NOTE: please submit all these documents in a single PDF

d. J-Terms Externships

To apply for a J-Term externship, a student must submit the following to externships@law.virginia.edu no later than **November 15**:

- 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(s) to the organization(s) to which the student is applying or, if available, an acceptance letter from the placement.
- Current resume
- Transcript (an unofficial transcript will suffice)

NOTE: please submit all these documents in a single PDF

2. Approval of Externships and Class Registration

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.

After a student has received approval for externship credit, the director of externships must receive a signed letter from the attorney supervisor at the field placement organization. The letter must be on the organization's letterhead and state 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; that the student will work for an average of 10 hours a week and complete 130 hours of work over the course of the semester, whether in person or virtually; and that the supervisor will provide the extern with frequent and regular feedback and will complete a written evaluation at the end of the externship. The letter must also acknowledge that the Director of Externships will conduct at least two check-ins with the supervisor and the extern by telephone or in person, as appropriate.

Once an externship is approved and the director of externships has received the letter from the field placement supervisor, the director of externships will provide the Law School registrar with the name of the student so that the student will be enrolled in the appropriate courses (Externship – Field Placement; Externship – Directed Study).

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

F. FINDING AN EXTERNSHIP

Students are responsible for obtaining field 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: <http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/publicserv/psresources.htm>. In particular, students interested in federal or local government offices (including public defender offices) should look at the *Arizona Guide*, <http://lawnotes2.law.virginia.edu/lawitc/techinfo.nsf/wcsn/Government+Honors+and+Internship+Handbook?opendocument&login>, which lists internship opportunities. Students interested in nonprofit and public interest organizations should look at the PSJD website, which does not list internships per se but provides contact and other information about these organizations, <https://www.psjd.org/home>. Students may also wish to consult a counselor in the Public Service Center for further suggestions and ideas.

Information on some organizations and government offices that accept externs, including a list of organizations that are currently hosting or have previously hosted UVA law student externs, is 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 students interested in pursuing an externship.

If a student is interested in working for a particular office, he or she should contact that office directly.

Students may also seek advice from the director of externships and other faculty members.

G. ACADEMIC AND WORK REQUIREMENTS

1. All Externships

a. Credit and Grading

The extern must complete both the field placement and academic components.

To obtain a grade of Credit for work at the field 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. Failure to fulfill these requirements may result in a No Credit grade for the field placement portion of the externship.

The extern's grade in the academic 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 timesheet submission) will negatively affect the grade for the academic component of the externship.*

b. Initial Discussion with Attorney Supervisor

During the first week of the externship, the extern must meet with his or her 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 and written products
- Best methods for communication between the extern and the attorney supervisor
- The extern's work schedule

c. Professional Conduct

The extern must comport him- or herself in a professional manner during the externship. Thus, the extern 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 an extern at a field placement to the same extent it applies while the extern is on grounds at UVA.

2. Part-Time Externships

a. Placement

The extern must work an average of 10 hours per week for 13 weeks at the field placement, for a total of 130 hours 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.

b. Coursework

The director of externships will provide a syllabus and grade the academic portion of the part-time externship.

i. Readings

The extern must complete the assigned readings on the schedule set forth in the syllabus.

ii. Reflective Journals

The extern must submit five reflective journal entries of at least 750 words as specified in the syllabus.

iii. Response Papers

The extern must complete three response papers of at least 900 words as specified in the syllabus.

iv. Final Report

The extern must write a final report of at least 1,500 words as specified in the syllabus.

c. Timesheets

The extern must record, in detail, his or her work at the placement on timesheets provided by the externship program and submit them weekly to externships@law.virginia.edu.

d. Attorney Supervisor Evaluations

At the end of the externship, the extern must provide his or her attorney supervisor at the placement with the evaluation form in Appendix B, which is to be completed and returned to the director of externships by the end of the exam period for that semester.

3. **Full-Time Individualized Externships**

a. Placement

The extern must work an average of 35 hours per week for 13 weeks at the field placement, for a total of at least 455 hours 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.

b. Readings

The extern must complete the readings from an agreed reading list on a schedule established in advance with the faculty advisor.

c. Reflective Journals

The extern must submit to both the faculty advisor and the director of externships reflective journal entries, of at least 750 words, reflecting on his or her placement experience. Topics and deadlines will be provided by the director of externships.

d. Research Paper and Guided Reflection Papers

The extern must complete a substantial research paper on an approved topic relevant to the organization's work. The student may elect *either* (1) a paper of approximately 12,000- to 18,000-words *or* (2) a paper of approximately 7,500 words *and* 3 guided reflection papers of at least 900 words responding to readings, the topics and schedule for which must be arranged with the faculty advisor. Externs may not switch between the two options after the add-drop period for that semester. Either paper may satisfy the Law School's upper-level writing requirement.

e. Timesheets

The extern must record his or her work at the placement on timesheets provided by the externship director and submit them weekly to externships@law.virginia.edu.

f. Site Visit

The director of externships will conduct separate on-site visits (or the equivalent, e.g., via telephone) with the extern and the extern's supervisor at least twice during the semester.

g. 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 end of the semester.

h. Final Report

The extern must submit to the faculty advisor and the director of externships a final report of at least 1,500 words that summarizes the extern's experience, describes the role of the extern in the projects he or she worked on during the externship, assesses the supervision the extern received, and evaluates the overall effectiveness of the externship and its significance to the extern's intellectual and professional development.

4. UVA Law in DC

a. Placement

The extern must work an average of 35 hours per week for 13 weeks at the field placement, for a total of at least 455 hours 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;

b. Seminar

The extern must attend and participate in a weekly evening seminar in Washington, D.C.

c. Readings

The extern must complete the readings assigned on the syllabus.

d. Reflective Journals

The extern must complete reflective journal entries of at least 750 words and submit them electronically approximately every other week. Topics and deadlines will be provided.

e. Research Paper and Response Papers

The extern must complete a research paper of at least 6,000 words on a topic approved by the director of externships and relevant to the placement organization's work, and two response papers of at least 900 words responding to readings. Topics for the response papers will be provided in the syllabus. The research paper may satisfy the Law School's upper-level writing requirement.

f. Timesheets

The extern must record, in detail, his or her work at the placement on timesheets provided by the externship director and submit them weekly to externships@law.virginia.edu.

g. Site Visit

The director of externships will conduct separate on-site visits (or the equivalent, e.g., via telephone) with the extern and the extern's supervisor at least twice during the semester.

h. 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 end of the semester.

i. Final Report

The extern must write a final report of at least 1,500 words that summarizes the extern's experience, describes the role of the extern in the projects he or she worked on during the externship, assesses the supervision the extern received, and evaluates the overall effectiveness of the externship and its significance to the extern's intellectual and professional development.

5. J-Term Externships

a. Placement

The extern 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.

b. Coursework

The director of externships will provide a syllabus and grade the academic portion of the externship.

i. Readings

The extern must complete the assigned readings on the schedule set forth in the syllabus.

ii. Reflective Journals

The extern must submit two reflective journal entries of at least 750 words as specified in the syllabus.

iii. Response Papers

The extern must complete two response papers of at least 900 words as specified in the syllabus.

iv. Final Report

The extern must write a final report of at least 1,500 words as specified in the syllabus.

c. Timesheets

The extern must record, in detail, his or her work at the placement on timesheets provided by the externship director and submit them weekly to externships@law.virginia.edu.

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 end of the semester.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY CHART COMPARING THE TYPES OF EXTERNSHIPS

TYPES OF EXTERNSHIPS AT UVA LAW

Part-Time Externships	Full-Time Individualized Externships	UVA Law in DC	J-Term Externships
Work at placement must be supervised by an attorney	Work at placement must be supervised by an attorney Substantial research paper under guidance of faculty member Paper can fulfill upper-level writing requirement	Work at placement must be supervised by an attorney Available only 3L fall semester Weekly evening seminar in DC Paper can fulfill upper-level writing requirement	Work at placement must be supervised by an attorney
4 th , 5 th , or 6 th semester Maximum 2 part-time externships per student	4 th , 5 th , or 6 th semester Maximum of 1 full-time externship per student	5 th semester Maximum of 1 full-time externship per student	Available only in January before the spring semester
Local, including Richmond and Washington DC	Local, national or international	DC area only	Local, national or international
4 credits: 1 graded, 3 Credit/No Credit	13 credits: 3 graded, 10 Credit/No Credit	13 credits: 3 graded, 10 Credit/No Credit	2 credits: 1 graded, 1 Credit/No Credit
Work 10 hours/week for 13 weeks (130 hours total)	Work 35 hours/week for 13 weeks (455 hours total)	Work 35 hours/week for 13 weeks (455 hours total)	Work 35 hours/week for 3 weeks (105 hours total)

APPENDIX B

ATTORNEY SUPERVISOR EVALUATION FORM

ATTORNEY SUPERVISOR EVALUATION OF EXTERN

Student Name: _____

Externship Placement: _____

Attorney Supervisor: _____

Unless otherwise requested, this evaluation may be shared with the student.

SKILLS	Not Applicable	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Legal Knowledge					
Legal Research					
Writing					
Analysis					
Developing Strategy					
Oral Communication/Presenting					
Problem-Solving					
Interviewing					
Client Counseling					
Investigation/Factual Research					
Negotiation					
Other (e.g., Training)					

PROFESSIONALISM	Not Applicable	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Professional Development					
Office and Staff Relations					
Attention to Ethical Issues					
Initiative and Independence					
Judgment					
Thoroughness and Attention to Detail					
Dependability, Punctuality					
Attitude toward Supervision, Criticism					
Time Management					
OVERALL PERFORMANCE					

STRENGTHS: Please briefly describe the extern's contributions to your office.

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: Please describe the reasons for any "poor" or "fair" ratings.

EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM: Please provide suggestions for improving our externship program.

STUDENT FEEDBACK: We encourage you to review this evaluation with the student. Please check the box if you have done so:

I have reviewed this evaluation with the student.

Date

Signature of Attorney Supervisor

Print or Type Name and Title