

## **Macon Externship Program Frequently Asked Questions**

**(The information below applies to the regular Macon Externship Program for 2L and 3L students. There is a separate FAQ for the expanded 3L Semester-in-Practice Program)**

### **What is Externship? – Work hours and credit-hour information on Page 2**

Externship is designed to offer students practical work experience while providing faculty supervision and guided reflection. Students work in a law office or similar setting (what we call “fieldwork”) and attend regular class sessions. Class for Externship I meets for two hours every week. The classroom seminar includes assigned readings, weekly submission of reflective journals, and class discussion, all of which are designed to help you learn from your fieldwork experience. Students who have previously taken Externship I register for Externship II. The requirements for Externship II are similar, except that the class sessions meet every other week for 1 hour instead of weekly.

### **What work qualifies for Externship? – Work hours and credit-hour information on Page 2**

- There are a wide variety of placements available. The work must be for a governmental or nonprofit employer, for an in-house corporate legal department, or for a private law firm *if* your work is limited to that firm’s governmental or non-profit clients (for example, working with a private law firm on its representation of a school board, its pro bono clients, or court-appointed criminal cases). Our rules, consistent with most law schools, do not allow us to give class credit if you work for paying clients for private law firms. **Students cannot receive wages or a salary from a for-credit externship placement.**

### **How do I secure an externship placement?**

You can seek out your own placement that meets the eligibility requirements and immediately email those details to **Tre Dekle at [dekle\\_g@law.mercer.edu](mailto:dekle_g@law.mercer.edu)**. Or begin working early with Tre Dekle in the Career Services Office. You may not be registered for the Externship course until you secure a field placement. Also, you can search BearBoard (“OCI and Job Listings”) for active and open Externship applications/positions (“Externship Eligible”).

**NOTE: You may not be registered for the Externship course until you secure a field placement.**

Most supervisors require an interview with students before approving a placement and our goal is for all students to have lined up their placement for the fall semester by registration in April and for the spring semester by registration in November. \*These timelines are flexible.

**After securing a placement** you must contact Tre Dekle in the Career Service’s Office – [dekle\\_g@law.mercer.edu](mailto:dekle_g@law.mercer.edu) Let him know where you plan to extern and he’ll email you further instructions.

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Placements will require at a minimum a resume, and many also require a cover letter and writing sample. Also, note that most supervisors require an interview with students before approving a placement.

**How much do I work at my placement site and what does that mean for the rest of my schedule?**

You can take Externship I for either 3 or 4 hours credit. To receive 3 hours of credit, you must complete fieldwork of at least 84 hours (about 6 hours per week); for 4 hours, you must work at least 126 hours (about 9 hours per week). Students who have already taken Externship I register instead for Externship II. You can take Externship II for either 2 or 3 credits; for 3 credits, you must work a total of 140 fieldwork hours, and for 2 credits you work 100 fieldwork hours.

You will arrange a regular work schedule with your field supervisor, and your fieldwork should be spread relatively evenly throughout the semester. Most students and supervisors find that it works best to spread your fieldwork over two to three days a week so that you are working in blocks of time. Therefore, we recommend that you arrange the rest of your schedule so that you have morning or afternoon blocks of time at least two days a week. You may register for Externship I and/or II even if you have taken Summer Externship.

**Is Externship valuable only for students who want to work in public service fields?**

No. The Externship course allows you to work with lawyers and to experience what it is like to work as a lawyer. You will build skills that are transferable to all kinds of legal work. Many students who have taken the course in the past have gone into practice areas quite different from the offices in which they were placed. Yet, they consistently report that the placement was valuable for them. Some students use the experience to try out fields they might be interested in for their careers; others use it to experience something different from what they will be doing after they graduate.

**Why should I take the Externship course?**

- It is a great learning experience, letting you apply the knowledge you've learned in law school to actual practice settings.
- It gives you practice at being a professional within a support structure of both a fieldwork supervisor and a faculty member.
- It is a great way to try out a field that you may or may not want to work in later. You learn about your own placement and also about those of your classmates, through classroom discussion.
- It creates networking opportunities. Some students have secured temporary or permanent jobs at either their placement sites or through contacts developed during the placement.
- It enhances your resume, giving you a list of specific skills and experiences that you have gained through the fieldwork.
- It also demonstrates initiative and that you are eager to supplement your classroom learning with legal work. Prospective employers are impressed to see Externship on your resume

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Our regular placements are in the Central Georgia area; however, we will approve placements that are not local as long as you can make it work for your schedule and the employer fits our guidelines.

If you are otherwise eligible and the fieldwork supervisor agrees, you may be certified under Georgia's Student Practice Act for your externship work, meaning that you can appear in court.

Examples of past placements include (\*not a complete list): District Attorney Offices in Middle Georgia (Macon, Houston, and Ocmulgee Judicial Circuits); Public Defender Offices - Middle Georgia; Georgia Legal Services Program; U.S. Attorney's Office - Middle District of Georgia; Federal Defender Program - Middle District of Georgia; Court Appointed Special Advocates; Crisis Line and Safe House; Macon-Bibb County Attorney; Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice; City Attorney for the City of Warner Robins; Georgia Department of Corrections Legal Department; Robins Air Force Base JAG Office; Georgia Office of the Capital Defender. If you are interested in working in a judge's chambers for credit, you should first consider **Judicial Field Placement (JFP)** and email **Prof. Longan, longan\_p@law.mercer.edu**. However, working with a judge does qualify for Externship should JFP not be an option.

**What do I do if I want more information?**

Cut/Paste the address to the Externship webpage into browser:

<https://law.mercer.edu/academics/experientialeducation/externships.cfm>

or contact Professor Tim Floyd, at [floyd\\_tw@law.mercer.edu](mailto:floyd_tw@law.mercer.edu) or Tre Dekle, at [dekle\\_g@law.mercer.edu](mailto:dekle_g@law.mercer.edu) who can answer your questions and/or suggest students you can talk with who have completed the course.