Every student in the Paralegal Program must complete an internship as a required course for graduation. Here are some of the frequently asked questions and the procedure for doing an internship.

**What is an internship?**

The internship is a required 3 credit hour course. However, instead of the traditional classroom setting, you will be placed in a legal setting and will apply the knowledge and skills that you have learned in class work. We do not meet at a scheduled class time as is reflected on your schedule. You are only required to report to your work location during your agreed hours.

**Can I be paid for my internship?**

If you find your own internship and they are willing to pay you, I have no objection. Remember, however, that this is considered a class not a job.

**If I’m already working at a firm, can I use this position as my internship?**

Absolutely. However, your position must consist of paralegal responsibilities. If you are currently working as a legal secretary, your employer must be willing to either reassign you as a paralegal or give you additional responsibilities that would be handled by a paralegal.

**When do I take the internship?**

The internship should be one of your last classes. This gives you the benefit of the knowledge from your class work plus you are ready to enter the job
market if you are offered a position following the internship (which we find oftentimes happens).

**How do I register for the internship?**

You register like any other course.

**What if I don’t have a placement for the internship?**

We have a wide variety of possible placements. You can select from any type of legal setting (firm, insurance company, corporation, agency etc.) You may select one based on location (downtown, Hamilton/Fairfield or any of the suburbs.) You need to schedule an appointment with Professor Walter to start your search or advise her of a location if you have found one on your own.

**When should I start looking for a internship?**

If you do not have a placement, you need to schedule an appointment with Professor Walter approximately in the 10th week of the semester prior to the one when you plan to complete the internship (i.e. if you are doing the internship in Spring Semester you should contact Professor Walter at the 10th week of Fall Semester). This will give you plenty of time to forward you resume, interview and select a placement. You should start your placement the first day of classes in the semester you have registered.

**How many hours is my internship?**

Every student is required to complete 200 hours for their internship. You must keep a weekly log of your hours to verify that you have completed them at the end of your internship. Please refer to the Syllabus for instructions on your weekly log.
What if I don’t/can’t finish my hours in one semester?

It is impossible for some students to complete the entire 200 hours within one semester due to other commitments, jobs, illness, pregnancy, etc. If you fall into this category, you need to advise Professor Walter of your situation. You will be assigned a grade of I (Incomplete) and allowed to finish the hours in the following semester. Upon completion of your hours and submission of the evaluation form, your grade will be changed.

I have to work all day and could only do an internship at night. Is this possible?

If you absolutely cannot do your hours during the day, we have some nontraditional types of placements. Obviously your best exposure to a legal setting is during business hours but realistically that doesn’t work for everyone. Most of the nontraditional placements are working for an attorney during evening hours and weekends or obtaining a research assignment and completing it at a convenient time for you. If this is your situation, let Professor Walter know when you are seeking a placement.

Do I receive a grade for the internship?

Yes, the internship is a graded course. You must submit reports after every 40 hours summarizing your experience. Professor Walter will periodically contact your supervising attorney/paralegal for a status report and may set up a visit with you at your site. At the completion of your internship, your supervising paralegal/attorney will submit a written
evaluation. You will also be required to evaluate your experience.

**When are my evaluations due?**

Both evaluations (the supervising attorney’s evaluation of your work and your own evaluation of your work) must be received by Professor Walter by the last day of classes. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that the forms are submitted timely. You should check with your supervisor to make sure that they submit it since they often fail to realize the importance of submitting it timely. If it is not received by the due date, the student will be assigned a grade of “I”. Please note that the failure to submit the evaluations timely could affect your graduation!

**How do I get the details for the internship?**

When you are ready to do an internship you need to schedule an appointment with Professor Walter. This should be at the 10th week of the semester prior to the one that you will do the internship. You will be required to bring a resume with you to the appointment. You will start the process to select an internship following the meeting.

**Whose responsibility is it to find the student an internship?**

It is the student’s responsibility to send their resume to the selected sites, schedule their interviews and then select the placement best suited for their needs. However, Professor Walter will answer any questions and provide guidance for you in the selection process.
What if there are problems that arise during my internship?

Contact Professor Walter immediately! Most of the time the problems can be resolved but the sooner the better.

Is it normal to be scared/nervous to do an internship?

Yes. It is a new experience and it is common to feel unprepared and inadequate. However, after a few days on the site you will realize how competent you are!

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