



# College of Law

**Externship Manual  
2023-2024**

## THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The College of Law's externship program allows students to earn academic credit while gaining legal experience that will stand out on resumes. Students gain hands-on lawyering experience working with and as lawyers in real office settings. Students become better problem-solvers, develop interpersonal and professional skills, and establish mentoring relationships and professional networks. Externs master self-directed learning and experience the practice of law.

### A. Overview

The Externship Program allows students to work part-time or full-time for a semester at a variety of placements for credit, including private firms, corporations, government offices, public interest/legal aid offices, judicial placements and non-traditional placements. Externships combine substantial practical legal work with academic inquiry through readings, reflections, and guest lectures in a 1 credit graded externship 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 legal work in a professional setting under the direct supervision of an attorney at the host organization. Remote externships are also permitted. As set forth below, paid externships are also allowed.

There are separate externship parameters for JD Residential (JDr) and JD Interactive (JDi) students.

#### ***JDr:***

- Externships are optional for JDr students.
- JDr students cannot exceed more than 30 credits of combined externship and clinic credits in total. Credits from the externship seminar are not included in the 30 credit maximum.
- JDr students meeting the eligibility requirements for the [Orange Flex Program](#) may do an in-person externship both in the Fall and Spring of their third year in an area more than 100 miles from campus.

#### ***JDi:***

- 3 credits of externship (2 placement credits and the 1 credit externship seminar) are required as part of the JDi curriculum.

- JDi students cannot exceed more than 15 credits of combined externship and clinic credits in total. Credits from the externship seminar are not included in the 15 credit maximum.

All students select their externship credits based on their overall class schedule and in consultation with their placement supervisors. If choosing to enroll in an externship, students must register for at least 2 credits of externship placement hours and 1 credit of externship seminar. The externship placement and seminar are graded Pass/Fail.

Students may not do more than one externship per semester. However, students may repeat an externship over a subsequent semester if there is prior written approval by the Director of Externships and written justification that the second externship experience will be different or more advanced than the first. For purposes of this manual, a "repeat" externship is a subsequent externship experience in a different semester at the same placement. Similarly, a student may engage in a second or subsequent externship at a different placement if otherwise in conformance with College of Law requirements and credit restrictions.

## **B. Eligibility**

Eligibility for externships is limited to students in good standing (as defined by the Academic Handbook) and as follows:

**JDr:** 2L and 3L (Professional Responsibility is a pre/co requisite)

**JDi:** Completion of all lower-level course requirements (Professional Responsibility is a pre/co requisite)

**LL.M.:** Completion of two full academic semesters (required practical training orders must be in place)

**SJD.:** Externships are unavailable to SJD students

## **C. Externships and Non-Classroom Credits**

Academic credits earned for externships count as non-classroom credits. 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 classroom credits to graduate if they enroll in an externship.

As set forth in the Academic Handbook, of the 87 law school credits required to earn the Juris Doctor degree, no more than 23 may be non-classroom credits. All externship credits, which

includes the placement and the seminar, count as non-classroom credits. The one credit externship seminar is considered distance learning. The seminar *must* be taken concurrently with any externship, including any repeat or subsequent externship.

Any questions regarding non-classroom credits should be directed to the College of Law Registrar's Office.

## **D. Externships and Experiential Learning Requirements**

All externship credits count towards the Experiential Learning Requirements. As set forth in the Academic Handbook, 6 experiential learning credits are required for graduation and 15 experiential learning credits are required for New York State Bar Admission.

## **E. Compensation by Placement Organization**

While it is more common for externship placements to be unpaid, some externship placements may offer compensation or stipends to their externs. In August 2016, the American Bar Association revised its Standards to remove the ban on granting academic credit to a student for participation in a Field Placement Program for which the student receives compensation. Accordingly, Syracuse Law does not prohibit a student from receiving academic credit for a field placement (externship) and being compensated by the placement or other outside funding source. Students may simultaneously earn academic credit in the externship while also receiving compensation. Compensation is at the discretion of the externship placement.

## **F. Applying for Externship Credit**

The externship process has three distinct steps. This process applies to any externship, including subsequent or repeat externships.

1. A student must apply for an externship (see below, "Finding an Externship").
2. A student must enter their externship placement information into 12Twenty for Approval (see below, "12 Twenty Process").
3. A student must register for academic credit (see below, "Registration Requirements").

The preferred process is for the placement to be confirmed at the time that you register. However, because of the varying schedules of placement organizations, it is not required that the placement be confirmed at the time of registration. 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 application(s) for an externship opportunity. **If an externship is not secured, the student must drop the academic credit prior to the financial drop deadline posted by the Registrar.**

Given the time needed to find a placement and the registration deadlines, students should begin their applications early in the semester prior to the one in which they hope to extern.

Below are proposed timelines for securing placements based on registration periods:

*Fall Externship:* Placement should be confirmed before the end of the Fall registration period which opens in April (for JDr students) and in June (for JDi students) of the previous Spring semester, and ends the first week of Fall semester classes.

*Spring Externship:* Placement should be confirmed before the end of the Spring registration period which opens in November of the Fall semester and ends the first week of the Spring semester.

*Summer Externship:* Placement should be confirmed before the end of the Summer registration period which opens in April of the Spring semester and ends the first week of the Summer semester.

## **G. Finding an Externship**

Students are responsible for obtaining their externship placements. Open externship opportunities are posted on [12twenty](#).

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.

Students interested in nonprofit and public interest organizations should look at the PSJD website, which does not list internships but provides contact and other information about these organizations, <https://www.psid.org/home>.

There is a list of organizations that are currently hosting or have previously hosted Syracuse law externs available on the externship [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.

Students are encouraged to seek advice about potential placements from the Director of Externships, the Office of Career Services, or other staff/faculty members.

## ➤ **12Twenty Process: Approval of Externships**

An externship must be approved for the student to receive academic credit. The Director of Externships approves all part-time or full-time externships.

Once the student secures a placement, the student must enter the externship information into the 12Twenty system for review and approval. The student is required to sign a Student Agreement and upload it with the externship information in 12Twenty.

The Director of Externships will review and approve the placement and a confirmation of placement is sent to the externship attorney supervisor. The attorney supervisor must confirm the placement and the Director of Externships must receive a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the attorney supervisor at the placement.

Students are prohibited from receiving externship supervision from a close relative (parent, sibling, or spouse/partner). Any questions as to whether a professional contact qualifies as a “close relative” under this provision should be directed to the Director of Externships. Further, solo practice law firms (i.e., a law firm comprised of only one attorney) are not allowed as externship placements absent extenuating circumstances and prior written approval from the Director of Externships.

## ➤ **Registration Requirements**

### Law 901: Externship Seminar

The externship seminar is a one credit, faculty led component of the experience. It is a majority asynchronous course, with embedded modules and reflective prompts, and 2-4 synchronous live class sessions, some featuring guest speakers. The purpose of the seminar is to encourage goal setting and reflection on issues that arise in a practice setting. Seminars are the same for every externship placement and graded as Pass/Fail. The seminar *must* be taken concurrently with any externship, including any repeat or subsequent externship.

### Law 902: Externship Placement

Students select their externship credits based on their overall class schedule and in consultation with their placement supervisors. There is a minimum registration requirement of two (2) credits of externship placement per semester.

For enrollment of 2-6 credits, 1 credit equates to 50 hours:

- 2 credits-100 hours / 3 credits-150 hours / 4 credits-200 hours / 5 credits-250 hours / 6 credits-300 hours

For enrollment of more than 6 credits, 1 credit equates to 45 hours:

- 7 credits-315 hours / 8 credits- 360 hours / 9 credits-405 hours / 10 credits-450 hours / 11 credits-495 hours

Full time Externship JDi semester: 10 credits-450 hours

Full time Externship JDr semester: 12 credits-540 hours

\*Note that for JDr students, the Summer semester is shorter, accordingly the maximum externship placements credits for Summer semester is 7 credits.

## H. Academic and Work Requirements

### 1. Placement

Externs must work at the placement based on the hours they registered for. Externs may work additional hours, but no additional academic credit will be granted unless the student seeks to change their registration through the Registrar's Office and receives permission from the Director of Externships. Students must add any additional externship credits prior to the last day of classes for a term, and all externship hours must be completed within the semester (prior to the last day of classes for a term). Pro bono credit towards the College's Recognition Program may be available for any **extra non-credit hours**.

All externship hours must be worked from the **first day of the semester to the last day of classes**. Any hours accrued outside this timeframe do not count towards the externship placement.

Externs must record their work at the placement in detail on timesheets provided by the externship program, have them signed by their placement supervisor, and submit them weekly via Blackboard. Electronic supervisor signatures on timesheets are acceptable. If an extern misses a week of work (sick, holiday, etc.), they should still submit a time sheet indicating zero hours but this would not need a supervisor signature. Once all externship hours have been met for the semester, there is no need to submit additional weekly timesheets.

Students may count lunch time in their total hours if they work both before lunch and after lunch; and they can count other meals if they are work-related meals.

Students may include time for travel in their total hours if part of a work assignment (example: travel to court from externship placement) but may not count commuting/travel time to and from the externship placement.

## **2. Seminar**

The seminar is a one-credit, faculty-led component of the externship. The purpose of the seminar is to maximize student learning experience by reflecting on issues and topics common to practice settings. The seminar must be taken concurrently with any externship, including any repeat or subsequent externship.

The seminar has both asynchronous modules to complete as well as synchronous live sessions. Asynchronous modules will be posted weekly, with the expectation that the asynchronous modules be completed within one week of the posting date. Corresponding chapters from a course textbook will be assigned in connection with each module. Assigned readings are expected to be reviewed in advance of completing each asynchronous module. Synchronous sessions are few, and therefore, attendance is mandatory. Guest speakers will likely be a part of any live sessions, and participation is strongly encouraged.

Details will be available on the course Blackboard pages.

## **3. Credit and Grading**

Externs must complete all requirements for both the externship placement and academic components of the externship seminar.

Externship Placement: The placement is graded on a "Pass/Fail" basis. Grading is based upon the following factors: completion of hourly requirements; timely submission of recorded timesheets; and evaluation feedback from the placement supervisor. To obtain a grade of "Pass" for work at the placement, the extern must do the following: (1) complete the required number of hours necessary to satisfy the number of credits for which the extern is registered by the last day of classes; (2) submit timesheets reflecting completed, approved hours on a weekly basis; and (3) earn a recommended "pass" grade from the externship placement supervisor. Failure to fulfill all requirements may result in a "Fail" grade for the externship placement.

Externship Seminar: The seminar is graded on a "Pass/Fail" basis. Grading in the seminar is based upon completion of asynchronous modules and attendance at all synchronous meetings. To obtain a grade of "Pass" for work at the seminar, the extern must do the following: (1) complete all the asynchronous modules in a timely fashion, or within a week of posting; and (2) attend all synchronous meetings. Participation at synchronous meetings is strongly encouraged. All required components of the seminar must be completed in a timely manner to receive a "Pass" grade. Failure to attend a synchronous meeting, failure to timely appear for a synchronous meeting, leaving early from a synchronous meeting, or failing to timely



complete any asynchronous module, may result in a "Fail" grade for the externship seminar.

#### **4. 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.

#### **5. Communication and Training with Placement Supervisors**

The Director of Externships and/or Externship Faculty will be available to all placement supervisors to field any issues related to extern performance and will contact placement supervisors throughout the semester via e-mail, survey, or other means, to obtain feedback relative to placement experience and extern performance. An introductory information session will be held for all supervisors at the beginning of each semester and general supervisor training opportunities may also be provided.

#### **6. Attorney Supervisor Evaluations**

At the end of the externships, placement supervisors will be provided with an externship evaluation form, to be completed by the end of the semester. Students should ensure that their supervisor completes their evaluation.

#### **7. Student Evaluations**

At the end of their externships, students will be provided with an evaluation form to complete about their externship experience. Students are highly encouraged to complete their evaluation to provide valuable feedback on their placement experience.

### **I. SPIN Award and Pro Bono**

#### **1. SPIN Award**

Since an externship is for academic credit, it does not qualify for a Syracuse Public Interest Network (SPIN) award.

#### **2. Syracuse Law Pro Bono Recognition Program**

Hours worked in an externship or a Clinic (for credit) do not qualify for the Syracuse

Law Pro Bono Recognition Program but may qualify for the New York State Bar Admission requirement. As noted above, pro bono credit towards the College's Recognition Program may be available for any extra non-credit hours. Please review the College of Law's [Pro Bono Recognition Program webpage](#) for more information.

For further information, contact [lawexternships@syr.edu](mailto:lawexternships@syr.edu)