

LEGAL STUDIES INTERNSHIPS

INFORMATION AND REQUIRED FORMS

INTRODUCTION

The LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship is an integral component of the Legal Studies program. It is designed to enhance the Legal Studies student's total academic experience through a planned period of observation, study, and participation in a law firm, governmental agency or related organization. The internship is the capstone to the student's academic experience.

Prospective legal professionals benefit greatly from the opportunity to observe and work with practitioners in the field. Internships provide Legal Studies students with the opportunity to apply concepts and principles learned in the classroom, to network with professionals in the legal community, and to analyze on-the-job experiences in light of academic learning.

If you are enrolled in the Legal Studies program, you should become thoroughly acquainted with the materials provided here, including the deadlines for internship placements, the required forms, and the description of the placement process.

Impact of Lack of LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship

Students who are enrolled in an Associate of Applied Science in Paralegal Studies, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, or Legal Nurse Consultant-Paralegal Certificate program are required to complete a LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship. If a student is not able to be placed in an internship, they may apply their course work in the program toward an Associate of Arts or Bachelor's Degree in another discipline, but will not be awarded an Associate of Applied Science in Paralegal Studies degree, a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, or a Legal Nurse Consultant-Paralegal Certificate.

For students in the Bachelor of Arts in Legal Studies program, the LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship is an option that may be used to substitute for the CEL A395 Civic Engagement Internship, but it is not a requirement. Students who do not complete a CEL 395 Civic Engagement Internship (or acceptable substitute) will not receive a Bachelor of Arts in Legal Studies.

GETTING STARTED

1. MARK THE DEADLINE IN YOUR CALENDAR!

Successful legal professionals know the critical importance of identifying and meeting deadlines. Successful interns are no different. The first deadline facing a prospective Legal Studies intern occurs well in advance of the semester in which the internship will occur.

LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internships must be established in the Fall or Spring Semester **prior** to the semester in which the internship will occur. Applications for fall internships must be submitted by the announced deadline in the prior Spring Semester.

Applications for spring internships must be submitted by the announced deadline in the prior Fall Semester.

Deadlines

To perform your internship during this semester:

Your application materials must be received by the Internship Coordinator by this date:

Spring Semester, 2022	October 15, 2021
Fall Semester, 2022	February 18, 2022
Spring Semester, 2023	October 21, 2022
Fall Semester, 2023	February 17, 2023
Spring Semester, 2024	October 20, 2023
Fall Semester, 2024	February 16, 2024
Spring Semester, 2025	October 18, 2024
Fall Semester, 2025	February 14, 2025
Spring Semester, 2026	October 17, 2025

2. MEET GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Full Major Status**

To be eligible for a LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship placement, you must be a full major in Paralegal Studies or Legal Studies. If you have not changed your degree status from pre-major to major, your application will be rejected.

- **GPA 2.0 or Higher in LEGL Courses**

LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship applicants must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 in Legal Studies courses to be placed in an internship. You are required to demonstrate your competency by earning a C or better in these courses in order to obtain the certificate or degree. If you are required to re-take a course to improve your grade in order to earn your certificate or degree, the course must be completed with the minimum grade required before you are eligible for the internship.

- **Prerequisites Completed**

Completion of the following Legal Studies core courses is required for placement in the LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship: LEGL A101; LEGL A215; and LEGL A367 with a C or better.

LEGL A356 is strongly recommended for all internships, and LEGL A377 is strongly recommended for any internship in a criminal law setting. At the discretion of the Internship Coordinator, an internship application may be accepted from students who are completing the final core course(s) in the same semester as the internship (*e.g.*, Trial and Advanced Litigation Processes).

- **Background Checks**

Many firms and agencies enforce standards requiring background checks. Consequently, you may be required to authorize related investigations and background checks as a condition of acceptance. Some students, because of their work history or history of criminal convictions, may not meet agency or law firm standards for placement. The University cannot require agencies or firms to accept students, and cannot guarantee that every student will be placed in an internship.

CONSIDER YOUR PLACEMENT OPTIONS

Intern placement involves a competitive process in which students apply for positions in non-profit entities, governmental agencies and law firms that have a formal Memorandum of Agreement with the UAA Justice Center. While more than one intern may be seeking a particular placement, factors such as each individual's interests and educational needs are considered by the Internship Coordinator when choosing where placement is sought.

The Internship Coordinator keeps a list of placement sites that have contracted with the Justice Center. Before you submit your application materials, review the list and identify *at least three placement sites* in which you are interested. You will need to include this information on your application form.

If you are currently employed at a law firm or if you have a placement in mind, the first step is always to discuss this with the Internship Coordinator. However, to ensure that the internship results in a significant educational experience, in most circumstances you will not be placed with an organization with whom you are, or have been employed. At the discretion of the Internship Coordinator, placements with existing employers may be approved under strict requirements.

After you file your application, the Internship Coordinator will contact your identified sites to determine if there is a need or desire for an intern during the semester. You should not contact the placement site. This policy is not designed to constrain development of new placements, but to maintain the integrity of the internship program.

COMPLETE THE APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Complete Application Materials.

All the application materials must be completed before the student will be considered for placement in a Legal Studies internship. The required materials include FORMS, RESUME, and WRITING SAMPLE.

The required FORMS include:

1. Internship Application form;
2. Legal Studies Internship Student Participation Consent form;
3. Academic Petition requesting that LEGL A495 be substituted for CEL A395;
3. Insurance Election / Rejection form;
4. Internship Information Release, FERPA Release, and Release of Liability form;
5. UAA Claim Release form; and
6. UAA Acknowledgement of Title IX Information form.

All required forms are included with this document, in hard copy or as fillable pdf forms in electronic form. If you are completing the forms electronically, print them for signature. In addition to your required forms, you must also submit:

7. Current RESUME,* and a
8. WRITING SAMPLE.**

*You may seek help with your resume at the Career Exploration & Services Center located on the ground floor of the Student Union.

**The writing sample should be work taken from one of your law classes, *ideally something less than five pages*. If the paper was returned to you with instructor comments, submit it with the instructor comments, and also submit a clean copy of the work reflecting your revisions based on your instructor's comments.

You may be required to revise the writing sample in preparation for placement with an internship firm, agency or organization.

2. File Your Application Packet on Time.

Double-check the deadline date!

Assemble your Application Packet with your application on top, followed by your resume and writing sample, then the required forms as listed above. Submit your packet as soon as completed, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date. To submit

your application you must scan the entire application as one PDF and send it to the Internship Coordinator via email. Hand-delivered, faxed, or incomplete internship packets will not be accepted, nor will packets submitted as .tif or .img files.

3. Register for LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship.

It's important to realize that the Legal Studies Internship is a class, and you will need to register for LEGL A495 just as you would for any other class! Important details are:

- **Do not wait for placement to register – you may be too late to enter the class.**
- **You must have instructor approval to register, so communicate with the Internship Coordinator prior to attempting to register.**
- **Once registered, begin reading materials and submitting required assignments on Blackboard.**
- **If no placement is confirmed before the drop deadline, you will be allowed to drop the course.**

RECAP OF THE PLACEMENT PROCESS, START TO FINISH

Once you have decided which semester you hope to complete your LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship in, follow these steps:

- Mark the applicable deadline!
- Complete the application materials.
- Submit the completed application materials by the deadline.
- Receive notice that your application was accepted and placement will be attempted.
- Meet with Internship Coordinator to finalize potential placement site (law firm, agency or related organization). You will need to sign a log sheet for your file.
- Your resume, transcript, and writing sample are sent to the potential placement site for consideration.
- Interested placement site(s) will contact you directly to schedule an interview.
- Attend the interview, dressed professionally and prepared for questions.
- If you are accepted for placement by the firm, agency or other organization, they will contact you directly. You are responsible for informing the Internship Coordinator of the interview and a subsequent placement.
- If you are declined for placement by the firm, agency or other organization, they will contact the Internship Coordinator who will inform you. In that event, you will meet with Internship Coordinator to select second-round options and address deficiencies identified by the first potential placement site.
- Complete your Learning Contract with your site supervisor and submit it on Blackboard for approval. A Learning Contract must be approved before you begin work! To help you draft your Learning Contract, a sample Learning Contract is available in the course Blackboard shell.
- Sign the approved Learning Contract, obtain the site supervisor's signature, and drop it by the Justice Center for placement in your file. Alternatively, you may scan the signed contract as a .pdf and attach it to an e-mail to the Internship Coordinator.
- Once the internship is completed, submit the Academic Petition to substitute LEGL A495 for CEL A395 at the Justice Center.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Will I be paid?

Most internships are unpaid. Many organizations reimburse interns for mileage, parking, and related costs incurred in the performance of the intern's duties. When pay is available, it usually ranges from minimum wage to \$14 per hour.

2. Is it likely that my internship will turn into a full-time job after graduation?

Permanent placement is not a goal of the internship program. Permanent placements have occurred, but are uncommon.

3. Will the University find me a LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship placement?

The Internship Coordinator will work with you and potential placement sites to establish your internship. However, there are occasionally impediments to placement arising from a student's work history or history of criminal conviction(s). The Internship Coordinator cannot guarantee that every student will be placed.

4. I work at a law firm, so may I serve a LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship there?

Generally, no. The goals of the internship program include providing you with the opportunity to apply and extend your academic experience in a professional setting. Your internship should support your classroom-based instruction and increase your understanding of its relevance. You should be adding to your set of professional skills in meaningful ways. If an internship can be developed that will achieve the course objectives and goals at your place of employment, an internship at your current law firm might be approved. Do not count on that; it's not a guarantee.

5. How many hours do I have to work to satisfy the LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship requirement?

You are required to perform a minimum of 225 hours of organized and approved work in the law firm, agency or organization. This work must be supervised, though each of the 225 hours need not occur in the physical confines of the placement site. Hours spent at the law library or conducting field interviews, for example, are clearly hours spent in completion of your internship responsibilities. Think of your internship hours as analogous to "billable time."

6. How am I supposed to complete an internship of 225 hours if I already work full time, take classes, and have a family?

By the time you are qualified to serve your internship, you have completed other Legal Studies core courses. Throughout that course work, you've been required to prioritize effectively, engage in problem solving, identify available resources and figure out how best to access them. Those same lessons apply here. If you have too many other commitments that take priority over the internship, you should reconsider your decision to complete your LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship at this time. You should also discuss the challenges you face with the Internship Coordinator, who may be able to help you strategize ways to reach your goal.

7. LEGL A495 is a course, so will I have assignments?

Yes. The first assignment is your Learning Contract that you negotiate with your site supervisor. You will have to complete journal entries for every work day, submitted at least bi-weekly on Blackboard. You need to meet 3 times with the Internship Coordinator (once at the half-way point on site). You need to write a paper at the end of your internship and submit your supervisor's evaluation.

8. What is the Learning Contract, and where do I find one?

The Learning Contract is an agreement between you, your supervising attorney and the Internship Coordinator. It establishes the purpose and structure of the internship as agreed between you and your placement site, then approved by the Internship Coordinator. The contract is unique to your internship. You are required to draft the contract, and perform your internship according to its terms. A sample is provided.

9. What is the point of the internship journal?

The journal serves several purposes. First, it documents your compliance with the terms of your internship contract. Second, it identifies the type of work you performed and the work product generated during your internship. Third, it simulates the time management and reporting requirements necessary in most legal practices. Fourth, as a contemporaneous record reflecting on your work and experience, it provides useful information in completing your final paper requirement.

10. What happens if I do not keep up with my journal?

You are required to submit your journal bi-weekly over Blackboard. This is a compulsory course requirement. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in a faculty-initiated withdrawal from the course, or a "No Pass" grade.

11. Will I be graded on my performance as an intern?

Yes. This is a Pass/No Pass graded course: LEGL A495 Legal Studies Internship. Your grade will be based on the evaluation of your supervising attorney and the Internship Coordinator's assessment of the journal, your work product and your final paper. If you don't comply with the compulsory course requirements, you may be withdrawn or assigned a failing grade by the Internship Coordinator.

12. What if I don't get along with my supervising attorney or other people on site?

If you have any problems or concerns during the course of your internship, you should contact the Internship Coordinator. In addition, you will be given a list of additional contacts for any issues related to sexual harassment or gender discrimination, as well as labor and civil rights issues.