



Externship on the Federal Government in Washington, DC Fall 2021 Notice & Application

INTRODUCTION

The Externship on the Federal Government in Washington, DC (the “DC Externship”) is a full-semester offering for third-year law students in the fall and second- and third-year law students in the spring.

DC externs earn academic credit while working full-time within the federal government or within a D.C.-based not-for-profit under the supervision of an attorney. DC Externs also take part in a rigorous program of academic inquiry and guided self-assessment designed to maximize professional growth.

WHY CHOOSE THE DC EXTERNSHIP?

The DC Externship is your chance to study not-for-profit or federal government lawyering at the highest levels.

The Externship provides a hands-on complement to conventional courses in public law. It connects academic learning and abstract thinking to practice.

In addition, due to its uniquely intensive nature – DC externs work full-time at their placements – the DC Externship allows you to:

- Fully integrate into your placement.
- Take on the work of a junior attorney.
- Form professional relationships with experienced attorneys.
- Develop professional-level problem-solving, self-direction, and interpersonal skills.
- Build a record of public service work to help you obtain positions immediately after graduation or later in your career.

ELIGIBILITY

The DC Externship is open to third-year law students in either semester and second-year law students in the spring. You must be a U.S. citizen if you are applying to federal government agencies. Admission is by application only. Up to 15 students will be selected. Transfer students are eligible to participate.

FALL 2021 DEADLINE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25 AT 4PM

Email your application as a single PDF to Rachel Pauley at rachel.pauley@law.columbia.edu

Examples of Past DC Extern Placements

PAST DC EXTERN PLACEMENTS

This is not an exhaustive list of past placements. Nor is it intended to limit the range of placements you consider.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Legal Div. – General Law & Ethics

Legal Div. – Law & Policy

Legal Div. – Litigation & Oversight

Office of the General Counsel

Department of Defense

Office of the Deputy General Counsel (International Affairs)

Office of the Deputy General Counsel (Personnel & Health Policy)

Office of the General Counsel

Department of Education

Office of the General Counsel

Department of Health & Human Services

Office of the General Counsel

Office of the National Coord., Health Information Technology

Department of Justice

Antitrust Division

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives

Civil Div. – Appellate Staff

Civil Div. – Consumer Protection Section

Civil Div. – Federal Programs Branch -- Office of Legal Policy

Civil Rights Div. – Asst. Attorney General's Office

Civil Rights Div. – Educational Opportunities Section

Civil Rights Div. – Housing Section

Civil Rights Div. – Policy & Strategy Section

Civil Rights Div. – Servicemember &

Veterans Division

Civil Rights Div. – Voting Section

Criminal Div. – Fraud Section

Criminal Div. – Office of Policy & Legislation

Criminal Div. – Public Integrity Section

Environment & Natural Resource Division

Federal Bureau of Investigation

National Security Division

Office for Access to Justice

Tax Division

Department of the Interior

Division of Indian Affairs

Department of the Treasury

Internal Revenue Service, Office of the Chief Counsel

Office of the Asst. General Counsel, Banking & Finance

Office of International Affairs

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

Office of Terrorist Financing & Financial Crimes

Earthjustice

Environmental Protection Agency

Bureau of Competition – Healthcare Division

Office of Enforcement & Compliance Assurance

Office of the General Counsel

Federal Communications Commission

Office of the General Counsel

Federal Trade Commission

Bureau of Competition – Mergers & Acquisitions

Office of the Commissioner

NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.

Securities and Exchange Commission

Office of International Affairs

Senate Committees

Banking & Finance Committee

Budget Committee

Foreign Relations Committee

Judiciary Committee

Republican Policy Committee

International Trade Commission

Office of the General Counsel

Patent and Trademark Office

Office of the Chief Economist

Department of Labor

Office of the Solicitor – Fair Labor Standards Division

Department of State

Office of the Legal Adviser

White House

Council on Environmental Quality

Office of White House Policy, Domestic Policy Council

Office of the General Counsel

Office of the Vice President

Office of the White House Legal Counsel

US Trade Representative, Office of the General Counsel

MANDATORY COMPONENTS

The DC Externship will be coterminous with the Fall 2021 semester. It will include four core components for a total of 12 credits.

1. Intensive Seminar on Ethics in the Federal Government (1 graded academic credit)

This one-week seminar explores the unique challenges and responsibilities of ethical law practice in the federal government. Topics include the challenges of providing legal advice, identifying attorney-client relationships, working with political clients, and transitioning between government and related private work. It covers statutory and other sources of ethical rules for federal employees and considers opportunities for reform. It examines key case studies in depth and may include guest presentations.

Although it covers important ethics topics, this seminar supplements but does NOT replace three-credit on-campus courses that satisfy the Law School's professional responsibility requirement. ***This course WILL NOT satisfy your professional responsibility requirement.***

2. Seminar on Federal Government Lawyering (3 graded academic credits)

This substantive weekly seminar engages students in a critical examination of the multiple roles lawyers play in federal government offices in DC. Classes draw heavily on students' and guest speakers' experiences. Substantive and reflective writing is required. Attendance is mandatory. The seminar usually meets on Monday evenings.

3. Field Placements (8 ungraded clinical credits)

Externs work full-time (a minimum of 40 hours per week) at their placements for the duration of the semester. More information below.

4. Experiential Learning Component

Externs meet with the Director of Government Programs several times to lay out their semester goals and track progress. Activities include two breakout sessions, two individual meetings, a visit by the Director to each placement, a retreat, and several goal-setting assignments, all with the purpose of enriching students' learning experience.

OPTIONAL COMPONENTS

1. Supervised Research Paper (1-3 credits + eligibility for Major Writing requirement)

Students may elect to write a substantive research paper on a topic closely related to the Externship and their individual field placement. In addition to providing graded or ungraded credits, papers may satisfy the J.D. Major Writing requirement. Students are responsible for obtaining their own faculty supervisors to advise and grade the work product. Externs may wish to develop their topics in consultation with their placement agencies. ***The J.D. Rules regarding supervised research papers are applicable and should be consulted.***

2. Satisfaction of Columbia Law School Mandatory Pro Bono Credit Hours

Students who extend their placements beyond the semester can use the additional time toward the **Columbia Law School 40-hour mandatory pro bono requirement** or as voluntary pro bono. Students must file the appropriate pro bono forms with Social Justice Initiatives.

EXTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

Students selected for the DC Externship will be counseled about their interests by [Rachel Pauley](#), Director of Government Programs, Social Justice Initiatives and Lecturer in Law, and will apply to positions of interest through Social Justice Initiatives. It is not expected that more than one extern will work in the same office.

Placement supervisors will be leaders in their field. They will be committed to providing a quality learning experience will collaborate with Columbia faculty on a learning agenda that complements the seminar. Rachel Pauley will have primary responsibility for coordination with the field placements during the semester, meeting with students several times and conducting a site visit/meeting with each student and field supervisor.

A list of potential placements in offices that do substantive legal work and that will provide excellent supervision in the executive and legislative branch and independent agencies of the federal government will be distributed to the externs upon their acceptance to the Externship. It is expected that options will include, for example: sections of the Department of Justice; the Departments of Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, and State; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Federal Communications Commission; the Federal Trade Commission; and the Securities and Exchange Commission. **Students are NOT required to choose a placement from this list. There will be a guided placement process that takes into account each student's interests and goals. Each student will meet individually with the course instructor and/or placement director during this placement process.**

Please note that some federal offices' deadlines fall before the Externship application is due. If you are interested in a placement for which this is the case, you are responsible for submitting an application before you have applied or been accepted to the Externship. Contact Rachel Pauley to discuss.

PREREQUISITES & OTHER PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

There are no prerequisite courses for the DC Externship, but preference will be given to students who have taken Administrative Law, Legislation, and substantive courses related to their proposed placements.

Successful completion of the core components of the Externship will result in the receipt of twelve credits – four graded academic credits and eight ungraded clinical credits.

No more than 30 of the 83 law school credits required for graduation may represent either clinical courses or other courses related to legal training. At least 64 of the required 83 credits must represent regularly scheduled class sessions. Students who have taken clinics or other externships or have received academic credit for supervised research, law review, moot court, or other nonresidential classroom activities, or who plan to do so following the Externship, should make sure that they will have the necessary credits to graduate. It is strongly suggested that **before** applying for this externship, students consult Rule 1.1 of the Columbia Law School [Rules for the J.D. Degree](#) and meet with an academic advisor.

All government agencies perform a background check on their externs. Some require in-depth investigations for security clearance. Many government agencies limit eligibility for volunteer positions to U.S. citizens. A green card will not be sufficient for those positions, and even in the rare situations when a green card is sufficient, the agency and the extern likely will have to go through many time-consuming bureaucratic steps for approval. This process may not be concluded before the semester begins. In addition, students who have spent a significant time abroad may confront issues with timing of the clearance process. Students who anticipate that either the clearance procedure or the citizenship requirement will pose a problem to their placements should meet with Rachel Pauley **before** they apply to the Externship.

HOUSING & SERVICES

DC externs are responsible for finding and funding their own housing. **Previous externs report that housing and transportation costs in DC are equal to or greater than those they experience in New York City.**

Applicants should note that while every effort is made to provide externs with services and support, many on-campus services are not fully replicated for students in the program. Career counseling, judicial clerkship counseling, and other advising services are only available remotely. While Columbia student health insurance will cover care in the Washington, DC area, past participants have reported that substantial additional administrative work is required to obtain service. Library, printing, and other services may be available by courtesy arrangement with other schools, but service levels may not match those provided on campus.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE & SCHEDULE

Applications must be received via email by the Social Justice Initiatives office **no later than 4 pm on February 25, 2021**. Applications must be emailed as a single PDF file to Rachel Pauley at rachel.pauley@law.columbia.edu.

CONTACTS

[Rachel Pauley](#)*

Director of Government Programs & Lecturer-in-Law

rachel.pauley@law.columbia.edu

*Appointments should be made through Symplicity.

HOW TO APPLY

The application consists of one PDF document containing, in this order:

1. A current resume.
2. A personal statement (1-2 single-spaced pages, 12-pt type, 1" borders maximum) that discusses your:
 - a. Reasons for wanting to take the Externship on the Federal Government in Washington, DC.
 - b. Preparation for the externship, with particular attention to work experience and relevant classes.
 - c. Interest and future aspirations, if any, with respect to government and public law work.
3. A list of 3-5 specific government agencies at which you may want to work. If the list includes the Department of Justice, please specify the division(s) of interest. (This list is intended solely for the purpose of getting a sense of where you may want to work. There are no "preferred" placements, and the list will not be binding during the placement process.)
4. A copy of your Columbia Law School transcript (an unofficial transcript is sufficient).

SELECTION

Selection will be based upon candidates':

- Demonstrated interest in public law and the role of lawyers in the U.S. federal government.
- Preparation for the Externship through classes, employment, or other activities, not restricted to those undertaken while a student at Columbia Law School.
- Prior substantive employment experience, not necessarily relevant to the subject matter of the Externship or to law.
- Excellent legal research, analysis, and writing skills.