

Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice Information Packet

A placement program for students seeking an externship that will expose them to legal practice in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Externship placements are available in the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Space is limited.

Virginia Practice Externships

Supervising Professor:

Judge Penney S. Azcarate,
Associate Professor of
Law/Director, Externship Program
Email: pazcarat@gmu.edu

Course & Credit Available:

Law 179: 3 credits for 180 hours of field work. Students participating in fall/spring programs must attend two tutorials; the summer program requires attendance at one tutorial.



Overview

George Mason's Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice program presents students with the opportunity to take what they have learned in the classroom and utilize it in real legal settings under the supervision of an attorney or a judge. Enrollment in the program is limited each semester and students are placed with specific externship opportunities. Students may be placed in a Public Defender, Commonwealth's Attorney, County Attorney, Legal Aid or private practitioner's office. Students may also be placed in judges' chambers throughout Northern Virginia. (Placement details on p. 5)

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

Students are free to structure their hours in consultation with their supervising attorney. Most supervising attorneys want students available for meaningful blocks of time. As a guideline: in the Fall or Spring program, students must work an average of 13 hours a week for 14 weeks to earn three credits for field work. In the Summer program, many students elect to work full-time for several weeks (though they may earn no more than three credits for their work). Other students may work part-time at the externship while working at another job or unpaid opportunity. 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 Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice Program

The Supervised Externship - Virginia Practice 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, live client or other real-life experiences, and study outside of the classroom. The teaching of "professional skills" involve teaching and evaluating law student performance on real cases or problems, with the goal of

mastering basic lawyering skills, professional responsibility, substantive and procedural law and the theory of legal practice.

Student Requirements & Responsibilities

1. Students must have completed one academic year of legal education to participate in the program.
2. Applications for the program will be solicited either prior to or shortly after the opening of each semester's registration period. CAS will notify students, via the student listservs, of the date when applications may begin to be submitted. Students will submit application materials directly to Judge Azcarate according to the instructions in the notification email. Application materials include:
 - a. A cover letter setting out
 - i. the office or offices in which you would like to work and why (see p. 5);
 - ii. a brief synopsis of your legal interests and background;
 - iii. whether you have taken Trial Advocacy, Evidence, and/or Criminal Procedure;
 - iv. the days you anticipate you will be able to work at the externship;
 - v. whether you have transportation to and from the assigned office; and
 - vi. an affirmative statement giving Judge Azcarate permission to share any of your contact information and submitted materials with potential offices/judges/attorneys.
 - 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.

3. After acceptance into the program, students will be registered by the Records Office for the externship course. Students then must complete the information form on the Externship module in Symplicity. Students should select "Add New Experience" to complete the form. 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 submits the form for approval.
4. No later than the first week of externship work, the "Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice Service Agreement" (p. 6-7) must be signed by the student and the supervising attorney. Signed forms should be scanned and uploaded as attachments to the Externship Information Form on Symplicity.
5. If a student has any difficulties or unmet expectations during the externship, it is his or her responsibility to initially discuss such issues with their supervising attorney. If any such issues are not properly rectified, the student shall promptly inform the supervising professors of the situation by email so that appropriate steps may be taken to address the concerns.

6. Each student must have a mid-semester consultation with Judge Azcarate 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 Judge Azcarate:

- 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.

7. Each student must attend the set number of tutorials required for the Fall, Spring, or Summer program. The Fall and Spring programs requires student to attend two tutorials. The Summer program requires students to attend one tutorial. In-person tutorial attendance is required.

8. 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 (in-person or by Zoom)	_____
Mid-Semester Employer Evaluation (by email, phone, or in person)	_____
Tutorial Attendance	
Fall/Spring Semester (two)	_____
Summer Term (one)	_____
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 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.

9. Students must ensure that their supervising attorney submits a timely evaluation 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 the professor.

Supervisor Commitment & Responsibilities

1. Supervisors must be graduates of an accredited law school and be able to commit to providing supervision, logistical support, and mentorship to students working through the Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice program.
2. Supervisors must provide the student with vocational opportunities and skills instruction in a reasonable number of appropriate activities.
3. Supervisors must sign the “Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice Service Agreement” (see p. 6-7) 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](#) and make themselves available for at least one formal mid-semester contact (either in person, by phone, or via email) regarding the placement. This contact may be in addition to periodic phone calls and, in some cases, site visits by the program’s 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 the program’s 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.

Placement Opportunities Available & Prerequisites

Judicial Chambers:

Students will accompany judges to court, review memoranda and briefs from counsel, draft legal memoranda for the judges, conduct research, and aid the judges in fulfilling their responsibilities. Students may be placed in judges' chambers throughout Northern Virginia. Prerequisites: None.

Legal Aid:

The offices of Legal Aid are divided into practice groups, including, but not limited to: (a) Consumer Law, (b) Housing Law, and (c) Family Law. Students will conduct client interviews, perform research, and draft memoranda and briefs. Students with Third Year Practice Certificates* may also have the opportunity to negotiate with opposing parties, argue motions, and try cases in court. Students may be placed with the Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, Loudoun and Prince William County offices. Prerequisites: None.

Commonwealth's Attorney's Office:

Students will accompany Assistant Commonwealth's Attorneys as they appear in court, assist in preparing witnesses for trial, research and draft memoranda and briefs, possibly including appellate briefs. Students with a Third Year Practice Certificate* may have the opportunity to appear before judges in Circuit, General District, and Juvenile courts to argue motions, participate in plea negotiations and try non-jury cases. Students may be placed with the Arlington, Alexandria, Prince William, and Fairfax offices. Prerequisites: A Third Year Practice Certificate* and completion of a Trial Advocacy course is preferred but is not mandatory.

Public Defender's Office:

Students will accompany Public Defenders as they appear in the Circuit, General District, and Juvenile courts, meet with clients, investigate cases, conduct research and draft memoranda and briefs, possibly including appellate briefs. Students with a Third Year Practice Certificate* may have the opportunity to argue motions, conduct plea negotiations, and try cases. Students may be placed with the Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun offices. Prerequisites: A Third Year Practice Certificate* and completion of a Trial Advocacy course is preferred but is not mandatory.

County Attorney's Office:

Students will draft pleadings, conduct research, draft memoranda, and assist the County Attorney in a wide variety of matters. Students may be placed with the Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William offices. Prerequisites: None.

Private Practitioners:

Students will draft pleadings, conduct research, and draft memoranda for a civil or criminal litigation practitioner. Students with Third Year Practice Certificates* may have the opportunity to make court appearances for docket returns, presentations of proof, and possibly to argue motions or participate in trials. Students may be placed with private practitioners throughout Northern Virginia. Prerequisites: None.

*To obtain a Third Year Practice Certificate a student must have completed the equivalent of four semesters and Criminal Law, Evidence, Professional Responsibility, and either Criminal Procedure or Civil Procedure. (For more details, see Rules of Virginia Supreme Court Pt.6, §IV, Para. 15.) Third Year Practice Certificate applications can be obtained at [Records](#). Whether a student is provided the opportunity to practice under a Third-Year Practice Certificate is a decision to be made by the supervising attorney.

ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
SUPERVISED EXTERNSHIP SERVICE AGREEMENT – VIRGINIA PRACTICE

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 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 Antonin Scalia Law School,
- (2) Antonin Scalia Law School has given permission for the student to provide his/her services for credit,
- (3) The _____ (Office) will provide supervised, skill-enhancing substantive legal or law related work and opportunities for the student, and
- (4) Antonin Scalia Law School will award appropriate academic credit upon satisfactory completion of the program described.

The _____ (Office) will ensure compliance with the supervisor responsibilities as set forth in the Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice Program Information Packet. It is recognized that workflow may vary, but semester totals must be a minimum 180 hours. At the end of the term, the supervising attorney will approve the student's timesheet and will provide the Antonin Scalia Law School with a written evaluation 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

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.

SCALIA LAW:

Professor Signature	Date	Phone Number & Email Address
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