

## **Externship Approval Policy for Paid Placements at a Former/Existing Employer**

To qualify for externship credit, the field placement experience must be *a substantively new learning experience* for the student. A student cannot gain experiential learning credit for performing a job they already have done or are doing. Externships support a student's professional identity formation by diversifying a student's legal experiences, professional competencies, and networks. For many students, externing at an existing employer could be a wasted opportunity to explore another professional path or expand their professional networks.

However, in some cases, the field placement's work is sufficiently diverse to allow a student to engage in a new learning experience outside of their established daily responsibilities. When this is possible, the student can gain new lawyering and professionalism competencies in a field where they already have expertise and are likely to continue working. With a firm footing in the institution's culture, goals and mission, a student doing an externship within their employer organization may be able to take on more complex work than other students. The employer also benefits by creating an opportunity to invest time in teaching their own employee.

If the student seeks to extern for a past or current employer or placement, the following requirements shall apply:

1. Prior to submitting the placement for approval, the student must meet with the Director of Externships for a preapproval meeting at least 4 weeks before the start of the semester in which they want to extern. The student should be prepared to discuss the proposed externship and explain why this placement would benefit formation of their legal professional identity and is tailored to their personal career plan. The Director of Externships may require that the student also meet with a career advisor in the LCDO to develop a career placement strategy.
2. Placements must be submitted for approval on UB Law Connect at least 3 weeks before the first day of classes. Where there is a preexisting relationship with the field placement site or supervisor, the student, in conjunction with their field placement supervisor, must create an Externship Educational Plan (see attached) for the proposed externship.

This plan must include:

- a. Detailed information about the student's prior work experience, including:
  - i. The dates of prior/current work
  - ii. Student's position title(s)

- iii. Division, department or practice group
  - iv. Names of current/prior supervisor(s)
  - v. Specific responsibilities and tasks performed
  - vi. Whether the work was paid or unpaid
- b. A detailed proposal for what kinds of tasks, responsibilities, observational and lawyering experiences the student will undertake during their externship, **and** an explanation of how these experiences will be distinct from the student's current or former position.

Possible ways to meet this standard may include:

- i. Working in a different physical location/office, practice area/division/unit or with different supervisors
- ii. Engaging in more sophisticated lawyering tasks and responsibilities that that are outside the student's core job responsibilities

Examples of appropriate externships for a current employer:

- *Government worker externing with the Office of General Counsel at their agency.*
- *Employee at a corporation externing with the company's General Counsel's office.*
- *A school teacher externing for the school district's General Counsel's office.*
- *Law clerk in the civil litigation division of a mid-size law firm externing in the criminal division or real estate practice.*
- *Law clerk at a State's Attorney's Office working in another division or court house*

- c. A professional development statement by the student setting forth why they believe this is the most suitable experiential learning option for them. The student should explain how this externship fits within their overall career goals, will diversify necessary legal skills and competencies and will afford them the opportunity to develop necessary professional skills and networks. This statement is required and should be at least 200 words.
3. If the student receives approval to complete an externship at a current employer, only hours spent achieving the goals of the externship can be counted towards the externship.
- a. Students must provide detailed time logs of the work spent on their externship.
  - b. Time spent carrying out other preexisting responsibilities would be excluded from the student's field placement hours.
  - c. Student non-compliance with timekeeping requirements is subject to the Honor Code.

4. Applications for approval to extern for a former/current employer will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Externships.
  - a. There is a presumption that a student may not extern for credit at an office where a close relative (by blood, adoption, or marriage) works.
  - b. The office's structure and practice must be conducive to a new learning experience. There is a presumption that a student who has been working as a law clerk for more than one year at a law firm with 5 or less attorneys should not complete an externship at the same law office.
  - c. With the understanding that each student and field placement are unique, all factors will be considered in the decision to approve the placement.
  - d. The Director of Externships may consult with the Associate Dean of Experiential Learning and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, as needed, in approving individual requests.
  - e. If approved, the Field Placement Supervisor must sign the Paid Externship Supervisor Rider Agreement.

I have read and understand the policy above:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Externship Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Externship Supervisor Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Placement Name