

Legal Studies Internship LS 490

In support of the mission of the Legal Studies Program, Legal Studies majors and the Certificate in Paralegal Studies, students are required to complete an internship in a private, corporate, or government law office under a site supervisor to allow students to apply academic knowledge to substantive professional legal work experience. Students with a Legal Studies minor are required to complete either an internship OR LS 495 (capstone). An internship provides students with professional on-the-job experience in the day-to-day routine and operation of a law office or other legal setting.

Key Information

Internship Coordinator:	Laura Marsh, LMSW Marshla1@gvsu.edu 616-331-7149
Prerequisites:	LS 101 and LS 324 LS 226 may be taken before or concurrently with LS 490. Senior Standing and permission of Internship Coordinator.
Credits/Grading:	3.000 – 6.000 credit hours; Graded credit/no credit.
Frequency:	Class offered every semester. *Students may also complete more than one semester of internship as elective credits.

Application Process

Meet the requirements, including the prerequisites.

Contact the Internship Coordinator to discuss where you would like to complete your internship, or for suggestions regarding when and where to seek an internship. If you have already located an internship it will need to be pre-approved. Students should plan to contact the Internship Coordinator well before the start of the semester in which they plan to intern. *Most students search for a site at least a semester in advance to have a timely application and interview process.*

Once you have met the requirements, you will need to get formal permission to register for the class. This requires processing a registration override request form.

No permits will be issued if a student has not communicated with the Internship Coordinator.

The Internship Coordinator is also available to meet with Legal Studies students who are not yet ready to enroll in the internship class but who would like more specific information on the internship process and requirements.

How to Find an Internship

Neither the university nor the Legal Studies Department will place you in an internship. It is a student's responsibility to find an appropriate internship location. Examples of appropriate locations include law firms, legal assistance centers, courts, and the legal departments of private companies.

There are many ways to find internships; through friends or relatives, personal contacts, other students who have found placements, suggestions from instructors, and by contacting the Legal Studies Internship Coordinator for information on locations that have taken interns in the past.

Internship opportunities can also be found on the "Handshake" site.

Before you start looking for an internship be sure you have an updated resume that you can send to potential internship locations. It is highly recommended that you make an appointment with the GVSU Career Center to have your resume reviewed before you begin your internship search. The Career Center can also provide you with tips for writing a cover letter and how to approach potential internship locations.

When to Start Looking for an Internship

You should begin looking for an internship location prior to the semester in which you plan to do your internship for several reasons:

- In most organizations the number of interns that can be accepted is limited.
- Some locations require a training session that is often scheduled prior to the start of the internship.
- Some offices or governmental agencies require an application and interview process, as well as a background check which can take some time.

Requirements for Completion of LS 490 (Legal Studies Internship)

- 200 hours of documented substantive supportive legal work at the internship location (approximately 15 hours per week over the course of the semester).
- Time/activity logs documenting time and professional duties at the internship site.
- Internship goals and objectives written by the student as applicable to the learning needs and the site.
- Internship agreement via the Career Center Internship Management System. This agreement must be approved by the supervisor at the internship location.
- Hybrid class meetings will be determined each semester.
- A resume that has been reviewed by the Career Center.
- Site review/visit between intern, the Internship Coordinator and site supervisor. (May include mid-semester electronic check in, or virtual or in-person).
- Intern and site supervisor final evaluations via the Career Center Internship Management System near the end the semester.
- A final paper