



Civil Government Field Placement

Possible Placements: Orlando City Attorney, Orange-Seminole-Osceola-Pinellas County Attorney's Offices, Department of Children and Families

SUMMER: 5 Credits – 35 Hour Week – 10 Weeks – Total 350 Hours plus a Weekly Seminar

FALL: 5 Credits – 25 Hour Week – 13 Weeks – Total 325 Hours plus a Weekly Seminar

Placement Requirements: Students placed in a Federal, County, or State agency's legal department must meet the following criteria – Have completed 4 semesters and received not less than 48 credit hours. Have a 2.0 or higher cumulative grade point average and completion of Professional Responsibility, Evidence and Administrative Law. Students are required to spend a minimum of 25-35 hours per week at their placement, depending on the semester, and receive five hours of credit for satisfactory completion. Attendance at a weekly seminar is also required. The seminar portion of the externship is graded; the field portion is pass/fail.

Students participating in the Civil Government Externship must be certified as legal interns (CLIs) in order to represent the State of Florida. You will need your Notice of Clearance from the Florida Bar to apply.

Objective I: Learning about government and public law. At these placements, students learn about various aspects of government civil law. Legal topics range may include taxation and finance, employment, permitting, contracts, transportation, animal services, utilities, eminent domain, land use, government benefits, government ethics and Constitutional law issues. Depending on the placements, students may participate in staff meeting, client meetings, committee meetings, public hearings and board meetings, or depositions and trials. These placements allow students to learn about both the transactional and litigation requirements placed on civil government lawyers and the valuable service they provide to citizens across a wide range of topics.

Objective II: Improving legal writing and researching abilities. The nature of civil practice mandates that students know how to prepare effective and concise legal documents. Included here may be the preparation of memorandum of law, contracts, ordinances, letters, pleadings, or interoffice documents of every nature.

Objective III: Understanding the relationship between politics and public law. By preparing for and attending public and executive session meetings on agency legal issues, students observes how the political process of negotiation and comprise results in the formulation of sound public policy and reasonable laws that can be intelligently and effectively implemented. Student input and contribution to this process demonstrates to them the values of legal education, ethical standards, and public service.

Objective IV: Negotiation and Mediation skills. As a prerequisite to litigation, contract creation, statute formulation, or other office issues, students have the opportunity to observe and participate in negotiation and mediation sessions. These experiences highlight the value of compromise and settlement, and demonstrate how an attorney considers legal judgment, expertise, experience, ethics, and understanding of human nature all contribute to the process of resolving difficult issues before they become insurmountable issues.

Objective V: Creating, reviewing, and implementing public contracts. One of the most important missions of civil government practice is procurement of community goods and services. How government contracts go from conception to implementation and review is a crucial component of civil government practice. Here students have the opportunity to observe how competing financial and policy issues are resolved in pragmatic terms.

Objective VI: Gathering and using facts. A universal and vital skill for lawyers concerns their ability to collect and use facts crucial to the outcome of their case. Here students observe and participate in both formal discover and informal fact collection. Interviewing techniques learned in trial skills classes are implemented here often, as are skills necessary for creating and responding to interrogatories and other forms of information gathering.

Objective VII: Dealing with the friction caused by Federal and State legislation's impact on government or agency implementation. This educational objective covers more than simply being asked to review a statute or other directive which affects government operations. It requires understanding how the various political, legal, administrative, and human aspects of the law affect citizens in their everyday lives. Students learn that the law is only effective when it works for the interests of citizens.

Objective VIII: Understanding the requirements of Rules of Professional Conduct. The first and most important component of a lawyer's profession is to know and abide by the ethical and moral constraints of our practice. In this placement, students have the daily opportunity to observe how their supervisors and others in the office reach effective results by uniformly working within the rules.