

OPTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES HIRING LAW STUDENTS

What options are available?

Government agencies interested in employing KU law students during the school year (fall and spring semester) or over the summer can hire students as paid or unpaid interns. The Office of Career Services (OCS) at the University of Kansas School of Law will assist an employer hiring for either type of position.

Will paid and unpaid positions be treated differently?

Yes. OCS can help you recruit students for either type of position, but only students in unpaid positions are eligible for KU Law School credit through the Externship Clinic.

For both types of positions, employers should post their job announcements with OCS. However, if an employer is interested in the unpaid academic credit option, the employer must complete additional paperwork. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Externship Clinic Director must approve the unpaid academic credit position.

How many hours may a student work?

During the school year, students may not work more than 20 hours per week, regardless of whether the position is paid or unpaid. During the summer, students may work up to 40 hours per week.

Students in the Externship Clinic may receive 1 credit for every 40 hours worked. Typically, for a 15 week program (fall or spring semester), students will work 8 hours per week and earn 3 credits. In the summer, students typically work between 35-40 hours (lunch hours do not count), and students may not earn more than 4 clinical credits per session. Students are permitted to work part-time during the summer, but will necessarily receive fewer credits.

How do agencies obtain student clerks?

Prospective employers can either solicit applications through a job posting on the OCS website or by completing a Request for Services form and scheduling on-campus interviews.

If an employer is interested in having its unpaid position be approved for the Externship Clinic, then a Letter of Interest must also be submitted to OCS, which will be forwarded to the Externship Clinic Director. The supervising attorney should prepare this letter.

What is the Externship Clinic?

The Clinic provides students with an opportunity to obtain academic credit for legal work performed at government agencies and certain public international organizations. If students have applied for, or accepted, a non-paying position either with a government agency or a public international organization, students may be able to receive credit through the Clinic for the work done for the organization. For more information about the Externship Clinic, visit the “Academic” link at www.law.ku.edu.

What types of “jobs” qualify?

For paid positions, all employers, including private law firms and government agencies, are encouraged to work with OCS. Although OCS assists only in the hiring process for paid positions, employers are encouraged to ensure that students gain legal experience and have adequate supervision.

For unpaid positions, students may choose to receive academic credit for legal positions with government agencies and public international organizations approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Externship Clinic Director. Positions with a private law firm or other private for-profit entity do not qualify. Students may not gain academic credit if they simultaneously receive monetary compensation for their work. However, students are not prohibited from receiving scholarship assistance or appropriate expense reimbursement.

What are the supervising attorney’s responsibilities when the student seeks academic credit?

The supervising attorney must submit a Letter of Interest. The letter must explain what the student will do for the organization, specify the amount of time the student will work each week, and address how the organization will assure the student will get an excellent legal experience.

At the end of the externship, the supervising attorney shall provide the student and the Clinic Director with a comprehensive written evaluation of the student’s performance. The student will provide the evaluation form to the supervising attorney. The supervising attorney must also be willing to meet or talk with the Clinic Director about the externship.

What are the responsibilities of the student intern?

For both paid and unpaid positions, students must meet the requirements of the attorney supervisor at the job.

Before academic credit will be awarded for the unpaid position, students must attend an orientation session at the start of the semester or summer session and provide the Clinic Director with a copy of the supervisor’s evaluation of the student’s work at the end of the semester. Students must find a faculty member willing to act as his/her sponsor and regularly communicate with that sponsor. Students must maintain a journal and submit weekly entries to the supervising attorney, Faculty Sponsor, and to the Clinic Director. Students must also submit a report at the end of the semester or summer session that provides information (in addition to information included in the journal) about the student’s overall experience, quality of supervision, quality of work assignments, skills developed, and progress in meeting the educational objectives. Finally, students must complete a research paper, which the Faculty Sponsor will grade.

Who should I contact for more information?

Contact OCS at 785.864.4377 or carservlaw@ku.edu.