Welcome to your international externship! An externship abroad will expose you to different ways of thinking, different cultures, and different systems of law. It is an opportunity to both learn how other countries’ history and values shape their legal systems and to reflect on the U.S. legal system.

Like all externships, international placements are also an important element of your legal education. They connect abstract substantive knowledge and legal thinking with the practice of law. They assist students in transitioning into their roles as law professionals, becoming practical problem-solvers, developing interpersonal skills, understanding mentoring relationships, and fostering professional networks.

The following information will help you make the most of this exciting experience.

GOALS & EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE

An overarching goal for Santa Clara Law’s international externships is introducing students to the various aspects of how law, in the broadest sense, is practiced in law firms, international organizations, NGO’s, corporations, and other entities outside of the United States.

It is recognized that international externships will vary widely in their purpose and the type of experience one may expect. Some will be with well-financed organizations, and others will be with NGOs operating on a tight, or non-existent budget. Functioning in these different settings is part of the externship experience. Thus, our general statement of goals must be adapted to the particular setting of the externship.

The purpose of the fieldwork is to afford qualified students the opportunity to observe, participate in, and critically evaluate the functioning of the relevant entity and its legal staff, to enhance the student’s understanding of the structure and role of the entity, to appreciate the realities of practice in the area, and to build skills which may be used in future work. There may be meetings during the externship with the program director(s) to monitor the externship, discuss your experiences, and ensure that the externship meets the content and experiential goals of the program. In addition, you will be asked to reflect on your externship through a series of reflection exercises, summarized below, and provided to you by your Program Director as you commence your externship. Any meetings and reflective pieces are mandatory to earn credit for the externship.

ACADEMIC AND WORK REQUIREMENTS

a. Student Responsibilities

You will complete a four-part guided reflection exercise. In addition, you will write a weekly progress report on your externship experience. Weekly progress reports should include a meaningful (non-confidential and non-privileged) description of work performed for the week and a brief analysis of the professional and legal lessons learned from these tasks. It may also include an evaluation of problems encountered or overcome, as well as questions raised. This report must be submitted to the Program Director for review at the end of every week. The externship supervisor must also evaluate your performance in the externship, verify that the requisite number
of hours were worked, and submit his or her evaluation to the Program Director. It is your responsibility to ensure that the externship supervisor is given the forms, completes the forms, and returns them to the Center for Global Law and Policy.

b. Grading

The final grade for the externship will be based on the faculty Program Director’s evaluation which includes an assessment of the extern’s written work as outlined above under “Student Responsibilities,” and the externship supervisor’s assessment.

c. Credit and Term of Externship

To earn academic credit for the externship, you must complete a minimum of 50 hours of work to earn one unit of credit. While 50 hours per unit is the minimum required to earn credit, students committing to an externship must fulfill the entire externship commitment to earn credit. This will often mean working substantially more than the minimum number of hours per credit. Only under special and extraordinary circumstances, and then only with the pre-approval of the Program Director, may you shorten the externship period. Even if such exception is made, you must complete at least 50 hours of work to earn a unit of externship credit. To have a meaningful experience, and to be of value to the entity, applicants for externship in certain locations or certain placements must commit to working in the externship for the entire summer. End dates may vary but most externships can expect to run through early to mid-August. While these time lines are generally fixed prior to the beginning of the externship, you and your supervisor may for further experience, agree as a private matter to a longer externship period if that is mutually desired.

d. Professional Conduct

Law students completing an externship abroad inevitably represent more than themselves alone. To the people you work with in your externship, you represent the United States, your law school, and our legal system. For these reasons, it is critical that at all times you comport yourself with professionalism and decorum and consistently with the custom and expectations of the placement. Business attire will be expected, unless you are specifically told otherwise. You must be prompt; meet deadlines; remain fully engaged regardless of the circumstances; demonstrate respect and be courteous towards all others, including clients, colleagues and support staff; and behave in an ethical manner.

You must comply with the rules of professional conduct, customs and courtesies of the relevant jurisdiction. All laws, regulations and ethical standards of the US, your home state, as well as of the host country must be obeyed. You must act on the assumption that you are ambassadors; therefore, you must act with diplomacy and courtesy. This may mean avoiding conflicts or confrontations that may be tolerated at home. Moving as seamlessly as possible in the context of the externship is critical. It is one of the fundamental goals of the international externship. Failure to do so will result in removal from the externship and the granting of no credit. Other sanctions may apply where appropriate.