

2012 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE EXTERNSHIP

Law 733

SPRING 2012

APPLICATION PACKET

The University of Alabama School of Law (Law School) is committed to offering its students the highest quality of legal education. In fulfillment of that goal, the Law School recognizes the value of employing a variety of methodologies and experiences. One such experience is the placement of students in practical legal settings outside of the Law School.

Externships assist the Law School in meeting its overall educational objective by permitting students to engage in the practical application of the legal knowledge gained in the classroom and practical skills learned in the classroom and in clinical settings. Externships provide students with an environment in which they can test the theories which they have learned in Law School and obtain verification of the practical application of the body of law and legal skills taught by the Law School. The supervision by field instructors and by Law School faculty additionally increase students' level of knowledge in both substantive law and in development of legal skills. Externships further enhance students' learning opportunities by offering "real life" problems, including professional responsibility issues, that are difficult to simulate or replicate through traditional classroom experiences.

Educational Objectives: The Federal Legislative Externship is intended to fulfill the educational objectives of the Law School in one or more of the following ways.

1. Enhancement of legal research, writing and advocacy skills. Students are expected to engage in legal and policy research and writing on complex issues involving constitutional, statutory, and procedural law. Students may have the opportunity to prepare position papers, develop and draft legislation, and prepare legal and policy analyses of pending legislation.
2. Enhancement of knowledge of substantive and procedural law. Students learn substantive law by participating in the briefing process for Members and Senators, preparing for hearings, drafting questions for hearing witnesses, drafting policy statements and floor speeches, interacting with outside legal and policy experts, reviewing scholarly articles to identify potential witnesses for hearings or attending committee "markup" meetings.
3. Appreciation of professional responsibilities. Students are exposed to practical ethical and professional responsibility issues, including relevant ethics rules relevant to Senators, Members and Staff. The type, variety, and complexity of these issues,

coupled with the students' own involvement in the legislative process, aids students in obtaining greater comprehension of and respect for these standards.

4. Knowledge of the federal legislative system. Students will gain valuable knowledge and insight into the procedures of various stages of the federal legislative branches.
5. Acquisition of practical knowledge. Students also benefit from learning the customs, courtesies, and governing law that exist in the various branches of government but which generally do not lend themselves to teaching through most law school courses.

Students who participate in the Federal Legislative Externship are also required to enroll in and complete the course in Political and Legislative Writing offered in Washington, DC, during the Spring 2012 semester.

CONTENTS

1. Course Requirements.
2. Information Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions
3. Schedule for Federal Legislative Externship Application Process.

Because of Law School limitations on the amount of course credit allowable for externships, students who have already received credit for other externships will be ineligible to receive graduation credit for those externships if they participate in a federal legislative externship. Please review the "Information Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions" for more information concerning matters you should consider before applying for this externship.

1. **Federal Legislative Externship Course Requirements: Below is the current syllabus for the Spring 2012 Federal Legislative Externship.**

**FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE EXTERNSHIP --
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SCHOOL OF LAW
LAW 733
(10 Credit P/D/F Placement)**

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1. Enhancement of legal research, writing and advocacy skills. Students are expected to engage in legal and policy research and writing on complex issues involving constitutional, statutory, and procedural law. Students may have the opportunity to prepare position papers, develop and draft legislation, and prepare legal and policy analyses of pending legislation.
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II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive credit for the externship, students shall

1. Work in the appropriate placement site full-time (approximately 40 hours/week) for the fourteen-week externship session and receive a favorable evaluation at the end of the placement from the field supervisor.
2. Attend three two-hour class sessions.
3. Complete four, 4-5 page Reflective Essays during the placement.
4. Complete a 10-12 page Externship Paper, course evaluations, and a “thank you letter.”
5. Be available by phone or in person for any discussions with the field director about the placement and facilitate any requested discussions between field director and your field placement supervisor.
6. Be present during any visit to the placement site by the field director.
7. This course is graded on the High Pass/Pass/D/Fail scale. Students must comply in full with all course requirements to receive a "Pass" grade. Up to one-third of students in the course may receive a "High Pass" grade for outstanding performance on work in the assigned externship placement and on written assignments.

III. GUIDELINES FOR REFLECTIVE ESSAYS:

- Each Reflective Essay should be 4-5, double-spaced pages (1400-1750 words).
- Each Reflective Essay should be in three parts:

Part I should briefly describe what the extern has been working on and participating in during the externship (or since the last reflective essay). This Part should be 1 double-spaced page.

Part II will be the bulk of the essay and should be 2-3 double-spaced pages. A list of topics (“Ideas for Reflective Essays”) will be provided by the Director of the Externship Program prior to the due date for the first essay. Each student should choose one topic from the list or can propose an alternative topic to the Directors.

Part III should identify any potential problem(s) with the placement (if any) and should be 1 page.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNSHIP PAPER:

- The Externship Paper should be 12-14, double-spaced pages (4200-4900 words).

- The Externship Paper should be in three parts:

Part I will be the bulk of the Externship Paper. This Part should be at least 6-8 pages and should address two to three legal or ethical issues. Each student should choose the topic (s) from matters observed or worked on during the externship (omitting names or other references that might breach confidentiality if the matter was not public record). In conducting and writing this portion of the paper, be sure not to “cut and paste” work done during the externship or in connection with other courses.

This Part should contain the extern’s thoughts about some aspect of legislative procedures, substantive policy, or professional conduct.

Part II of the paper should be 2-4 pages. It should describe what the externship experience was like. Include the good and bad experiences (if there are any bad). Be sure to include the names of people who helped during the placement and information about their assistance. This Part should also offer any suggestions for improving the externship program.

Part III should be 2-4 pages and should offer advice for future externs going to the same placement site. Include big and small suggestions.

V. TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR¹

December *: Externship Class: Orientation, Professional Responsibility (Tuscaloosa)

Sunday January 8: Welcome dinner

Monday, January 9: Report for work at placement; First placement visits with Director.

Sunday January 23: Externship Class: Serving Effectively and Career Advice

Monday, January 30: First Reflective Essay due

Monday, February 20: Second Reflective Essay due

Sunday March 4: Externship Class: Discuss Reflective Essays

Monday, March 12: Third Reflective Essay due

Monday, April 2: Fourth Reflective Essay due

Friday, April 20: Last day of placement.

Friday, May 4: Final paper, Thank you letter, Course evaluations due

¹ Please note that this calendar does not include scheduled meetings and obligations for the Political and Legislative Writing class offered by Profs. House and Rogers.

2. Information Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions.

In Spring 2012, up to six University of Alabama law students will have the opportunity to earn ten hours of externship credit working in the U.S. Congress. As of this date, the Law School has secured commitments for externships in the respective offices of Reps. Bobby Adherholt and Terri Sewell and on the staffs of the House Financial Services Committee (Rep. Spencer Bachus), the Senate Banking Committee (Sen. Richard Shelby) and the Senate Judiciary Committee (Sen. Jeff Sessions).

In addition, participants in the externships will take a specially-designed course in the legislative process from two distinguished UA Law adjunct faculty: Mike House, director of the legislative practice at Hogan Lovells, and Ed Rogers, principal of BGR Group, will co-teach a two-hour course that will meet weekly in the Washington DC area during the Spring semester. This course will carry two hours of regular academic credit.

Certificate in Governmental Affairs

The Law School is proud to announce the establishment of a Certificate in Governmental Affairs. The certificate is intended to enable students to focus their efforts to obtain specialized knowledge and develop skills that will facilitate their success in government service and to help demonstrate to prospective employers the students' interest in, and commitment to, this important area of our nation's public life. Both the externship and the Legislation course will count towards the requirements of the Certificate.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How long does the externship last?

The externships begin on Monday, January 9, and end on Friday, April 20. In addition, externs are required to attend a two-hour session to be held at the Law School in December. The final paper is due May 4, 2012.

Q: Where will I live while I am in Washington?

Students must locate their own housing for the externship. Students will need accommodations in the Washington area during the months of January through April 2012. Students may complete the remaining requirements of the externship (final paper, evaluations, etc.) from the location of their choice.

Q: Is financial assistance available?

In addition to Financial Aid, up to three (3) \$4000 housing stipends will be awarded based on need.

Q: Can I participate in the Washington externship if I have already received externship credit?

Yes. However, Law School policy provides that no more than seven (7) hours of externship credit may be counted toward graduation, except that participants in the Washington program may count up to ten (10) hours of externship credit toward graduation. Thus, **if you have already received externship credit, that credit will NOT count toward your graduation requirements if you participate in the Washington externship.**

Q: How much credit will I get?

Students who successfully complete the externship will receive ten (10) hours of Pass/D/Fail credit. Students who successfully complete the associated Legislation course will receive two (2) hours of regular academic credit. Students who participate in the externship are required also to enroll in the associated legislation course. Thus, students who complete both classes will receive 12 hours of academic credit for the semester.

As noted above, students who have already received externship credit will not be able to count the prior externship credit toward graduation if they participate in the program. In addition, students should note that they may count a maximum of six (6) hours of non-Law School coursework toward degree requirements and a maximum of approximately eighteen (18) hours of coursework that is not traditional law school coursework. This latter category includes externships, law review, moot court, independent study and courses outside the Law School for which credit is granted. Thus, for example, a student who takes the 10-hour Washington externship and is receiving course credit for law review or moot court activities may not be able to take courses outside the Law School for credit toward graduation. A high number of pass/fail credits may also affect students' eligibility for certain academic honors such as Order of the Coif.

Q: When will I find out whether I have been selected for an externship?

Applications are due October 14. The Committee reviewing the applications will make every effort to inform students of its decision by November 1. However, the Committee anticipates that some of the participating Congressional offices may play a role in decision making concerning externship placements. It is thus possible that some students may not learn of the Committee's decision until after November 1. Students may also be asked to interview with either the Committee, or a representative of a Congressional office, or both.

Q: Registration for Spring 2012 classes begins October 24. What will I do about Spring classes if I am not selected for an externship?

Students applying for an externship should register for Spring classes as though they were planning to be in residence in Tuscaloosa for the Spring semester. The students will be added into the Externship and associated Legislation course in the event their application is accepted.

Q: If I am accepted for an externship, am I obligated to participate in the program?

Yes. By applying for an externship, a student commits that if he or she is accepted, she will participate in the program during the Spring 2012 semester.

Q: If I am not accepted for a Washington externship, is it still possible to earn a Certificate in Governmental Affairs?

Yes. You may be able to satisfy the Certificate's externship requirement by either being selected and participating in the Washington externship program during the Spring 2013 semester or by participating in a State Government externship during the summer. If you elect the latter option, you will need to take a Legislation course offered at the Law School, in addition to completing the other coursework required to earn the Certificate.

3. Application Process.

You may apply online for the Federal Legislative Externship. Applications are due not later than 5:00pm on October 14, 2011. The Selection Committee will attempt to inform candidates whether or not their application has been accepted on or before November 1, 2012. Applicants may be asked to schedule an interview with the Selection Committee and/or with Congressional staff members involved with the externship. It is possible that participation by Congressional staff may delay the selection process past the anticipated November 1 decision date.

Applicants agree that they will accept an externship if selected.²

² Applicants who are unable to participate in the externship absent receipt of a housing stipend may so indicate on the application form.