



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

Field Placement Program

Supervisor Handbook

<https://www.law.gwu.edu/field-placement>

fieldplacement@law.gwu.edu

202-994-5184

Dear Field Placement Supervisors,

Welcome to The George Washington University Law School's Field Placement Program. We are excited to work with you and greatly appreciate the commitment you have made to supervise a GW Law student extern.

Students participate in the Field Placement Program to enhance their legal education, obtain practical experience, and improve their legal skills in a professional setting. Accordingly, the quality of a student's experience is directly related to the quality of the supervision provided. We hope that this handbook and the [*CACE Manual for Extern Supervisors*](#) will assist you in effectively mentoring an extern, and enable you to develop a mutually beneficial working relationship.

This handbook has been developed to reflect the ABA requirements for the conduct of externship programs. It also articulates Field Placement Program requirements and highlights best practices in extern supervision.

Throughout the duration of your student's externship, the Field Placement Program faculty and staff are here to provide support, offer guidance, and work with you to address any issues or concerns you may have regarding your extern or the Program. We encourage you to reach out to us if you have any questions or if we can otherwise be of assistance.

Thank you for supervising a GW Law extern this semester. We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Keri McCoy

Assistant Dean for Field Placement & Professorial Lecturer in Law

The George Washington University Law School

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Educational Objectives

Introduction to the Field Placement Program

The Field Placement Program ("Program") is designed to expose students to the practical aspects of lawyering both inside and outside of the classroom, in accordance with American Bar Association requirements.

The Field Placement Office facilitates the award of academic credit for both externship work in the field and corequisite courses. Further, the Program vets the externship opportunities and organizations to ensure compliance with Program requirements. GW Law students who obtain qualifying externships and wish to participate in the Program must meet all of the criteria outlined in this handbook (and any applicable policy supplement) to ensure their successful completion of the Program and to remain eligible to earn academic credit for both their externship work and corequisite course.

Field Placement Program Overview

The Field Placement Program consists of two parts: the student's externship work as a part of the *Field Placement* course, and the corequisite course (required for JD students only). After a student secures an eligible externship, they must submit a joint registration form with their prospective supervisor. If approved, the student will be enrolled by the Field Placement Office in both the *Field Placement* course ***and*** the corequisite course.

In the *Field Placement* course, students earn academic credit for their externship work with judges or practicing lawyers as legal externs in government, judicial, and nonprofit organizations.

In addition to the *Field Placement* course, students concurrently enroll in a corequisite course that directly aligns with their externship. Taught by adjunct faculty, the corequisite course provides students an opportunity to reflect on their externships and connect their externship experiences with academic concepts they are learning in law school. Each corequisite course has its own syllabus and course assignments, as determined by the corequisite course professor.

All participating students are required to timely submit forms to the Field Placement Office at the midpoint and at the end of their externships. Students must meet all Field Placement Program requirements and deadlines in order to maintain their eligibility for academic credit.

Educational Objectives of the Field Placement Program

The primary educational objectives of the Program are: to provide students with the opportunity to gain experience in different substantive areas of law and legal process and reflect upon their professional development; to develop legal research, writing, interviewing, counseling and

investigative skills and engage in reflective lawyering; to deal with issues of professional responsibility in a practice setting and give thought to an attorney's ethical and moral choices and obligations; and to consider cross-cultural competency within the context of client representation and an attorney's role in creating a legal system providing equal access and eliminating bias, discrimination, and racism in the law.

In order to meet these objectives, students are directly supervised by a judge and/or licensed attorney at the field placement site who provides supervision and feedback so that students gain valuable knowledge and practical lawyering experience. JD students must also enroll in a corequisite course that directly relates to their placement, which allows them to reflect on their externship experiences.

The combination of on-site attorney supervision, instructional guidance through the law school's faculty, and regular communication between law school staff and the placement site supervisor offers students a unique opportunity to gain practical experience and enhance their overall academic experience.

Chapter 2: Externship Eligibility Criteria

Placement Sites

1. All externships must be with a government, judicial, or nonprofit organization.
 - a. *Nonprofits*: Students seeking academic credit for an externship with a nonprofit entity may be required to provide proof that the organization has obtained tax-exempt status under 26 U.S.C. §501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code.
 - a. *Legislative Externships*: Externships with legislative bodies and committees are permitted. However, there shall be a presumption against the approval of externships with individual members of legislative bodies (i.e. Members of Congress or Members of City Council). In order to overcome this presumption, the placement site supervisor must confirm (on the joint registration form) that the student's externship work will be substantive and legal in nature and unrelated to any political campaign or election. **Please see the Policy Supplement for the 2023-2024 Academic Year for more information specific parameters concerning legislative externships.**
 - b. *International Nonprofits*: Students seeking academic credit for an externship with an international nonprofit organization (summer semester only) must provide documentation demonstrating that the organization has been certified by the relevant government authority as a nonprofit entity.
2. Students are prohibited from receiving academic credit for externships with for-profit entities (e.g., law firms).
 - a. This prohibition applies even if a student's work at the for-profit entity is limited to public interest, pro bono, or low bono projects.

Externship Duration, Required Hours, and Timing

1. All externships must last at least eight (8) weeks. Students may not count weeks during which they do not work.
 - a. *Fall and Spring semesters*
 - i. Students may begin recording their externship hours on the first day of the Fall/Spring semester.
 - ii. Fall/Spring externships must begin no later than Monday of the third week of the semester. (Note: If the third Monday of the semester is a federal holiday, externships must begin by the Tuesday of the third week). Fall/Spring externships that do not meet these requirements are not eligible for credit.
 - b. *Summer semester*
 - i. Students may begin recording their externship hours on the Monday immediately following the Spring exam period.
 - ii. Summer externships must begin no later than the first Monday after Memorial Day and may not end before the first Friday in July (regardless of start date). Summer externships that do not meet these requirements are not credit-eligible.
2. Students may not record externship hours after the final submission deadline, absent an extension from the Program.
3. Students must keep track of their hours using a timesheet. See the “Timesheet” in Chapter 6 below for more details.

Externship Work

1. Students must be engaged in substantive legal, legislative, or law-related policy work. Credit will not be awarded for an externship that does not provide a meaningful legal educational experience (i.e., one consisting of administrative work or non-substantive assignments).

Supervision

1. Students must be directly supervised by a licensed attorney.
 - a. A student's direct supervisor must have at least three years of experience practicing law and demonstrated experience supervising junior attorneys and/or legal interns. (Note: This provision does not apply to judicial externships at which the judge provides ultimate oversight of the externship, but a law clerk may serve as the day-to-day supervisor.)
 - b. Students can add additional supervisors throughout the semester by emailing a Placement Supervisor Contact Update Request form to fieldplacement@law.gwu.edu. Please note, your primary supervisor will be the only one noted on the Experiential Learning Module on CORE.
 - c. Students must ensure that each of their Placement Supervisors is on record with the Field Placement Program.
 - i. Field Placement Program forms signed by a placement supervisor that is not on record will not be accepted.

2. Students may not work with or be supervised by a family member (immediate or extended). If students secure an externship with an organization where a family member (immediate or extended) is employed, they must advise the Field Placement Program and disclose the name(s) and title(s) of the family member or members. The Field Placement Program will determine if such an externship is eligible on a case-by-case basis.
3. A student's externship supervisor may not also serve as the student's corequisite course professor.

Compensation

1. Students may receive compensation for their externship work *pursuant to* the pilot program that permits paid externships on a limited basis for the 2023-2024 academic year. The pilot program as outlined below and as detailed in the 2023-2024 Field Placement Program Policy Supplement provides that Student Externs may earn academic credit for their paid externship work with government organizations, judicial organizations, and nonprofit organizations that have obtained tax-exempt status under 26 U.S.C. §501(c)(3). **Please see the Policy Supplement for the 2023-2024 Academic Year for more specific parameters of the applicable pilot program regarding paid externships.**
2. Students may receive stipends or reimbursement of costs (i.e., reasonable metro, parking, or meal expenses). However, students must obtain advanced written approval from the Program before they accept any form of compensation (even negligible amounts).
3. Students may not receive academic credit for any externship work with an organization from which they have previously received compensation, with the exception of paid externships completed during their law school matriculation.
 - a. Students may not receive academic credit for an externship with their current employer, even if the externship is in a different office or division within the same agency or organization.
4. Students are permitted to receive any applicable subsidies, scholarships, and funding.

Externship Formats

The Field Placement Program permits externships that are in person, remote, or hybrid (a combination of in person and remote) as set forth below.

1. **In-Person Externships:** Student Externs may earn academic credit by participating in person at a placement site if the externship organization permits Student Externs to complete their work in the office.
 - a. During the Fall and Spring semesters, students with externships in the in-person format must be located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
 - b. During the Summer semester only: Students may earn academic credit for in-person externships outside of the D.C. metropolitan area, including international externships (see below for more information), when concurrently enrolled in a distance section of a corequisite course.

2. Remote Externships: Student Externs may earn academic credit by participating in a remote externship.

- a. During the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters, students may participate in externships in the remote format.
- b. Supervision: Remote externship supervisors are expected to provide the same amount of oversight, communication, direction, and feedback to their Student Extern as they would in an in-person capacity.
- c. **Meeting Requirement: Student Externs must speak to their Placement Supervisor via videoconference or phone call at least once per week throughout the duration of a fully-remote externship. The software (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.) is at the discretion of the Student Extern and the Placement Supervisor, but a weekly meeting is required in order for the Student Extern to earn academic credit for participating in a remote placement. The student's Placement Organization/Placement Supervisor must be able to meet this requirement in order for the student to remain eligible to receive academic credit for their externship work.**
- d. Students must be able to attend their corequisite course in person even if their externship is fully remote.

3. Hybrid Externships: Student Externs may earn academic credit by participating in an externship that is a combination of the two options described above.

- a. During the Fall and Spring semesters, students with externships in the hybrid format must be located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
- b. **Meeting Requirement: Student Externs must speak to their Placement Supervisor via videoconference or phone call at least once per week throughout the duration of the externship in any weeks during which the weeks that the Student Extern is fully remote. The software (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.) is at the discretion of the Student Extern and the Placement Supervisor, but a weekly meeting is required in order for the Student Extern to earn academic credit for participating in a remote placement. The student's Placement Organization/Placement Supervisor must be able to meet this requirement in order for the student to be eligible to receive academic credit for their externship work.**
- c. If the Placement Organization chooses to change the externship format during the course of the semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other circumstances, the Placement Supervisor must be able to continue supervising the Student Extern in the alternate format selected by the placement. If the Placement Supervisor/Placement Organization is unable to meet this requirement, the Student Extern will not be eligible to receive academic credit for their externship.
- d. Students must be able to attend their corequisite course in person even if their externship is in a hybrid format.

International Externships

1. Students may receive academic credit for qualifying international externships during the summer semester only, provided that the international externship meets the Field Placement eligibility criteria described in Chapter 2 above.
 - a. Students must successfully complete two full academic years of law school prior to the summer during which they plan to enroll in order to be eligible to receive academic credit for international externships.
 - b. Students must first receive written approval from [The George Washington University Office of International Programs](#).
 - c. After the international externship has been approved by the Office of International Programs, the Field Placement Program vets the international externship opportunity/organization to ensure it meets all Field Placement standards and aligns with the curriculum of available corequisite course offerings. Students must receive approval in writing (via email) from the Assistant Dean for Field Placement to be eligible to receive academic credit for their international externship.
 - i. The approval process for international externships may take 3-6 months or longer, so students are strongly encouraged to pursue approval as early as possible.
 - ii. International externships are approved on a limited basis.

Chapter 3: Student Eligibility

JD Students

1. Full-time JD students may participate in the Program after they have successfully completed the law school's full-time first-year curriculum.
2. Part-time JD students who have not completed the entire full-time first-year curriculum may be eligible to participate in the Program if they can demonstrate that their externship will provide sufficient contemporaneous training to ensure the quality of the student educational experience in the Program.
3. JD students may earn one (1) to four (4) *Field Placement* credits per semester and a total of eight (8) *Field Placement* credits toward their JD degree.

LLM and MSL Students

1. LLM and MSL students are eligible to participate in the Program with the permission of their program directors.
2. LLM and MSL students may earn one (1) or two (2) *Field Placement* credits per semester and a total of four (4) *Field Placement* credits toward their degree.

Chapter 4: COVID-19 Safety Notice for In-Person and Hybrid Externships

Student Externs participating in an in-person or hybrid (combination of in-person and remote) externship may be exposed to certain dangers and risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic that cannot be eliminated regardless of the care taken to avoid such risks. By conducting any part of their externship on-site at any time, Student Externs have an increased risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

While externing at the placement, Student Externs must comply with all applicable COVID-19 safety guidelines and directives issued by relevant federal and local government health agencies, including but not limited to social distancing and face covering requirements. Please click [here](#) for current CDC guidance. If the Student Extern is not comfortable performing work on-site due to these potential health risks, they remain eligible to receive academic credit for a “remote” externship.

If the Student Extern plans to conduct any part of their externship on-site at any time while they are enrolled in the Field Placement Program, they must complete the Program’s COVID-19 Assumption of Risk, Release, and Waiver of Liability Agreement on the Experiential Learning Module of CORE.

Chapter 5: Field Placement Program Registration

Program Registration

The Program registration form is available on the Experiential Learning Module of CORE and must be completed jointly by the Student and Supervisor. For instructions on how to register, please see the [Field Placement Registration Instructions](#).

1. Program registration forms are available approximately 8 weeks in advance of each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer).
2. After a student secures an eligible externship, they must submit a joint registration form with their prospective supervisor. If approved, the student will be enrolled by the Field Placement Office in both the *Field Placement* course (for their externship work) ***and*** the corequisite course.
 - a. Forms submitted after the Program’s priority registration deadline are considered on a case-by-case basis as space allows.
 - b. The Program cannot accept registration forms from JD students after the Add/Drop period in any given semester.

3. Students are not permitted to count externship hours until they are registered by the Program in the *Field Placement* course and only after the start date of each semester outlined in the Program Calendar available on the Field Placement page of MyLaw.

Chapter 6: Academic Requirements

All students admitted into the Field Placement Program will be concurrently enrolled in two courses. The first course is for the student's externship/working credits. Students will be awarded credit for this course upon successful completion of their externship and after all Field Placement Program requirements have been met. Students participating in the Field Placement Program will also be concurrently enrolled in a corequisite course that relates directly to the student's externship.

The *Field Placement* Course Component

Students can enroll in GW Law School's *Field Placement* course to earn academic credit for qualifying externships that meet Field Placement requirements. In order to be awarded credit for *Field Placement*, students and supervisors must submit the following documents over the course of the semester:

Mid-Semester Evaluations

- 1) Mid-Semester Evaluation of the Externship, Supervisor, and Corequisite Course - to be completed by the Student Extern
- 2) Mid-Semester Evaluation of the Student Extern - to be completed by the Placement Supervisor

Final Submission Materials

- 1) Final Evaluation of the Externship, Supervisor, and Corequisite Course - to be completed by the Student Extern
- 2) Final Evaluation of the Student Extern - to be completed by the Placement Supervisor
- 3) Timesheet - to be completed by the Student Extern and signed by the Placement Supervisor
- 4) Work Product Log - to be completed by the Student Extern and signed by the Placement Supervisor

All forms must be submitted to the Program by the appropriate deadlines (absent an extension from the Program), in order for the student to receive academic credit.

Descriptions of Documents

Mid-Semester Evaluation of the Student Extern

The *Mid-Semester Evaluation of the Student Extern* provides supervisors with an opportunity to evaluate the student's performance at the (approximate) midpoint of the externship. Students and supervisors are strongly encouraged to meet in-person prior to the submission of this form to discuss any questions, concerns, or issues that may have arisen during the first half of the student's externship.

Mid-Semester Evaluation of the Externship, Supervisor, and Corequisite Course

The *Mid-Semester Evaluation of the Externship, Supervisor, and Corequisite Course* provides students with an opportunity to evaluate their performance and provide details about their externship at the (approximate) midpoint of the externship. Students and supervisors are strongly encouraged to meet in-person prior to the submission of this form to discuss any questions, concerns, or issues that may have arisen during the first half of the student's externship.

Final Evaluation of the Externship, Supervisor, and Corequisite Course

The *Final Evaluation of the Externship, Supervisor, and Corequisite Course* provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their externship experience, field placement courses, acquired skills, and "lessons learned" at the conclusion of their externship.

Final Evaluation of the Student Extern

The *Final Evaluation of the Student Extern* provides externship supervisors the opportunity to evaluate their student's performance, legal research and writing skills, and professionalism at the conclusion of their externship/end of the semester.

Timesheet

Students are required to track their externship hours using a timesheet. The timesheet must contain:

1. The location where the externship work was conducted;
2. All dates worked at the externship;
3. The exact number of hours worked on those dates, documented in quarter-hour increments;
4. The supervisor's signature.

Hours Requirement

- All externships must last at least eight (8) weeks long. Students may not count weeks during which they do not work.
- 60 hours = 1 *Field Placement* credit

Qualifying externship hours

- Students may only count hours that are externship-related. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - An orientation organized by the externship organization;
 - Meetings with field placement supervisor or other attorneys at the placement;
 - Time spent completing research and writing for externship-related assignment;
 - Networking events, attendance at court proceedings, etc.
 - Supervisors who have additional questions about qualifying hours may contact fieldplacement@law.gwu.edu.

Work Product Log

- Students must submit a “Work Product Log” at the end of the semester, which provides “high-level” descriptions of the written work product completed. Students should NOT submit the actual work product to the Program or identify clients by name so as to avoid any confidentiality issues. Work Product Logs must be signed by the placement supervisor.

The Corequisite Course Component

1. **Every** JD student must enroll concurrently in a corequisite course that relates to their externship when they participate in the Program. The corequisite courses allow students to reflect on their externship experiences and connect the course content with the practical lawyering skills they are gaining at their respective externship organizations.
2. A student’s corequisite course professor may not serve as the student’s externship supervisor.
3. LLM and MSL students are exempt from the corequisite course requirement.

Termination of Externship

Students must establish their work schedules, including start date and end date, in consultation with their placement supervisors. Students are strictly prohibited from terminating their externships prior to the established end date without the express written approval of the placement supervisor and the Assistant Dean for Field Placement.

Chapter 7: Student Expectations

Time Commitment

- Students are expected to establish a reasonable and realistic work schedule that aligns with the [academic calendar](#) and accounts for holidays and other dates which conflict with their work schedules. Students are expected to proactively communicate with their supervisors if there are any conflicts and/or changes to their work schedules.
- Students are expected to work with their externship supervisors to establish reasonable start and end dates for their externship. Students are strictly prohibited from terminating their externships prior to the established end date without the express written approval of the externship supervisor and the Assistant Dean for Field Placement.

Professionalism

- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times during their externships.
- All students must familiarize themselves with the Rules of Professional Conduct in the jurisdiction where they are externing. In particular, students need to be aware that there are rules governing the unauthorized practice of law; competence and diligence; truthfulness; confidentiality (including attorney-client and work-product privilege); and conflicts of interest.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Field Placement corequisite courses require students to complete reflective assignments about their externship experiences. Supervisors and students should therefore review and discuss any confidentiality and privacy rules/agreements that exist to mitigate the risk of compromising sensitive information.
- Students are expected to discuss with their supervisors any issues or concerns regarding ethical issues/duties.

Work assignments and workload

- Students should always ask questions and seek clarification on work assignments.
- Students should seek and be receptive to constructive feedback on work assignments and skills (such as writing or presentation skills).
- Students should address any concerns they have about workload with their supervisors.

- Students must successfully complete the externship requirements established by their externship supervisors to receive *Field Placement* credit.
- Students are expected to keep their externship supervisors abreast of Field Placement Program requirements and monitor their progress to ensure they are meeting those requirements.

Professional Development

- Students are strongly encouraged to proactively seek work assignments or other projects at the externship that further their educational and career goals.
- Students are encouraged to seek opportunities for career/professional development.
- Students are encouraged to network as much as possible.

Questions or Concerns?

If issues develop related to a student's work habits, attendance or otherwise, please contact the Program right away. The Program's email is fieldplacement@law.gwu.edu. You can find complete Program contact information in Chapter 9 of this handbook.

Chapter 8: Advertising Externship and Job Opportunities

Organizations can post externship opportunities and job vacancies for students and alumni directly through GW Law School's career database (CORE). Organizations can also email job descriptions for open positions to postjobs@law.gwu.edu to advertise opportunities for current GW Law students and alumni. Please visit the [Career Center's web page](#) for additional information.

Chapter 9: Field Placement Program Contact Information

Contact Information

- Office: Lisner 204
- Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 5:00pm
- Email: fieldplacement@law.gwu.edu
- Phone: 202-994-5184
- Website: <https://www.law.gwu.edu/field-placement>

Field Placement Program: Social Media

- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/gw-law-field-placement-program>
- Instagram: @gwlawfieldplacement
- Twitter: @GWLAWFPP
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/gwlawfieldplacement>