



EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Externships or field placements allow students the opportunity to integrate the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom with the practical experience of on-the-job training. Unlike an internship, an externship allows a student to receive academic credit as they continue to learn outside of the classroom. The Externship Program at Savannah Law School (SLS) offers students a variety of field placements to enhance their legal education. Students who participate in the Externship Program gain the practical experience and confidence necessary to embark on a successful legal career.

Mission

The mission of the Savannah Law School (SLS) Externship Program is to provide students with substantial lawyering experience that is reasonably similar to the experience of a lawyer.

In order to accomplish this mission it is imperative that our students are appropriately supervised, receive feedback, and engage in guided reflection.

Goals

At the beginning of the semester, students will be asked to reflect on their decision to participate in an externship and to list the goals they hope to achieve throughout their externship. At the end of the semester, students will assess what goals were met. The student's weekly timesheets will also be used to monitor whether the goals are being met.

The desired outcomes the Externship Program are to expose the student to:

1. Professional skills instruction in the following areas:
 - a. problem solving;
 - b. legal analysis and reasoning;
 - c. legal research;
 - d. fact investigation;
 - e. interviewing and counseling;
 - f. negotiation; and
 - g. organization and management.

2. Opportunities to develop their written and oral communications skills by:
 - a. drafting pleadings, legal memoranda and correspondence;
 - b. drafting transactional documents; and
 - c. representing clients in formal and/or informal judicial and administrative proceedings.
3. Fundamental values of the legal profession by:
 - a. acquainting students with the rules governing attorney conduct in their jurisdictions;
 - b. enhancing students' abilities to recognize, address and resolve ethical issues in context; and
 - c. emphasizing the lawyer's responsibility to:
 - i. provide competent representation;
 - ii. promote fairness and justice;
 - iii. engage in an on-going process of professional growth and development.
4. Professional practice standards by encouraging students to:
 - a. invite critique by supervisors and peers;
 - b. engage in thoughtful self-assessment; and
 - c. reflect on and extrapolate from placement experiences and observations.
5. Understanding of the roles played by the various "actors" in the judicial system.
6. Psychological and sociological factors that may affect an attorney's ability to be an effective counselor and advocate for his or her clients.
7. Opportunities for examining the application of legal doctrines learned in the classroom to the resolution of "real world" legal problems.
8. Public service and the need for equal access and competent legal representation to all.

Course Description and Requirements

In addition to fulfilling the required number of hours at your placement for the appropriate number of credits, each student **MUST** contemporaneously participate in classroom sessions. The classroom sessions are primarily conducted on TWEN. Students will be given assignments and provided opportunities for guided reflection on their externship experience.

A. Credit Hours

Unlike internships, externships allow a student to receive academic credit. Students participating in Externships must take a minimum of two and no more than six credit hours. Students interested in participating in the externship program for more than one semester are encouraged to apply to a different field placement, but may complete up to two semesters at one placement site for a maximum combined total of six externship credits. Students may earn a total of 12 externship credits during their law-school career.

Fall/ Spring

Number of Credits	Total Hours Worked (Minimum)	Average Hours Worked Per Week ¹
2	94	6-7
3	141	10
4	188	13-14
5	235	16-17
6	282	20

Summer

Number of Credits	Total Hours Worked (Minimum)	Average Hours Worked Per Week ²
2	94	11-12
3	141	17-18
4	188	23-24
5	235	29-30
6	282	35-36

Students must record their hours on a weekly timesheet. Descriptions of activities must be recorded in 6 minute increments and follow the [Action verb/ Activity] with [whom - if applicable] re: [reason for activity] format. Timesheets must be submitted on TWEN by 11:59 p.m. every Friday.

¹ Hours are based on a traditional fourteen (14) week fall or spring externship.

² Hours are based on an eight (8) week summer externship.

B. Grading

Externships are graded as Pass/No Credit/Fail.³ Grades are based on the supervising attorney’s assessment of the student, including but not limited to the student’s work habits, work quality, and professionalism and the classroom component. In order to receive an overall grade of “Pass” in your externship you must receive a grade of “Pass” in the classroom component and satisfactorily complete the required number of credit hours at your field placement. You must work an average of 47 hours a semester for each credit hour (see the chart on page 5) and you must complete your hours prior to the end of the semester. Absent extreme circumstances, students who are terminated or asked to leave a placement because of unprofessional or inappropriate behavior will fail the externship and you will no longer be eligible to participate in the SLS Externship Program.

Consistent with graduation requirements a student may not receive credit for more than ten credit hours in elective courses with Pass/No Credit/Fail grading; expect that hours earned in the Externship Program shall not count toward this ten hour total.

There are a total of 400 possible points plus 30 extra credit points. Students must turn in all assignments by the end of the semester *and* earn at least 200 points to pass the classroom component.

Points	Letter Grades	Pass/No Credit/Fail Equivalent
400	A	Pass
367	A-	
333	B+	
300	B	
267	B-	
233	C+	
200	C	
167	C-	No Credit
133	D+	
100	D	
67	D-	Fail
0	F	

³ See Section 501 of the Academic Code for a definition of “pass,” “no credit,” and “fail.”

C. Withdrawal

A student may withdraw from an externship only with the prior permission of the Externship Director and the Field Placement Supervisor. Since withdrawal from an externship may also mean withdrawing as counsel in a case, the rights of the client(s) affected will be a paramount consideration. SLS Academic Code § 502(d). Students are strongly discouraged from withdrawing from their externship. Students will be given permission to withdraw only under extreme and unavoidable circumstances. Students may receive a WF which is a withdraw failing notation on his/her transcript.

Student Eligibility

Students must have completed all required first year courses, be in good academic standing and have at least a 2.00 GPA prior to enrolling in the Externship Program.⁴ After the placement interview, students must be accepted by the placement supervising attorney.

Field Placements

All field placements must be approved by the Externship Office. Placements will be approved if they meet the educational goals and objectives of the Externship Program. SLS has a non-exhaustive list of placements available to students on the Externship TWEN page.

If a student is interested in a placement not on the list, he or she must complete a Placement Approval Request form and submit it to the Externship Office. All students must review and sign the Memorandum of Understanding. If necessary, the Externship Office will contact and/or visit, the desired placement to approve it for the Externship Program.

In order to be approved, a placement must:

- Be a judicial clerkship or with a governmental agency, or a legal non-profit agency;
- Meet the educational outcomes of the Externship Program; and
- Provide direct supervision by a practicing attorney.

⁴ First year students are eligible the summer after their first year. Part-time or evening students are typically eligible after the fall semester of their second year.

Placements with private firms or attorneys are approved on a limited basis. Preference is given to private firms or attorneys that have a significant number of pro bono cases that a student can work exclusively on during the externship. Factors for approving a placement include, but are not limited to, length of time the attorney or firm has been in practice, reputation in the legal community, and primary areas of practice.

Please note that while a paralegal or secretary may give a student an assignment from an attorney, a student cannot undertake projects assigned or supervised by non-lawyers. Neither law school policy nor the ABA regulations permit students to earn academic credit for photo-copying, typing or answering the telephone. While a student may be asked to do one or all of these activities periodically, those activities cannot be a regular part of the placement experience. Students cannot earn credit for time traveling alone to and from their placement. However, time spent with the supervising attorney traveling to interviews, depositions, hearings or trainings can be counted toward their required credit hours. Supervisors are encouraged to take students with them to practice-related activities outside the office. **Students who feel that they are not given appropriate assignments should contact the Externship Director immediately.**

Paid Externships are not permitted. However, students may be able to get credit for work for which they receive funding from third party sources, including grants, scholarships, or stipends.

Placement Selection and Registration Procedures

1. Externship opportunities are announced through the Externship Office. The application procedure for each externship will vary based on each placement's requirements. If you have secured a placement **not** posted by the Externship Office please submit a Placement Approval Request form to determine the placement's eligibility.
2. If the placement offers to interview you, contact the appropriate person to schedule an interview.
3. Once an offer is made, contact the attorney or judge to accept or decline the offer.
4. Coordinate the dates and times that you will be at your field placement with your new field supervisor.

5. Follow the instructions on the Externship Checklist for information on what to do after you secured a placement and arranged your schedule. Externship Checklists are available in the Externship Office Room 214.

Student Conduct and Professionalism

Students must conduct themselves in accordance with the Savannah Law School's Code of Student Responsibility at all times during their externship. Students must be honest in reporting their work hours and conduct themselves professionally at all times. Students who fail to comply with these conduct requirements shall be in violation of the SLS Disciplinary Rules and shall face disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion. Your externship is a job and should be treated as such. During your externship you are expected to:

Be on time (everyday!)

Dress appropriately (everyday!)

Be prepared (everyday!)

Should your supervisor fail to provide you with an assignment for the day, take the initiative by asking for something to do, attending meetings, talking to other professionals, or helping with clients. The bottom line is **DO SOMETHING!** During your externship it is okay to ask questions, to say "I don't know" or to ask for help.

During your externship you can expect your on-site supervisor(s) to give instructions, feedback and suggestions. During the externship you can expect the Externship Director to provide support to you and the placement supervisor. Should a problem arise do not hesitate to contact us. Challenges might include: interpersonal conflicts, scheduling, inconsistent or no feedback, expectations too high. Ask for how to handle challenging situations in a timely manner. Do not wait until the end of the term. More often than not the challenge can be handled in a way that everyone wins.

Student Safety

Students are advised to use caution and common sense when traveling to and from their externship site and at all times at their placement. Students should not go to crime scenes or places

outside of the placement office to interview or serve clients or witnesses without a supervising attorney. Students should also avoid giving personal information to clients and witnesses. At all times students should be mindful of their surroundings and exercise caution.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Savannah Law School, in compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (45 CFR 86), and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, does not discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, disability, race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, marital status, gender identity, gender expressions, or sexual or affectional preference in Savannah Law School's educational programs, admissions policies, employment policies, or other school administered programs. Students should contact the Externship Office immediately if they feel that they are being harassed or discriminated against.

Congratulations on your decision to participate in an externship! The lessons you learn will help you bridge the gap between law school and practice. Good luck at your field placement!