

# **CLARK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

## **Overview and Description of Field Work**

The District Attorney's one-semester Externship Program will enable students to develop an in-depth understanding of the state criminal justice system in Nevada. Students will be placed in a variety of departments of the Clark County District Attorney's Office including: Case Assessment, Support Services (includes Drug Court and Diversionary Programs), Domestic Violence, Sexual Abuse, Vehicular Crimes (includes DUI), Juvenile and Appellate. The students will work closely with the heads of each department. Each student will be exposed to as many of these departments as time permits.

The program's primary goals include legal research and writing opportunities, exposure to a wide variety of prosecutorial functions, case assessment and management experiences, fact investigation, and trial strategy. The program will provide students with opportunities to observe trials and other proceedings, and reflect on their learning experiences.

## **Academic Components**

### **A. Class Meetings**

The externship program will include two academic components. One will be taught by Chuck Thompson, Assistant District Attorney in charge of the Criminal Division and members of his staff and will consist of weekly seminars covering a variety of topics, including:

- Advanced Lexis and Westlaw Research in Criminal Law and Procedure
- Introduction to the DA's office and the Nevada Court System
- Criminal Procedure and Discovery
- Search and Seizure
- Ethics
- Drafting Pleadings
- Diversionary Programs and Sentencing
- Appeals and Post-Conviction Relief

With the exception of the Lexis and Westlaw training taught at the Law School, the seminars will be taught every week at the DA's office.

In addition, students will attend a weekly seminar conducted by the Externship Director along with students engaged in other non-judicial externship placements. This course

component will focus on professional ethics, writing skills, time management, career choices, reflective lawyering and limited lawyering skills training.

- B. Journals.** The externs will maintain a daily journal and weekly timesheets, which they will submit to the Externship Director. The log should include a description of the student's work, a record of the hours worked, and a discussion of substantive and procedural legal issues, professional responsibility issues, lawyering skills, and values as they arise in the context of the field work.
- C. Work File.** The externs will maintain a file of all work submitted to the field supervising attorney, which they will submit to the Externship Director. The Externship Director will protect confidential client information.
- D. Paper.** At the end of the externship, the externs will write a self-evaluation or other paper as directed by the Externship Director. The paper may not be used to satisfy the Advanced Legal Writing requirement. The length of the paper will be determined by the Externship Director depending on the credits to be awarded.

### **General Program Requirements**

- A. Eligible students.** Students must have completed at least 45 hours of academic work, including all first year courses and be in good academic standing. Professional Responsibility is a pre or co-requisite. All student participation is subject to an interview with the District Attorney's Office.
- B. Field placement requirements.** This program is primarily designed for six to seven credits requiring at least 24 hours a week (three full days) in the fall and spring semester and forty hours a week during the summer term ( 264 hours for six credits). The Externship Director, with consultation with the field supervisor, must approve the number of credits for each student. Students will not be required to be on-site during the exam period.
- C. Supervision.** An experienced assistant or deputy district attorney will act as the primary field supervisors. Field supervisors will confer with the Externship Director on a regular basis and provide evaluations of each extern. Field supervisors will participate in training from time to time. The Externship Director will not provide direct case supervision due to the potential of a conflict of interest.

### **Student Practice Certification**

**Court Appearances** (a) All students may be certified under Nevada Supreme Court Rule 49.5 under "level 1 certification" and may engage in the activities delineated in Rule 49.5(4); (b) Students certified under "level 2 certification" of Rule 49.5 may conduct motion hearings under supervision if they have completed or are concurrently enrolled in Pretrial Litigation or motion practice training offered by the District Attorney's Office or the Externship course; (c) Students who have completed Evidence and have either completed a live client clinic or have taken or are concurrently enrolled in Trial Advocacy may participate in the examination of witnesses under supervision in trials for civil infractions or misdemeanors. Students shall not have primary responsibility for

conducting trials; (d) Students certified under either “level one” or “level two” of Rule 49.5 may second-chair and assist a supervisor in any trial as permitted by the court; (e) court rule certification under Rule 49.5 is limited by this section.

**Evaluation**

The course is graded on a Pass-Fail basis.

- a. The field supervising attorney will evaluate each student’s work by:
  - 1. Conferring regularly with the student and Externship Director throughout the placement;
  - 2. Reviewing and observing the student’s work and conducting feedback sessions with the student; and
  - 3. A written evaluation shall be provided to the Externship Director at mid-semester and at the end of the placement.
  
- b. The Externship Director will evaluate the student’s overall work performance at mid-semester and at the end of the term by:
  - 1. Conferring regularly with the field supervising attorney;
  - 2. Reading and responding to the student’s daily logs and weekly timesheets;
  - 3. Conducting at least one individual conference with the extern during the placement and at the end of the placement;
  - 4. Conducting at least one site visit;
  - 5. Reviewing the student’s written work;
  - 6. Reviewing the student’s required paper at the end of the placement; and
  - 7. Evaluating the student’s participation in the classroom component.