Registration Manual

Clinical Education

http://www.stetson.edu/law/academics/advocacy/clinics/

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Welcome to Stetson University  
College of Law’s Clinical Programs

Introduction

Unlike more traditional courses, a clinical course offers the unique opportunity to learn by observing or participating in actual legal proceedings or situations. The term “clinical course” refers to both the internships and clinics offered at Stetson. These experiential courses offer students an opportunity to work closely with judges or practicing attorneys on real cases by interviewing clients, researching, writing and observing legal proceedings. In some programs, students actively assume the role of a practicing attorney, as a Certified Legal Intern, in real situations under the close supervision of an approved, experienced attorney. Professional skills are developed and honed in the practice component of each clinical course. In the academic component, students learn substantive, procedural, tactical, and ethical issues presented by the particular practice area.

Clinical Education Staff/Department

Professor Cynthia Batt, Esquire, Director of Clinical Education, is responsible for the creation, supervision and administration of all clinical courses. She is responsible for on-going evaluation to insure the academic integrity of each clinical, consistent with the educational objectives of the law school. The Director of Clinical Education works with overseeing professors, adjunct faculty and supervising attorneys to create and refine courses, develop syllabi, instructional materials, and curriculum. She also assists in counseling of students and resolving problems that may arise during clinics and internships.

• Office Phone: 727-562-7327
• E-Mail: cbatt@law.stetson.edu

Trista Mustaine, Esquire, Assistant Director of Clinical Education, is responsible for the daily administration of all clinical courses. She will help you with the application process, reporting hours during clinic, counseling regarding clinic selection, coordinating with Adjunct Professors and hosting agencies, and other administrative tasks.

• Office Phone: 727-562-7800, Ext. 7227
• E-Mail: clinicaled@law.stetson.edu

Shirley Wells, Legal Assistant for Clinical Education, is responsible for assisting in all daily aspects of clinical administration. She will also help you with the application process, reporting hours during clinic, counseling regarding clinic selection, coordinating with Adjunct Professors and hosting agencies, and other administrative tasks.

• Office Phone: 727-562-7800, Ext. 7315
• E-Mail: clinicaled@law.stetson.edu
Please read all of the materials in this packet

We want your choice of a clinical course to be as informed as possible – it is a professional commitment which should not be taken lightly. We also want the process to be as painless as possible, and we have tried to put all of the important information in your hands.

Hours Required

Each clinical course has different requirements for the number of hours you must work each week and for the semester overall. Please review carefully the number of hours required before listing a course as a choice.

Grading

All clinical courses are graded on a S+, S, S-, or U basis. Generally, grades are assigned by each program’s overseeing professor with input from each student’s on-site supervisor. Clinics and internships provide students with important opportunities to gain valuable, real-world experience and represent a significant step in the student’s legal education. Furthermore, the interaction between students and the legal community that results from these courses has a significant impact on Stetson’s reputation within the legal community. Consequently, students are required to demonstrate a commitment to hard work, professionalism, and conscientious adherence to the code of legal ethics at all times. Anything less will result in a grade of U and the student will be disqualified from further participation in clinics or internships.

Educational Objectives of the Clinical Programs

Experiential learning is the touchstone of clinical education. Each student is confronted with problem situations in which he or she must assume the lawyer’s role. Under the close supervision of clinical full-time and adjunct faculty, they work through the situation, learning far more than the applicable procedural and substantive law. For many students, it will be the first time that they wrestle with the fluidity and complexity of developing issues and real clients. For every student, the clinical program is a structured opportunity to encounter the practice of law under the guidance of a teacher for whom educational goals are paramount.

In an effort to promote clinical teaching responsive to our aims, we have identified several goals for clinical courses.

- Provide opportunities for students to assume the professional role of a practicing attorney in some clinical courses.
- Enhance students’ professional skills through participation in activities such as interviewing, counseling, negotiation, oral and written advocacy, investigation, and the formulation of case strategy.
• Expose students to issues of professional responsibility within the context of legal practice.
• Teach students how to identify problems and generate strategies and solutions.
• Provide students with insight into the realities of the legal system, its institutions, and limitations.
• Instill fundamental values of the legal profession, including the obligation of public service and pro bono and the promotion of justice, fairness and morality.
• Develop student’s ability to learn from experience, including critical professional feedback on performance.

Professional Responsibility

Furthering the student’s sense of professional responsibility is one of the fundamental goals of Stetson’s clinical program. Stetson’s Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct apply to all students participating in clinical courses. Clinical courses are both professional working experiences and credit-bearing courses, and you should conduct yourself accordingly. Your performance will have an impact on your professional reputation, as well as the reputation of the entire Stetson community. The Florida Bar and future potential employers may contact supervising attorneys or other members of the hosting agency for references.

Some clinical courses prohibit students from working or volunteering outside of that agency while participating in the course. Please carefully read the course description for each clinical course. Because of the potential for conflicts of interest, students in all clinical courses must have all outside work cleared for conflicts and feasibility by the student’s supervising attorney, adjunct and the Director of Clinical Education. If you are participating in an internship, all outside work should be cleared by the faculty member overseeing the internship and your supervising attorney.

Please understand that “Failing to complete requirements associated with clinics, internship, and other off-campus courses than can affect the College of Law’s reputation and ability to place students into those programs in the future,” is a violation of Stetson’s Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct.

Eligibility

Minimum Academic Requirements

In order to participate in any clinical course, a student must be in good academic standing and have successfully completed all first-year required courses. Additionally, each program has requirements and prerequisites, particular to that program. Please carefully review the program requirements before listing as a choice. If you will not have successfully completed the prerequisites for a clinical course before the beginning of the semester for which you are applying, do not list that course as a choice. You will not be allowed to participate in that clinical course. You also have an ongoing duty to advise the clinical education staff of any changes in your status, such as a failure to maintain good academic standing.
Additional Background Check, Applications, Interviews

Many of the placements require interviews with supervising attorneys or judges, background checks, additional applications and forms that need to be completed before the hosting agency will accept the responsibility of supervising a proposed student. Hosting agencies have different timelines for these background checks, some taking several months. You must provide all requested documents by the deadline given by the hosting agency and/or the clinical education staff. If you do not complete and provide the necessary documentation before or on the deadline you may be removed from the clinical course and may not be able to apply for any subsequent clinical course without written permission of the Director of Clinical Education.

When to apply

The application process for spring programs is conducted during the preceding Fall semester and application for Summer and Spring programs is made during the preceding Spring semester. All students will receive an email that the application period is open. The deadline will also be posted on the webpage for Clinics and Internships.

How to apply

The registration for clinics and internships is separate from your registration for other classes. Students apply for clinic and internship programs online at http://connect.law.stetson.edu/cai/index.php/login/index/1.

These applications will be reviewed by the Department of Clinical Education, overseeing professors for each program and by the hosting agencies during the selection process. They may also be reviewed by other Stetson faculty members or employees and by the Florida Bar or other state bars.

- Questions that will be asked:
  - Name, contact information;
  - Anticipated graduation date, GPA, class rank;
  - Questions regarding prerequisites such as:
    - whether you are a citizen (required for some programs),
    - whether you are proficient with Westlaw and/or Lexis,
    - whether you have or may apply for Public Service Fellowship during,
    - semester in which you are applying for a clinic or internship,
    - whether you are enrolled in a concentration program,
    - whether you have previously participated in a Stetson clinic or internship,
    - Florida Board of Bar Examiners Application status,
    - Courses in which you are enrolled or have completed,
    - Preference of placement and location,
    - activities or obligations that will require a significant commitment of student’s time during the semester,
    - type of employment you will be seeking upon graduation.
What else is needed

In addition to completing the application, you must upload PDF versions of the following documents:

- current résumé;
- unofficial Stetson transcript with class rank;
- statement of Interest for each program chosen (please put one Statement of Interest per page in one document, e.g., you are applying for three clinical courses, you will upload one document containing three pages);
- and disclosures, if applicable, of any criminal or honor code violation. Please note, these disclosures will be reviewed by the overseeing professors and may be forwarded to any hosting agency and/or the Florida or other state bar to which you apply.

Listing more than one choice

While we would like to award every student their first choice in clinics or internships, there are a limited number of spaces available for each clinic and internship. Not every student will receive their first choice and some students may not be selected for any clinic or internship that semester. To increase your chances of participating in a clinic or internship you should review all of the available programs and carefully consider listing alternative placements. The more flexible you are with which agencies and which locations you apply for, the more likely you will be chosen to participate in a clinical course. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding clinics and internships.

Withdrawing from a clinical course once selected

Although you are encouraged to list more than one choice, please do not list a placement or a location unless you are willing and able to fulfill this obligation. By choosing a clinical course on the application you are making a professional commitment. Once you have been provisionally selected by a professor for a course, another student may lose the opportunity for that placement. Additionally, supervising attorneys and staff members at hosting agencies start working on background checks, reviewing cases to assign, and arranging schedules to accommodate students. Therefore, if you have any questions or concerns about your ability to fulfill the requirements of a clinic or internship please contact the Clinical Education Department before you apply.

The Stetson College of Law policy regarding the Drop/Add Deadlines for Clinics and Internships states: “The last day a student may drop a clinic or internship is generally the final day of classes of the prior academic semester. However, an earlier drop date may be specified in the application or assignment letter for the clinic or internship. After initial assignments are made, a student may not add a clinic or internship without the written permission of the supervising faculty member.”
Certified Legal Intern Process

As mentioned earlier, students in some clinical courses will have the opportunity to assume the role of a practicing attorney as a Certified Legal Intern, supervised by an approved licensed attorney. All Certified Legal Interns must have completed legal studies amounting to at least four semesters and 48 semester hours. Additional requirements and the process for becoming a CLI are outlined below:

To become certified a student must:

Register with the Florida Bar Board of Bar Examiners with either a Student Registration or a Certified Legal Intern Registration. The Florida Board of Bar Examiners will conduct an investigation into the student’s character and fitness. Students are urged to start this process their first year of law school to allow the most time for investigation to be completed and the least expensive fees. On average, this process takes 6 to 8 months and may require the student to submit additional information. Although the process is sometimes completed in less than 6 months, it can also take considerably longer. More information can be found at [http://www.floridabarexam.org/](http://www.floridabarexam.org/).

If the Florida Board of Bar Examiners determines there is nothing in the applicant’s background that would necessarily preclude admission to the Florida Bar, it will issue a letter of approval to the applicant sometimes referred to as a “letter of clearance” or “notice of registrant clearance.”

- Once the student receives the “notice of registrant clearance,” the student may be provisionally placed in a clinical course that requires certification. The student must then complete an Application for Certification which will be provided to them upon notification that they have been provisionally selected. The application requires the student to certify:
  - That he or she has completed legal studies amounting to at least four semesters or six quarters for which the student has received not less than 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours of academic credit or the equivalent if the school is on some other basis;
  - that he or she has read and is familiar with the Rules of Professional Conduct; and
  - whether there is something that might reflect adversely on their character.

  - If there is something the student needs to disclose they will have to provide a statement for the Court, including the specifics of each incident, with dates and dispositions, and a signed verification that all information provided is true and accurate, (all disclosures made in law school applications, to any state bar, and the Application for Certification should be consistent) and
  - the supervising attorney from the hosting agency will receive a copy of the disclosure and a form they will complete indicating that they have reviewed the disclosure and if they agree to supervise the student. If the supervising attorney does not agree to supervise the student, the student will not be allowed to participate in the clinical course.
  - The student must also attach a copy of the Notice of Registrant Clearance.

- The completed Application, any disclosures, and a copy of the Notice of Registrant Clearance must be turned in to the clinical education staff by the assigned deadline. The student’s Application for Certification, any applicable disclosure and the accompanying Agreement to Supervise form, and a copy of the Notice of Registrant Clearance will be forwarded to the Dean. The Dean reviews the files for all proposed Certified Legal Intern
candidates. For those students for which the Dean feel it is appropriate, he or she will sign a letter certifying that the student is of good moral character and adequately trained to participate in a clinical course as a Certified Legal Intern. If the Dean declines to sign a letter on behalf of a student, that student will not be allowed to participate in the clinical course.

- The clinical education staff will then forward the Applications for Certification, any applicable disclosures and the accompanying Agreement to Supervise forms, copies of the Notice of Registrant Clearance, and Dean’s Letter to the Florida Supreme Court.

- The Florida Supreme Court then issues a letter to Stetson designating qualified students as CLIs.

Additionally, Rule 11-1.9 allows students, upon graduation, to be certified to "make appearances for any of the same supervisory authorities under the same circumstances and restrictions that were applicable to students in law school programs pursuant to this chapter..." This is often referred to as a "post-graduate certification." Please note, in order for a student to qualify for certification post-graduation they must have completed a "law school practice program." Thus, in order to be approved under this section, a graduate must have participated in one of the qualifying live client clinics or externships while a student. Many state attorney and public defender agencies in Florida prefer to hire graduates who can qualify for post-graduate certification. Therefore, if your career interests are in these areas of public service, you should try to participate in one of the qualifying live client clinics or externships while you are a Stetson student.

Although there are several steps involved in the certification process, most students who receive their “Notice of Registrant Clearance” before applying for a clinic are successfully certified as legal interns by the Florida Supreme Court. Many of the “offenses” which must be disclosed do not prevent a student from participating in a clinic. Disclosures should be consistent with law school and bar applications.
Program Outlines
See http://www.stetson.edu/law/academics/advocacy/clinics/ for details.

Internship Program Outlines
Bankruptcy Judicial Internship
Elder and Disability Law Internship
Elder Consumer Protection Internship
Equal Employment Opportunity Law Internship
Environmental Law Internship
Family Law Internship
Federal Judicial Internship
Federal Litigation Internship
Florida Circuit Court (Appellate) Internship
Florida Circuit Court (Trial) Internship
Florida Department of State General Counsel Internship
Florida District Court of Appeals Internship
Homeless Advocacy Internship
Individual Externship
In-House Counsel Internship
Intellectual Property Internship
Labor Law Internship
Municipal and Administrative Law Internship
Private Practice Internship
State Litigation Internship
State Supreme Court Internship
US Court of Appeals for Veteran’s Claims Internship

Clinic Program Outlines
Child Advocacy Clinic
Civil Elder Law Clinic
Civil Legal Services Clinic
Federal Public Defender Clinic
Immigration Law Clinic
Innocence Initiative Clinic
Local Government Clinic
Low Income Taxpayers Clinic
Prosecution Clinic
Public Defender Clinic
Tampa Prosecution Clinic
Veterans Advocacy Clinic
Supreme Court Advocacy Clinic