

L6695 - JD Independent Experiential Project

L6695 provides a unique opportunity to explore a particular legal practice area under the guidance of a Columbia Law faculty member and the close supervision of an experienced attorney. Columbia Law School rules and the ABA Standards dictate certain requirements. These requirements must be satisfied for students to earn academic credit for this legal work. This memo is intended to provide a summary of those requirements.

Legal work supervised by a lawyer. Students may only earn credit for placements in which they are supervised by a lawyer and doing work that lawyers regularly do.

Students cannot be compensated and earn credit for the same placement. L6695 does not authorize part-time work at a law firm. In *very limited circumstances* where a law firm has a specialized practice that the student would otherwise be unable to experience, an unpaid, for-profit law firm placement may be acceptable. For example, students have done independent externships at civil rights firms, labor firms and small specialized IP practices. However, these are intended to be rare exceptions. In-house counsel placements may also be suitable and are more likely to be approved than a for-profit law firm placement.

Securing a placement. Columbia Law offers many externships for which students may apply and participate. L6695 is specifically for those students who are seeking a placement outside of these Columbia Law sponsored opportunities. L6695 placements are those that students find on their own. Faculty, career services, SJI or the Externship Director may be able to provide some guidance but it is ultimately up to the student to find an appropriate placement.

Faculty supervisor. Students must secure a faculty supervisor who will meet with the student periodically over the course of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to arrange meetings or otherwise communicate regularly with the supervising faculty member.

Facilitate communication between the site supervisor and the faculty supervisor. The student should provide each supervisors' contact information to the other supervisor. Students should ensure that the faculty and site supervisors have communicated over the course of the semester.

Registration. Once a student has secured an independent externship placement and a faculty supervisor, the student must register for L6695 on LawNet. The registration form requires the student to identify both the site supervisor and the faculty supervisor. Once the registration is approved students will be added to the Courseworks site for L6695 where they will find the assignments described below.

Academic Credit. Students may earn up to 3 credits for L6695 in a semester and no more than 4 credits per academic year. Each credit requires 45 hours of fieldwork over the course of the semester. Students who are enrolling in other independent work in addition to L6695, must confirm with the Externship Director and/or Registration Services the available number of credits for an experiential project.

Grading. Unless the faculty supervisor is able and willing to review the student's work at the placement, the student should be graded on a Credit/Fail basis. Where confidentiality or other issues do not preclude the faculty member from reviewing the student's work, it is entirely within the discretion of the faculty member whether to grade on a letter or Credit/Fail basis.

International Student Requirements. International students must comply with the requirements of their visa status. F-1 Visa holders must apply and be approved for CPT. J-1 Visa holders must apply and be approved for Academic Training (AT). This must be completed and approved by ISSO before the student begins the placement. This does require advance planning to allow ISSO processing time.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) due no later than October 1, 2021 (Fall term) or February 1, 2022 (Spring term). The student, the faculty supervisor and the site supervisor must all sign the MOU. It sets out each party's respective responsibilities. The MOU must be signed and uploaded to Courseworks.

Learning Goals Assignment due no later than October 1, 2021 (Fall term) or February 1, 2022 (Spring term). Students must complete this assignment and submit it to the site supervisor for signature. Once signed, it should be shared with the faculty advisor and uploaded to Courseworks.

Mid-Semester Evaluation due by October 28, 2021 (Fall 2021) and March 1, 2022 (Spring term). Each student should meet with their site supervisor midway through the semester. This should be an opportunity for reflection and feedback. The student's learning goals provide a starting point for assessment. The evaluation should be shared with the faculty supervisor.

Student Placement Assessment due by December 10, 2021 (Fall term) and April 30 (Spring term). Each student must complete an exit assessment of their placement. The Columbia Law Externship Program will provide a Google Form to complete the exit assessment.

Final Evaluations due by December 10, 2021 (Fall term) and April 30 (Spring term). Each student should meet with their site supervisor at the end of the semester for reflection and feedback. The mid-semester evaluation and learning goals provide a starting point for assessment. The evaluation should be shared with the faculty supervisor.

The information provided here is a summary of the process and requirements. Please confer with the Director of Externships and Field-Based Learning for additional information.