

Clark County Office of the Public Defender

Overview

The legal externs assist the Deputy Public Defenders in the area(s) of research and writing, communications with clients, and litigation/trial support. The legal externs also assist with identifying client needs and accessing community resources to address those needs. Additionally, where appropriate, the legal extern makes court appearances on behalf of clients.

Essential Job Functions

- Interviews clients and assesses individual client needs
- Conducts interviews and gathers collateral information about the client's school, social, employment, military and treatment history
- Helps with client placement into various treatment programs
- Prepares legal memorandums
- Conducts research and writing at both the trial and appellate level
- Helps prepare and organize trial exhibits, notebooks, and other demonstrative evidence
- Assists with investigation, witness interviews, and trial preparation
- Helps prepare witness cross examination(s) and direct examination(s)
- Where appropriate, makes court appearances on behalf of clients

Non-essential Job Functions

- Attends and participates in training sessions for social workers, interns, and Public Defenders
- Attends and/or participates in preliminary hearings and trials
- Learns about criminal justice/court system by interacting with prosecutors and judges
- Tours facilities involved in the criminal justice system including, but not limited to, jails, prisons, treatment facilities, courthouse(s), etc.

Requirements

- Current enrollment at an ABA accredited law school
- Legal research/writing skills
- Ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines, and make effective decisions
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Good writing and communication skills
- Knowledge and sensitivity of multi-cultural issues
- Knowledge and sensitivity of addictive behaviors, mental health issues, and appropriate treatments therefore
- Ability to identify and access community based and institutional resources

General Requirements

- A. **Eligibility and Prerequisites.** 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. **Credit Hours.** 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. 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.
- D. **Confidentiality.** The extern will execute an agreement of *confidentiality* with regard to all privileged information learned during the course of the externship.

Academic Component

- A. **Class Meetings** – Extern will attend class meetings conducted by the Externship Director. Dates of classes to be announced. Students are required to check their email and/or the TWEN site daily for class announcements and other important information.
- B. **Writing Requirements.** The externs will maintain a weekly journal and timesheet, 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. Students are also required to submit at least two other memo assignments as instructed by the Externship Director.

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; Reviewing and observing the student's work and conducting feedback sessions with the student; and
 - 2. Evaluating the student's overall work performance 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 writing assignments and weekly time sheets;
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. Evaluating the student's participation in the classroom component.