

Capitol Hill Supervised Externship Information Packet

The Capitol Hill Externship exposes students 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.

Supervising Professor:

Associate Dean and Assistant Professor, Victoria Huber
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Course & Credit Options: *

Law 325 or 325R (unpaid): 3 credits for 180 hours of unpaid field work.

Law 525 or 525R (paid): 3 credits for 180 hours of paid field work.

*Students participating in the program must attend two tutorials and may only complete paid externships for credit in the final two full semesters of their academic career.

Updated Fall 2022

Overview

George Mason's Capitol Hill Supervised Externship 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. Externships for credit must be pre-approved by the professor.

Students must work a minimum of 180 hours (three credits) for the Capitol Hill Supervised Externship program. Students must attend two classroom tutorials. Students are free to structure their hours in consultation with their site supervisor. Most site supervisors want students available for meaningful blocks of time – particularly Capitol Hill positions. As a guideline, students must work an average of 13-15 hours over the semester to earn three credits for field work. Part-time students also find ways to participate in the externship programs by consolidating their hours in a single month or stretching the hours out over many months. Regardless of how the hours are structured, students are required to maintain accurate time sheets, which must be submitted via Symplicity and verified before credit will be awarded.

Educational Objectives of the Capitol Hill Program

The Capitol Hill Supervised Externship 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 Information & Responsibilities

1. Students must have completed one academic year of legal education to participate in the program.
2. To be eligible for registration in a remote section, students must be living and working outside of the DC metropolitan area.
3. Students must obtain approval to earn credit for their field experience. To obtain approval students must complete the information form on the Externship/Experiential Learning module in Symplicity. Students should select "add new" to complete the form. After obtaining approval, students will be registered by the Records Office in the appropriate section. If a student wishes to extern at an employer a second (or third) time, the form should include comments about how continuing the externship with the same employer advances the student's career objectives and skills growth. Supervisor name or contact information can be added at a later time on the form if such information is unknown at the time the student is seeking approval. Supervisors MAY NOT be a family member and MUST be a barred attorney or judge.
4. Work must be done under the direct supervision of an attorney and be substantive and legal or law related in nature (see page 5 for examples). Placements that do not meet these requirements will not be approved. If the externship opportunity is not secured prior to the start of the semester, students will need to seek approval to join the externship class following the usual late add procedure. Students who join the Capitol Hill externship program after the start of the semester must still meet the attendance requirement of the tutorials.
5. 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, and students may only complete paid externships for credit in the final two full semesters of their academic careers. Paid externships are not permitted during the summer.
6. No later than the first week of the field work, the "Service Agreement" found in this packet must be signed by the student and site supervisor on behalf of the employer. Signed forms should be scanned and uploaded as attachments to the Externship Information Form on Symplicity.

7. Each student must have a mid-semester consultation with a professor to discuss the externship and work being accomplished. In addition, supervisors must complete a mid-semester evaluation. The evaluation should briefly address the following and be sent by email to both professors:

- 1-2 sentences on the nature of the assignments given for the externship hours.
- 1-2 sentences about the student’s performance on the assignments.
- 1-2 sentences about the student’s overall professionalism. Please address any strengths or weaknesses related to timeliness of work product, communication with supervisors about work schedule, project updates or completion, and interaction with clients or other professionals in the workplace.

8. Each student must attend two tutorials. In-person tutorial attendance is required unless the student is registered for a remote section. In instances of enrollment in a remote section, the student must participate in remote tutorials.

9. To earn credit, the following tasks must be completed:

Externship Information Form Completed and Approved (on Symplicity)	_____
Signed Service Agreement (scan and attach to your Externship Information Form on Symplicity)	_____
Mid-Semester Meeting with Professor (by phone or in-person)	_____
Mid-Semester Employer Evaluation (by email, phone, or in person)	_____
Tutorial Attendance	
Spring Semester (two)	_____
Track Hours (hours log must include a general description of tasks completed; hours should be logged on Symplicity weekly and must be logged before the final supervisor evaluation can be completed)	_____
Self-Evaluation (on Symplicity)*	_____
Sample of your Written Work Product (attach to your Self Evaluation on Symplicity; waivers granted with prior approval)	_____
Student Program Evaluation (on Symplicity)*	_____
Final Employer Evaluation (on Symplicity)	_____

*Student *Self* Evaluation should include reflections and comments about the work accomplished in the program; the legal and professional skills developed through the program; the extent and nature of the student’s interaction with and feedback from supervisors and other attorneys; how the internship advanced overall career goals. Student *Program* Evaluation should include general comments regarding any recommendations to future students interested in the same or a similar opportunity with that particular employer and is viewable by students.

10. Students must ensure that their site supervisor submits timely evaluations both at the mid-semester point and at the end of the semester. The due dates for the mid-semester evaluation and the final evaluation are set forth in the class syllabus.

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

Supervisor Commitment & Responsibilities

1. Supervisors must be attorneys and able to commit to providing supervision, logistical support, and mentorship to students working through the Supervised Externship Program.
2. Supervisors must provide the student with vocational opportunities and skills instruction in a reasonable number of appropriate activities (see recommended list).
3. Supervisors must sign the Externship Service Agreement no later than the first week of the externship unless an extension has been granted to the student.
4. Supervisors must review the University’s Equal Employment Policy (<https://www.law.gmu.edu/career/employerservices/>) and make themselves available for at least one formal mid-semester contact (either in person, by phone, or via email) regarding the student’s performance in the internship. This contact may be in addition to periodic phone calls and, in some cases, site visits by a program professor.
5. Supervisors must complete the online final evaluation of the student’s performance at the end of the externship. In the final evaluation, supervisors must review and approve the student’s hours log.
6. If at any time the supervisor experiences difficulties working with the student, the supervisor is encouraged to have a candid discussion with the student. If the situation is not promptly rectified, the supervisor should contact a program professor. Supervisors should not wait until the end of the program to inform the student or school of problems.
7. George Mason University 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 Associate Dean for Administration and Student Affairs, Annamaria Nields, at 703-993-8174 or aniels@gmu.edu.

Sample Placement Opportunities and Duties

Students may find their own positions or, on occasion, the law school works directly with an employer to recommend and place a student in an office for the Capitol Hill program.

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.

Guidelines for Supervisors: Appropriate Assignments for Capitol Hill Externship Students

Students should undertake a reasonable number of substantive legal or law related work activities. The attorney supervisor must be willing and able to ensure compliance with this requirement. Appropriate activities vary by employer type (for example, a Congressional committee versus a private sector employer representing a client in government affairs matters) and include but are not limited to:

I. Research, Writing and Drafting

- Briefs
- Citation checking
- Testimony
- Declarations
- Pleadings and contracts
- Property transfer papers
- White papers / policy papers
- Searching & tabulating public records
- Correspondence
- Discovery documents
- Opinions
- Contracts
- Memoranda of points and authorities on substantive and procedural issues

II. Investigation

- Interviewing clients and witnesses, and taking statements
- Collecting documents and physical evidence
- Photographing potential evidence

III. Proceedings – Adjudicatory or Legislative

- Arranging witness attendance
- Filing papers in court
- Preparing witnesses to testify
- Investigating jury records
- Arranging & supervising service of process
- Drafting jury instructions
- Preparing exhibits and audiovisual displays
- Tasks permitted by a 3rd-Year Practice Certificate

IV. Observation and Note Taking

- Meetings with clients
- Settlement Negotiations
- Legislative and Court Testimony
- Hearings
- Depositions
- Conferences

V. Conferences with Colleagues

- Evaluating strategy and tactics in matters
- Discussing facts, law, settlement offers, courtroom or legislative strategies

VI. Office Management

- Assembling and indexing case files and correspondence
- Abstracting case files
- Managing computerized data bases

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
CAPITOL HILL EXTERNSHIP SERVICE AGREEMENT**

COURSE NUMBER _____ (3 CREDITS)

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 field work opportunity with _____ (Agency/firm name, etc.) as part of the Capitol Hill Supervised Externship Program offered by the Antonin Scalia Law School for academic credit to be earned by the student. The period of work 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 Scalia Law,
- (2) Scalia Law has given permission for the student to provide his/her services for credit,
- (3) The _____ (Agency/Office) will provide supervised, skill-enhancing substantive legal or law related work and opportunities for the student, and
- (4) Scalia 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 Capitol Hill Supervised Externship Program 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) _____.

SUPERVISOR:

STUDENT:

Signature Date

Signature Date

Name printed or typed

Name printed or typed

Title

Phone Number & Email Address

Organization

Phone Number, Email Address, Office Address

After obtaining the supervisor signature and signing the document himself or herself, the student should scan and upload the agreement as an attachment to the student's Externship Information Form found in the Externship module in Symplicity.