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**Paralegal Studies Certificate and
B.A./B.S. in Legal Studies
An ABA-Approved Program**
www.gvsu.edu/cj/legalstudies

LEGAL STUDIES INTERNSHIP COOPERATING OFFICE INFORMATION SHEET

Overview of Program

The legal studies internship program allows students to get college credit for work in law firms, corporate legal departments, government agencies including courts, and other organizations that engage in law-related work. In order to receive credit, the student must complete a minimum of 200 hours of work in the cooperating office. This averages to about 15 hours per week over the course of a semester. Other requirements include keeping a daily log of activities, preparing a term paper, and giving a presentation about the internship experience. Students who enroll in the internship program must have completed Introduction to Law, Legal Research and Writing, and Civil Litigation I (unless it is taken concurrently with the internship) and must have senior status unless they obtain a waiver from the Legal Studies Internship Coordinator.

What does the internship program offer to the Cooperating Office?

There are a number of benefits to working with student interns. Interns can work on those projects that your normal staff keeps putting on the back burner because of their time constraints. Having an intern is a good way to give younger employees supervisory or mentoring experience and having interns in the office keeps your regular staff on its toes. The interns will ask a lot of questions, and your employees will want to be helpful, able to provide answers, and share their knowledge and experience. Having an intern in the office puts everybody on a slightly higher plane of operation. An office that may have hiring needs in the future also has a chance to "try out" an intern to see if that person would fit into the office, without having any obligation beyond the internship period.

What type of work can a student intern do?

To a large extent this depends on the nature of work done by the office where the student is placed. The goal of the program is to give students exposure to the type of work commonly performed by paralegals. Interns have had the following assignments:

Organizing files and records
Summarizing depositions and medical records
Obtaining medical records
Drafting complaints, interrogatories, and other litigation documents

Drafting letters
Organizing exhibits
Legal research, Shepardizing/KeyCiting
Fact gathering/investigation
Interviewing clients
Filing documents with the court
Preparing mediation summaries
Creating Excel spreadsheets

Students who have worked in the court system or other offices have performed some of the above duties as well as other duties unique to the particular office.

What are the responsibilities of the Cooperating Office?

The first responsibility of the office is to designate a supervisor for the intern. The supervisor is usually an attorney, a paralegal, or an administrator in the office. The supervisor is responsible for giving the intern an orientation to the office, and monitoring the intern's work.

Supervisors are asked to make sure that students get some exposure to the overall work of the office beyond the specific tasks that they are performing. For instance, arrangements may be made for students to sit in on meetings, observe court hearings and depositions, and accompany other employees conducting investigations.

Certain details of the internship are negotiated directly between the student and the cooperating law office. For instance, the student and the office reach agreement on the days that the students will be in the office. Many students are able to work in the cooperating office several days a week.

Internships may be either paid or unpaid. For guidance on when interns should be paid, see: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>. It is expected that students who are producing billable work will be paid for their efforts.

Other responsibilities of the Supervisor

Every student participating in an internship must register in the GVSU Internship Management System. Once they have done so, their supervisor will be asked to approve an internship agreement that will be emailed to them by the GVSU Career Center early in the internship period. It is essential that the supervisor read and approve the agreement.

Supervisors will be asked to participate in a short meeting once during the internship with the intern and the Legal Studies Internship Coordinator to discuss how the internship is proceeding. This meeting will be arranged by the intern.

Near the end of the semester, supervisors will be asked to complete an employer evaluation of the intern that will be emailed to them by the GVSU Career Center. Students will not receive credit until this evaluation is completed. Supervisors have the option of sharing their evaluation with the intern and they are encouraged to do so. Supervisor comments will be valuable to them.

Please feel free to contact the Legal Studies Internship Coordinator at any time with questions or comments about the program.