

EXTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

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For more information and Application Packets please go to:

<http://www.usfca.edu/law/externships/civil/>

Civil/Criminal Law Externship Program FAQ's

The Civil/Criminal Law Externship Program provides upper-division law students who meet certain requirements to receive academic credit for unpaid externships¹ they secure with established law firms or corporate legal departments; non-profit organizations or the legal department of government agencies or offices, including Administrative Law Judges. Thus, the Program provides students the opportunity to include practical, hands-on experience as part of their school education. The policies and requirements are intended to ensure a high-quality experience for students working under the supervision of experienced practitioners.

PARTICIPANTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND ALL CORRESPONDING EXTERNSHIP CLASS SESSIONS, SUBMIT EVALUATIONS AND WEEKLY TIMESHEETS, AND COMPLETE OTHER ASSIGNMENTS.

1. What's the difference between a volunteer internship and an externship for academic credit?

The student pays tuition for each credit in an externship. The ABA allows law students to apply this experiential learning while externing under the supervision of attorneys, toward their J.D. degree. Accordingly, externships contain an academic component. In addition, law schools and the ABA expect higher standards of teaching and oversight from an externship supervisor than from the supervisor in a volunteer internship or a paid position.

Students in volunteer internships also are not subject to the Law School's academic eligibility requirements (*Exception: See "Can I get credit for an externship with an employer where I have interned/externed/volunteered/worked previously?" policy in question 16 below*).

2. Can I get paid and get credit for an externship?

No. ABA Standards prohibit students from receiving course credit for compensated work. This does not include reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses related to the externship.

3. When can I participate?

- **Full-time students:** during the second and third years of law school (i.e., starting the summer following the first year of courses)
- **Part-time students:** during the third and fourth years (i.e. starting the summer following the spring semester of their second year)
- **Part-time students who convert to full-time status after their first year:** starting in the spring semester of the second year

Note re International Students: Before submitting an Externship Application, students with visas are advised to consult with the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) regarding any off-campus work authorizations that may be required. (415) 422-2654. See <http://www.usfca.edu/iss/employmentoffcampus/>.

¹ "Externship" is synonymous with "internship." To distinguish itself from USF's In-House Law Clinics, the Externship Programs Office uses the term "externship" to identify learning opportunities for students that occur outside the classroom. Students earn academic credit for these opportunities. Employers/supervisors sometimes use the term "internship" to identify these opportunities because these students will be working within their organizations.

4. What's the minimum GPA requirement?

No. of Academic Units	
Half-time (6 units)	Above 2.50 and good academic standing
Part-time (3 or 4 units)	2L (summer and fall): Above 2.50 and good academic standing
	2L (spring) and 3L students (summer, fall, and spring): at least 2.30 and good academic standing

5. Are there any pre-requisite courses I need to take before undertaking an externship for academic credit?

None from the Law School, but some employers may state a preference for candidates with certain interests and/or experience.

6. How many credits can I get and how many hours of fieldwork are required?

Half-Time	6 units = 288 hours → 21+ hours/week (unavailable for externships with private sector employers and during summer sessions)
Part-Time	4 units = 192 hours → 14+ hours/week during fall/spring or 30+ hours/week during summer
Part-Time	3 units = 144 hours → 11+ hours a week during fall/spring or 22+ hours/week during summer

Please note that in addition to the fieldwork hours, externs are required to attend a corresponding, faculty-led course or orientation, depending on the semester. Classroom and meeting hours do not apply toward the fieldwork hours.

7. Can I frontload the required fieldwork hours into the first or second half of the semester? How about if I want to volunteer for more hours than are required for the number of credits I'm registering for?

Fieldwork hours must be completed during the course of the semester and spread out relatively evenly, and it will be up to you and your employer to figure out a suitable work schedule given these parameters. Working a significantly higher number of hours beyond what is required to receive credit is discouraged. The ABA states that credit shall be "commensurate with the time and effort required." The Law School also wants to make sure that you have enough time to do well in your other classes and school commitments.

8. Are there limits to how many out-of-classroom units I can apply toward my J.D. degree?

Yes, keep in mind these Law School policies:

- **Students entering prior to Fall 2011:** to obtain the Juris Doctor degree, students must complete 86 course units including at least 65 units in regularly scheduled law school classroom courses. Non-classroom units include, but are not limited to, the In-House Clinics, Civil Law/Criminal Law/Judicial Externship Programs, school-sponsored international internships, Moot Court, Advanced Moot Court, ASP Tutors, Street Law, the *Intellectual Property Law Bulletin*, the *Maritime Law Journal*, and the *USF Law Review*. Please note that any activity listed under "Special Programs" in the Registrar's Course Schedule is non-classroom credit.
- **Students entering Fall 2011 and thereafter:** to obtain the Juris Doctor degree, students must complete 84 course units including at least 65 units in regularly scheduled law school classroom courses. Non-classroom units include, but are not limited to, the In-House Clinics, Civil Law/Criminal Law/Judicial Externship Programs, school-sponsored international internships, Moot Court, Advanced Moot Court, ASP Tutors, Street Law, the *Intellectual Property Law Bulletin*, the *Maritime Law Journal*, and the *USF Law Review*. Please note that any activity listed under "Special Programs" in the Registrar's Course Schedule is non-classroom credit.
- Out of the non-classroom units allowed, a maximum of 8 units of part-time civil/criminal law and 8 units of part-time judicial externship experience (*i.e.*, 3 or 4-unit externships) is permitted.

Part-time international internships for academic credit sponsored by the Law School count toward the civil/criminal part-time maximum. Half-time (6 units) externships do not count toward this 8-unit maximum.

- Although you may take advantage of all of these programs during the course of your law school education, you can take only one in-house clinic, civil/criminal law or judicial externship, or Street Law, in any given semester.

9. Does the corresponding externship course that I attend during the semester of my externship count as an extra academic credit?

No, attending this class is one of the requirements for you to receive academic credit for the externship. Please note that classroom hours do not apply toward the fieldwork hours.

10. Can I get an externship outside of the Bay Area?

All externships during the fall/spring semesters must be in the San Francisco Bay Area, which includes the counties of San Francisco, Marin, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo and Santa Clara. During the summer session *only*, students may apply to receive credit for externships outside these areas. In all cases, please make sure that the employer and externship meet the criteria of the Programs.

11. What kinds of attorneys can be supervisors?

All attorney supervisors must have been practicing law for at least 2 years and be in good standing with the Bar. (Exception: externships with Administrative Law Judges, where the supervising law clerk is a one-year rotating position, are permitted.)

12. Where can I find information on civil/criminal law externship employers?

Attached to the Civil/Criminal Externship Application Packet is a list of pre-approved externship employers and specific contact data where available. (Application Packets may be downloaded from the law school website.) More information on some of these externship opportunities can be found on www.USFLawLink.com. (Go to the Internship/Job Listings toolbar and conduct a search by selecting the Position Type field “Civil Law Externship” or “Criminal Law Externship.”)

13. Are there student evaluations of past externships?

Student evaluations of past externships are on www.USFLawLink.com. Please follow the following instructions to view these student evaluations:

- Once logged in, click on the “Resources” tab.
- Once on the Resources page, search using the “Type” field for the externship you are interested in (*i.e.* Student Externship Evaluation – Criminal Law, Student Externship Evaluation – Civil Law).

Please note that if you have a particular legal employer or court in mind, you may type in the name of the legal employer or court in the “Keywords” search field.

14. Am I limited to applying to this list of employers?

No, keep in mind the geographical limitations as stated above, AND make sure your attorney supervisor has been practicing law for at least 2 years and is in good standing with the Bar. (See questions 10 and 11.) If you seek credit for an externship at a legal employer that is not on the attached *List of Prior Externships*, that employer must complete a *Request for Approval of Agency for Civil/Criminal Law Externship Program*.

15. Are there any ineligible externships?

Yes:

- A student may not simultaneously receive academic credit and be employed, *i.e.*, compensated, by the same agency/office/firm.
- A student may not receive academic credit for work previously performed or completed during a prior semester. Academic credit must be arranged at the outset of the student’s work for the agency/office/firm.
- A student may not earn credit for work performed at a family or relative’s (including spouse’s/domestic partner’s) office/agency/firm.

- A student may not earn credit for a repeat externship, except in limited circumstances. See below for further explanation.

16. Can I get credit for an externship with an employer where I have interned/externed/volunteered/worked previously?

Normally, under Law School policy, course credit will not be given for an externship with the same agency, office or firm at which a student has previously worked (whether volunteer, paid, work-study or in a previous externship) for substantial periods of time, *except in the very limited circumstances as follows*. A student may be allowed a part-time (3 or 4-unit) externship with an agency/office/firm where she/he has previously worked or interned by completing the *Petition for Repeat Civil/Criminal Law Externship* to demonstrate that the experience to be gained:

- constitutes significant educational value commensurate with the academic credit to be given, and
- differs substantially from the work previously undertaken.

17. How do I go about seeking an externship position with employers?

Approach this process as if you would apply for any typical internship, by sending at minimum a cover letter and resume. If the employer offered more information on the externship position, other application material requests may be listed on www.USFLawLink.com.

18. I need help putting together cover letters and resumes. Where can I get assistance?

Please contact the Office of Career Planning (OCP) and schedule an appointment with an OCP Director. Room 230, (415) 422-6757, lawcareer@usfca.edu.

19. How far in advance should I contact employers for an externship?

It depends on the type of employer and employer's hiring timeline, but we recommend contacting employers at least six to eight (6 to 8) weeks before the Externship Application submission deadline. For example, while the U.S. Attorney's Office requires applications several months in advance because of security clearance issues, private sector employers usually do not require the same amount of time. Also keep in mind that you need to allot time for the interviews and employer's decision-making process.

20. I have an externship offer from an employer. Now what?

Download the Application Packet from the Law School website. Complete (typed format is preferable) and submit forms by the deadline listed on the Packet. Please note that some forms need to be completed and signed by your attorney supervisor. Please submit the following forms:

- __ *Student Application for Civil/Criminal Law Externship*
- __ *Class Attendance Confirmation*
- __ *Extern Supervisor and Extern Agreement*
- __ *Statement of Educational Goals for the Civil/Criminal Law Externship*
- __ *Petition for Repeat Civil/Criminal Law Externship* (required if you have
- __ *Request for Approval of Agency for Civil/Criminal Law Externship Program*
- (if necessary, see above)
- __ *Current resume*

21. After I secure an externship offer, by when do I have to submit an Externship Application to the Externship Programs Office?

Deadlines are listed on the cover of the Application Packet. The deadline for Fall semester externships is usually in early August; deadline for Spring semester externships is usually in early December; and the deadline for Summer term externships is usually in early April. Please check with the Externship Programs Office for specific deadlines.

22. How do I register for the externship units and corresponding class?

If your externship application is approved, you will receive an email notification from the Externship Programs Office.

Since most externship applications are submitted and/or approved after the initial class registration period closes, it is recommended that you register for classes as if you are not taking an externship. Once you have been notified by both the Externship Programs Office that your externship has been approved, you will drop your previously registered classes and add the externship units and corresponding class. This process can be done during the add/drop period.

23. Other than completing my fieldwork hours at my externship, what else do I have to do to earn credit?

Approved participants are required to attend a corresponding faculty-led Externship Course, submit evaluations and weekly timesheets, and complete other assignments. The class/externship is graded on a Credit/Credit-Unsatisfactory/No Credit basis.

24. I'm interested in participating in the Externship Programs over the summer. Can I do that?

While this is possible, please consider the following:

- Summer externships are treated like any other summer school course. You must register for the externship at the beginning of the summer and you must pay for tuition for each unit. *The unit options during the summer session are 3 and 4 units.*
- *Please see Financial Aid Office for more details about submitting your Intent to Enroll.*
- The last day to register for summer school is usually in May. See Registrar's Course Schedule for official date.
- Full-time students must still pay tuition for subsequent semesters at the School of Law. Thus, if you are a full-time student, it may not make financial sense for you to get course credit for summer work. Instead, you might consider performing the work on a volunteer basis. You will still obtain valuable experience while avoiding an increase to your overall costs/debt burden.²
- All the aforementioned rules about student eligibility, academic standing, course credit, hours of work required, pre-requisites and co-requisites still apply.

25. I volunteered for (or was paid by) the employer during the summer, and it wants me to continue working into the fall semester. Can I receive credit for the work in the fall semester?

Typically, no. If the student wishes to receive credit for work to be done with the same employer for another semester, the student must complete a *Petition for Repeat Civil/Criminal Law Externship*. See Question 16 regarding the law school's policy on fieldwork for employers where students have previously volunteered or worked.

² In a few instances, the employer will request the student continue working from a previous semester into the next one. If the student wishes to receive credit for work during the following semester, please review the policy regarding "Fieldwork for Employers Where You Have Previously Volunteered or Worked". The student and the employer must make plans to ensure that the work to be completed in the following semester will be substantially different from the work already completed.