Patent Law Externship

The Patent Law Externship Experience

Through the Patent Law Externship, students have the opportunity to gain experiential training and learning in the complex field of patent law, which will facilitate their transition from law student to competent and productive practitioners. The Patent Law Externship is a great fit for third-year students, and qualified second-year students, who wish to pursue an intellectual property career focusing on the preparation, filing, and prosecution of patent applications. This externship further enhances the Law School’s expansion of practical skills development opportunities by placing students for a semester at the law firm of Oliff & Berridge (O&B), a full-service Intellectual Property firm based in Alexandria, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C.

After undergoing extensive training by the firm, students will be expected to perform as first-year associates and will be given responsibility for a docket of patent cases. They will also benefit from the mentoring and guidance of practicing attorneys during their semester-long externship. Students will be required to adjust to the culture of a law firm environment and function professionally, and their performance will be critiqued by the firm during mid-semester and end-of-semester reviews.

Program Offerings

- Development of lawyering skills, such as preparing responses to office actions, drafting amended patent claims, and preparing communications with clients.
- Exposure to legal and ethical issues in context.
- Development of an understanding of workplace issues such as time management, workplace culture, professionalism, teamwork, and giving and receiving feedback.
- Experiential training designed to assist with career placement.
- Promotion of self-directed learning.

Requirements

- Students will need to be in good academic standing, eligible to sit for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) bar exam, and selected by O&B after an application and interview process.
- Students will be required to submit weekly journal entries covering the student’s experiences in the program and tracking their course-related time.

The Bottom Line

- The class is limited to a maximum of five students per semester, but no students have been selected to participate since the Fall 2011 semester.
- Students will be awarded 12 credits for the semester-long externship for 15 weeks of full-time work.
- Note: Credits from this course count toward the 19 maximum credits a J.D. student can take in non-law classes and law classes without a classroom component or clinics/externships without direct supervision of the clinical work by a law school faculty member.
- This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Patent Law Externship Faculty

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