

Field Placement

Introduction

UMass Law Field Placement courses offer opportunities for students to enhance their practical understanding of what it means to be a lawyer. This course offers a variety of different types of placements, including judicial internships, government placements, and private practice. We have described in more detail below how they can provide an excellent way for students to develop professionally by practicing as student lawyers or law clerks while supervised by professors and/or field supervisors.

Once you accept a field placement, you may not withdraw from the Field Placement course.

Field Placement - (Law 639) 3 or 4 credits, enrollment limited to 12; Letter Graded;
Prerequisites or corequisites: Professional Responsibility (Law 525);
completion of 30 credit hours minimum GPA 2.3 (3.0 for Judicial
Placements); Some placements may qualify for MA Rule 3:03 or RI Rule 9
student lawyer certification.

Field Placement provides the student with the opportunity to experience the practice of law. Students will work under the supervision of a practicing attorney or judge, gaining practical skills in a real-world setting. Time required at the placement is approximately 10 hours per week (130 hours per semester) for the 3-credit option, and approximately 13 hours per week (170 hours per semester) for the 4-credit option. A weekly seminar permits students to discuss their experiences (while maintaining client confidentiality) and focus on various ethical issues encountered in practice. Class discussions will also address substantive areas of law and skills building. Of the 90 credits required for graduation, students are required to earn at least 65 in courses that meet in regularly scheduled class sessions. This course does not count toward the 65-credit requirement.

A weekly seminar permits students to discuss their experiences (while maintaining client confidentiality) and focuses on ethical and other issues encountered in practice. Class discussions may also encompass setting up a law office, and the theory and practice of legal skills such as interviewing, counseling, and professionalism. Students write weekly journals, a fifteen page paper and complete other assignments as determined by the professor. Admission into the course requires an interview with the professor teaching the seminar.

Judicial Placements: Students applying for judicial placements must submit a writing sample and, if requested, letters of recommendation. In these placements, in addition to participating in the Field Placement class, students observe a judge in chambers and court, conduct research, and may have an opportunity to work on judicial opinions.

Advanced Field Placement - (Law 693) – 3 or 4 credits, enrollment limited to 12; Letter Graded;
Prerequisites or corequisites: Professional Responsibility (Law 525);
completion of 30 credit hours; minimum GPA 2.3 (3.0 for Judicial
Placements); completion of a prior field placement.

Students taking the Field Placement course for a second semester are encouraged to seek a

placement in a different law office (public or private) or judicial chamber to broaden their knowledge and skills in the practice of law, attend weekly seminars, write journal entries, and a final fifteen (15) page paper. Additional assignments will be determined by the professor teaching the class.

Students who wish to repeat a prior experience must obtain the permission of Assistant Dean John Quinn, who may consult with the professor teaching the field placement seminar, before permitting you to repeat an experience.

For additional information please contact Crystal Desirey, Clinical Programs Coordinator at cdesirey@umassd.edu or Assistant Dean John Quinn at Jquinn3@umassd.edu.

MA Supreme Judicial Court Rule 3:03 Approval/RI Supreme Judicial Court Rule 9 Approval:

For students working in either non-profit organizations or governmental offices requiring them to appear before the courts of the Commonwealth, Supreme Judicial Court Rule 3:03[MA] / 9 [RI] approval may be available. Please see Crystal Desirey to coordinate the application. More information regarding this rule may be found at <https://www.mass.gov/guides/student-practitioners> or <https://www.umassd.edu/media/umassdartmouth/school-of-law/forms/rhode-island-rule-9-request-for-certification-form.pdf>.

Participation in any of these opportunities requires submission of an application form to the LEC for approval by Assistant Dean John Quinn who may consult with the professor teaching the seminar component of the course.

Students are allowed to enroll in one clinic or one field placement per semester.