

Supervised Externship – Capitol Hill Information Packet



A field program for students seeking an externship that will expose them to legal and policy work in and around Capitol Hill: in Congressional offices, with Senate or House committees, federal agencies and commissions, trade associations, with lobbying firms, and with government affairs groups in law firms and corporations.

Capitol Hill Externships

Supervising Professor:

Dr. David K. Rehr,
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Mason Law Staff Contact:

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Course & Credit Available:

Law 325: 3 credits for 180 hours of field work. Students participating in the program must attend two tutorials.



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Overview

George Mason’s Supervised Externship – Capitol Hill program presents students with the opportunity to experience the intersection of law and policy by earning credit for unpaid work in Capitol Hill offices or committees; in government affairs offices of agencies, corporations, or nonprofits; trade associations; in lobbying firms, and with government affairs groups within law firms. The law school has a rich history of graduates with prominent positions “inside the Beltway,” and through this program students will be introduced to the extensive alumni network of the Capitol Hill Law & Economics alumni group. Students who have secured their own positions with the employers described above or students who would like assistance with placement are eligible for this program.

Students must work a minimum of 180 hours (three credits) for the Supervised Externship – Capitol Hill program. During the semester of the externship, students in Fall or Spring program must attend two classroom tutorials; Summer program students must attend one classroom tutorial.

Students are free to structure their hours in consultation with their site supervisor. Most site supervisors want students available for meaningful blocks of time. As a guideline, students must work an average of 13 hours a week for 14 weeks to earn three credits for field work during the Fall or Spring semesters.

Educational Objectives of the Supervised Externship – Capitol Hill Program

The Supervised Externship – Capitol Hill program is designed to meet the objectives of the American Bar Association’s Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar for professional skills training and study outside of the classroom. The teaching of “professional skills” involves teaching and evaluating law student performance on real

matters of law and policy, with the goal of mastering legal and policy research and communication skills, improving one's understanding of the process by which laws and regulations are crafted in the United States Congress and within federal agencies, and developing an appreciation for professional responsibility.

Student Requirements & Responsibilities

1. Students must have completed one academic year of legal education to participate in the program.
2. Students who have secured a position with a Capitol Hill office or committee; in a government affairs office of any agency, corporation, or nonprofit; with a trade association; in a lobby firm; or with a government affairs group of a law firm may register for the program after approval of the instructor.
3. For students who need assistance being placed: Applications for the program will be solicited either prior to or shortly after the opening of each semester's registration period. CAAS will notify students, via the student listservs, of the date when applications may begin to be submitted. Students will use the law school's Symplicity system to submit application materials. Application materials include:
 - a. A cover letter setting out
 - i. the office or offices in which you would like to work and why (p. 3);
 - ii. a brief synopsis of your legal and policy interests and background;
 - iii. and the days you anticipate you will be able to work at the externship.
 - b. Resume.
 - c. Unofficial law school transcript.
 - d. Writing sample.

Applications will be considered as received and interviews scheduled as part of the selection process. Students will be informed whether they are accepted into the program shortly after the interview. As space is limited, students are encouraged to submit their application materials promptly once notified that applications are being collected.

4. Students may receive compensation for externship work if offered by the field placement site. A maximum of six (6) externship credits may be earned in performing work for which the student also receives compensation. If the externship opportunity is for pay, students must receive approval from the professor in advance of externship registering for the externship course. Students should submit a proposal to the professor detailing the externship opportunity, including the supervisor's name and contact information, and the compensation being offered.
5. After acceptance into the program, students must submit a signed volunteer service agreement. (p. 5)
6. Each student must have a mid-semester consultation with Professor Rehr to discuss the externship and work being accomplished.

7. Each student must attend the set number of tutorials required by program. The program requires students to attend at least two tutorials in the Fall and Spring semesters and one tutorial in the Summer semester.

8. At the end of the externship, students must submit a
 - a. time sheet, approved by their supervisor, showing the hours worked (p. 7);
 - b. sample of their written work product of any length (with the supervising attorney's permission; redactions are acceptable to preserve confidentiality);
 - c. written summary of the research and communication skills enhancement resulting from their field experience. The summary should be 2-3 pages in length and must include a description of:
 - i. the work accomplished in the program;
 - ii. the skills developed through the program;
 - iii. the extent and nature of the student's interaction with and feedback from supervisors and other attorneys;
 - iv. any recommendations to future students interested in the same or a similar opportunity.

9. Students must ensure that their site supervisor submits a timely evaluation (p. 8) by the end of the semester.

10. Antonin Scalia Law School has an Honor Code and Academic Regulations articulating minimum standards for student conduct and procedures for handling allegations of Honor Code violations. Supervisors with concerns about unethical student behavior are encouraged to contact the Annamaria Nields, Associate Dean for Administration and Student Affairs, at 703-993-8174 or anields@gmu.edu.

An "incomplete" will remain on a student's transcript until all of the above requirements have been met and the documents reviewed by the professor.

NOTE: Students shall be listed in an externship directory so that future externship participants can contact them and speak with them about their experience. Students will be listed with their name, placement, and GMU email address in this directory. Students wishing to "opt-out" of this directory must send an email to lawcareer@gmu.edu indicating that they do not wish to be listed.

Placement Opportunities and Description of Duties

Capitol Hill:

Students may work in the personal office of U.S. Representatives or Senators, or for House or Senate Committees. Work may include attending congressional hearings, assisting Members of Congress or their staff in preparing testimony, statements, analyzing or drafting legislation, or conducting research in support of Congressional oversight activities.

Federal Agency or Commission:

Students may work in a federal agency, commission, or similar office of the Administration. Work may include legal research and analysis in support of the regulatory activities of the agency or commission, review and analysis of regulatory comments, attending public meetings, roundtables or other forums for regulatory action, researching and writing legal memoranda in support of rulemaking activity and policy development, and other similar activities.

Trade Association/Non-Profit Organization:

Students may work in a trade association/non-profit organization engaged in advancing the public policy priorities for a particular community, constituency or industry. Work may include attending congressional hearings or following the rulemaking activities of federal agencies or commissions, attending open meetings of various federal regulators, researching and analyzing legislative proposals on Capitol Hill or proposed rulemaking from a federal or state regulator, interacting with and supporting association members and staff to help analyze important legislative and/or regulatory actions.

Firms:

Students may work in a government relations practice of a law firm or lobbying firm. Work may include attending congressional hearings or regulatory meetings and preparing supportive memoranda and analysis for firm clients, supporting lobbying work on Capitol Hill, preparing comment letters or related advocacy materials, or preparing testimony for delivery before congressional committees or regulatory agencies.

Government Affairs Offices:

Students may work in the government affairs office of a corporation or partnership whose responsibilities include representing that entity before policymakers in Washington, DC. Work may include attending congressional hearings or regulatory meetings, analyzing legislation or rulemaking proposals, providing summary analysis of policymaking activity for various corporate constituencies or business units, or similar activity.

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
SUPERVISED EXTERNSHIP – CAPITOL HILL VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

This agreement is among _____ (student's name),
_____ (supervisor's name) at _____
(Agency, firm name, etc.) , and _____ (Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason
University). The purpose of this agreement is to place _____ in a volunteer, work
assignment with the _____ (Agency, firm name, etc.) as part of the Supervised
Externship Program offered by the School of Law for academic credit to be earned by the student.

The period of volunteer service involved in this agreement commences on or about _____, 20____ and
will end on or about _____, 20____ .

It is understood by all parties to this agreement that:

- (1) _____ (student) is enrolled in a course of study at Antonin Scalia Law School,
- (2) The School of Law has given permission for the student to volunteer his/her services for credit,
- (3) The service rendered is to be unpaid,
- (4) The _____ (Agency, Office) will provide supervised, skill-enhancing
substantive legal or law related work and opportunities for the student,
- (5) The School of Law will award appropriate academic credit upon satisfactory completion of the program
described.

The _____ (Agency, Office) will ensure compliance with the supervisor
responsibilities as set forth in the Supervised Externship Program – Capitol Hill Information Packet. It is
recognized that workflow may vary, but semester totals must be a minimum of 180 hours (3 credits).
Terminations will be reported immediately to the Antonin Scalia Law School. At the end of the term, the site
supervisor will certify an attendance record showing the dates and hours of the student's attendance on the job
and will provide the law school with a written appraisal of the student's performance, including a statement of
the skills emphasized and the student's progress in using those skills.

This position is (circle one): Unpaid Paid

(If paid, please provide or explain the amount of compensation, gift, or stipend):

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Student's site supervisor is: _____ (Name) _____ (Phone)

Length of time supervisor has held this position: _____ (years) _____ (months)

If less than two years in this position, please note previous position and/or employer:

_____.

Supervisors who are engaged in the practice of law must confirm that they are members in good standing with a bar and, if so, specify which bar(s). Member in good standing: ___ yes ___ no.

If yes, bar(s)_____.

FOR THE AGENCY, FIRM, OR OTHER EMPLOYER:

FOR ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL:

Signature Date

Signature Date

Name printed or typed

Name printed or typed

Title

Title

Organization

Phone Number & Email Address

Phone Number & Email Address

FOR THE STUDENT:

Phone Number & Email Address

Student Signature Date

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
SUPERVISED EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM – CAPITOL HILL
SUPERVISOR EVALUATION FORM**

(Use of this form is optional; evaluation may be written on official letterhead or emailed.)

Student's Name: _____

Attorney's Name: _____ Firm/Office: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Please provide a written evaluation of the student's performance, including the student's application of research and communication skills and how the student progressed in the utilization of those skills:

Attorney signature: _____ Date: _____