



Externship on the Federal Government in Washington, DC

INTRODUCTION

Spend a semester in DC with the Externship on the Federal Government in Washington, DC (the “DC Externship”). DC externs earn academic credit while working full-time under the supervision of an attorney within the federal government or within a DC-based not-for-profit that interacts with the federal government. DC Externs engage in a weekly seminar featuring off the record conversations with attorneys who work in the White House, on Capitol Hill, at agencies, non-profits, and in government relation offices at Fortune 500 companies. Students also take an ethics course and engage in several reflection sessions.

WHY CHOOSE THE DC EXTERNSHIP?

The DC Externship is your chance to study lawyering as part of or in association with the federal government. 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.

This program is especially valuable to students who are applying to Honors programs or plan to work in DC after graduation.

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.

Interested students should visit

<https://www.law.columbia.edu/academics/experiential/externships/externship-federal-government-semester-washington-dc>. Students should also contact Natasha Harnwell-Davis, Lecturer-in-Law, at

nh2535@columbia.edu or Ejaz Baluch, Lecturer-in-Law, at ehb2153@columbia.edu with questions.

SELECT 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. – Voting Section
Civil Rights Div. – Servicemembers & Vets
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.

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

Trade Representative

Office of the General Counsel

House Committees
Antitrust Subcommittee

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

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- <https://www.senate.gov/employment/po/internships.htm>
- <https://www.usajobs.gov/>
- <https://www.justice.gov/legal-careers/volunteer-legal-internships>
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/get-involved/internships/white-house-internship-program/internship-departments/>

MANDATORY COMPONENTS

The DC Externship will be coterminous with the Spring 2024 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 four-day seminar explores the unique challenges and responsibilities of ethical law practice in the federal government. 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. Attendance is mandatory.

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.

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.

4. Experiential Learning Component

Externs meet with program coordinators several times to lay out their semester goals and track progress. Activities include two breakout sessions, two individual meetings, a visit by a coordinator 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.

PLACEMENTS

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. Ejaz Baluch 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.

To qualify as a placement for the externship, a student must perform at least 40 hours of legal work per week under the supervision of an attorney. The organization can be part of the government such as the White House, an executive agency, a federal commission, or a Congressional committee. Alternatively, the organization can be a non-profit that litigates against the federal government. Students are encouraged to meet with Natasha Harnwell-Davis to discuss their interests.

****Please note that some federal offices' deadlines are 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. If you have received an offer to extern full time, please still submit an application for the DC Externship and indicate the agency where you intend to extern during the academic semester.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE & SCHEDULE

Applications must be received via email by Natasha Harnwell-Davis no later than 5 pm on October 15, 2023. Late applications will be considered on a case by case basis. Applications must be emailed as a single PDF file to Natasha Harnwell-Davis at nh2535@columbia.edu. Please also copy Ejaz Baluch at ehb2153@columbia.edu.

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 extern. There are no "preferred" placements, and the list will not be binding during the placement process.). If you have already accepted an externship position with a particular agency (e.g., the State Department), please indicate that.
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.

PREREQUISITES & OTHER PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

There are no prerequisite courses for the DC Externship. 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 Natasha Harnwell-Davis or Ejaz Baluch 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.