

INTERNSHIPS IN UT'S PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM

For over 25 years The University of Toledo's Paralegal Studies Program – one of Northwest Ohio's only American Bar Association approved programs - has been providing Interns to local law firms, government agencies, corporations, and the court system within the Northwest Ohio area and beyond. The following is an explanation of the Paralegal Internship through The University of Toledo.

What Is A Paralegal Internship?

The Internship is a practical on-the-job experience for the paralegal student while at the same time providing paralegal service to a law office. The student is required to work a minimum of 180 hours during a 15-week semester (Fall or Spring) or a 6-week semester (Summer). The manner in which these hours are structured is flexible to accommodate the supervising attorney's needs and the student's schedule (i.e. two days a week, all mornings, or all afternoons, etc.)

What Is The Profile Of The Student?

Students are enrolled in one of the four paralegal program options: a two-year associate degree, a four-year bachelor degree, a post-baccalaureate certificate, and the nurse paralegal certificate. All students bring different educational and experiential backgrounds to their internship experience.

One thing all our students have in common is the completion of a difficult course of legal study in highly acclaimed, American Bar Approved, paralegal studies program. However, students will still need additional direction, training, and supervision throughout their Internship from the supervising attorney.

What Is The Procedure?

A representative of a private law firm, private industry, or government agency law office that is interested in the Internship Program should contact Program Director John J. Schlageter, III. While meeting the needs of the office, Program Director Schlageter will make every effort to make a placement that most fully meets the desires of the student in regard to type of law practice, geographical location, and type and size of the office. *

Once the appropriate student has been selected, the supervising attorney and the student will meet to coordinate a work schedule and discuss the student's responsibilities. At that time, a three-part agreement is signed, which lists the types of paralegal tasks that the student will be assigned. In the agreement, the supervising attorney agrees that the student will accomplish these tasks, that the student will be supervised, that the attorney will assume responsibility of the completed work, and that the attorney will evaluate the student. The student agrees to complete the tasks for the purpose of an evaluation, and to preserve case and client confidentiality. Program Director Schlageter agrees to be available should any type of problem arise.

How Is Student Performance Evaluated?

During the term of the Internship, the supervising attorney will complete two evaluations, provided by Program Director Schlageter. These evaluations consist of printed forms on which the attorney evaluates the student in several different areas. Several open-ended questions are asked. One evaluation is sent to the supervising attorney around the seventh week of the semester. This midterm evaluation does not count toward the student's final grade. However, it is important that the student and supervising attorney sit down and discuss the student's performance up through that date. The final evaluation, sent in the fourteenth week, counts as one-third of the student's grade for the Internship. These evaluations are not only used for a grade in the Internship but they are also used when Program Director Schlageter writes recommendations for individual students.

What Is The Cost To The Attorney?

The bottom line is that many internships are free to the law office. However, some law offices do pay the interns. In addition, some law offices that do not pay interns pay gas mileage when an Intern runs errands around town. Additionally, some law offices pay a small stipend to help with lunches and incidentals as most of the Interns function on a very "bare bones" budget. Tax Deductible donations may also be made to the Undergraduate Legal Studies Progress Fund.

How Can The Attorney Become Involved?

The attorney should contact John J. Schlageter, III at the University of Toledo, Paralegal Studies Program (419-530-7748) to arrange for an Intern, or e-mail him at john.schlageter@utoledo.edu

* Please Note: Placements are dependent on the number of students enrolling in the Internship each semester. In addition, the desires of the student in regard to type of law practice, geographical location, and size of firm are considered. Therefore, it may not be possible to meet all requests for internship assistance.