

MELP & LLM Internship Handbook

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MELP/LLM Internship Checklist

- **Find an internship**
- Arrange for a **Faculty Sponsor**:
 - Line up a faculty member with expertise in the area of your internship.
 - Try to line up your sponsor before the preceding semester ends! This is especially important for summer internships (try to secure your sponsor before the end of the spring term)!
 - If you are having trouble finding a sponsor, contact Laurie Beyranevand and she will help direct you.
- Draft a **contract** that details your obligations and your onsite supervisor's obligations, including a deadline for your supervisor to submit a letter evaluating your work. Obtain signatures from internship supervisor and faculty sponsor. (details below)
- Complete **Registration Form**; this must be submitted with the complete contract
- Submit signed contract and complete registration form to Jett Vaden in the ELC two weeks before the first day of classes of the semester during which you will be completing your internship. If you fail to meet the deadline, we will not accept your contract or register you for the credits until you receive approval from the Committee on Standards.
 - To petition to the Committee on Standards, please submit your request as well as a complete contract (the committee will not hear your case without the contract!) to the Registrar.

Attention JD and post-JD MELP Students!:

JD and post-JD MELPs: Do you anticipate practicing law in Vermont? If so, you are required to complete a clerkship with a Vermont attorney. If you engage in an internship with such an attorney you may be able to count the time toward this Vermont clerkship. In order to do so, however, you must indicate your intention to the Vermont Board of Bar Examiners ahead of time. In entering into a Vermont legal internship you should consult with the attorney/supervisor to determine whether you can take advantage of this opportunity.

You may not earn JD credit through this program. See Professor Liz Ryan Cole or Professor Jeff White for information about internships for JD credit.

Finding Your Internship

- If you are interested in a particular subject matter, consider meeting with one of your professors to discuss possible internships in that area
- Review the listings on Symplicity, the online Career Services site that lists jobs and internships, for ideas of local organizations that are seeking MELPs
- Check out the directories at Career Services for ideas of organizations. (Many organizations do not have formal internship programs but would love to have a VLS student as an intern.)
- Schedule an appointment with a Career Services counselor to discuss other possibilities as well as how the internship fits with an overall professional development plan.

MELP/LLM Internship Contract Guidelines

Contracts must be submitted two weeks before the first day of classes for the semester in which you will be doing your internship (if you fail to meet the deadline, you must petition the Committee on Standards to complete registration—see checklist above). When you turn these documents in, you will officially be registered for the internship. At the back of this handbook is a sample internship contract and registration form.

Your internship contract for MELP/LLM credit should include the following information. Please email a draft of your contract to the Internship Coordinator for review before you obtain the necessary signatures to make it valid.

1. Your name, address, phone number and email while on internship.
2. Supervisor's name, agency/firm name, address, phone number and email.
3. Faculty Sponsor's name.
4. Number of credits.
 - Include the number of hours (weekly and total) and weeks you will be working. Please include your start and end dates. The amount of credit depends upon the amount of hours worked. Forty-five hours of work equals one credit. JD/MELP students should specify that the internship is for MELP credit. MELPs can pursue internships for between 2-9 credits, LLMs 4-9 credits.
5. Journals.
 - Students are required to keep journals reflecting on the days they work and submit these journals to their faculty sponsors on a bi-weekly basis.

6. Grade.
 - All MELP/LLM internships are pass/fail.
7. Description of Project.
 - A paragraph describing the actual work you will be doing. It is important to get this up front from your sponsor. You do not want to spend your time as a glorified “go-for.” Use this to outline what you want to learn during your internship experience. Because this is an MELP internship, your work should consist of at least 70% environmentally related projects. Internships are work onsite with a field supervisor; they are not research projects done here at VLS for supervisors at distant locations.
8. Work Product.
 - For internships of three credits or more, most faculty sponsors require an example of materials which you wrote, contributed to or compiled while on internship. For confidentiality, proper names can be blacked out with a marker. Once your internship is over, send a copy of the work product to your faculty sponsor. She or he will return it to you. Laurie Beyranevand reserves the right to review sample writings. (Do not routinely provide them to her).
9. Supervision and Evaluation by Sponsor.
 - A brief statement on supervision should be included to protect your interests. For example, you may want to meet formally with your supervisor once every two weeks for an evaluation session. A letter of evaluation from the supervisor for the faculty sponsor at the end of your internship is required. The letter must include a recommendation of pass or fail. Letters of evaluation are confidential. If you want to see a copy, you must get it directly from your supervisor. The faculty sponsor is not free to share it with you without prior approval from your supervisor.
 - Establish a deadline by which your supervisor’s letter of evaluation must be submitted as part of your contract; ideally, this deadline will be your last day of work at the internship.
10. Signatures and Dates for Yourself, Faculty Sponsor, and Supervisor.

Once signatures are obtained, give Jett Vaden the original contract and she will distribute copies to you, the Registrar, your supervisor, and Faculty Sponsor.

If necessary, you may amend your contract at any time after its initial submission until the last day of classes. Please handwrite the needed changes on your copy, have your faculty sponsor and supervisor initialize the changes, initialize the changes yourself, and resubmit your contract to the Internship Coordinator. For further information review the Academic Regulations regarding MELP/LLM Internships in your Student Handbook.

MELP/LLM Internship Registration

Summer Internships: Please submit the registration form below to the MELP/LLM Internship Coordinator at the ELC by May 1 (your information will be forwarded to the Registrar's and Business Office). Your contract must be submitted at least two weeks before the first day of classes in the summer term.

Spring and Fall Internships: The registrar's office will register you for the internship when they receive the complete contract (via Jett Vaden in the ELC). Your contract must be submitted two weeks before the first day of class. You can update the contract throughout the semester.

Tuition for the internship is due within a month of receipt of your bill. Remember to take care of Financial Aid matters as much in advance as possible.

Internship Credit Hours

45 hours of work onsite = 1 credit (regardless of semester)

For example:

~ 9 hours/week over 5 weeks = 1 credit (45 hours)

~ 20 hours/week over 9 weeks = 4 credits (180 hours)

~ 27 hours/week over 15 weeks = 9 credits (405 hours)

****If your internship is the only course in which you are enrolled (ie. during a summer or seventh semester), please note the necessary credit minimums:**

You must be enrolled in at least 3 credits to be eligible for financial aid from VLS

You must be enrolled in at least 5 credits to be eligible for health insurance from VLS

You must be enrolled in at least 3 credits to defer student loans.

You must be enrolled in at least 3 credits to be considered a Part-Time Student, and 6 credits to be considered a Full-Time Student

Internship Stipends

According to the ABA, no intern may receive wages or salary for work done for academic credit. *There are no exceptions to this rule.* Interns, may, however, be provided a stipend which is not to exceed expenses associated with an internship. Students may receive stipends to cover non-reimbursable expenses such as relocation costs and housing. Stipends are not compensation for work performed and therefore, students should not appear on the organization's payroll or have taxes deducted.

In a regular job, employers pay half of an employee's social security as well as unemployment insurance and often health benefits. Stipends are lump sums of money paid to cover expenses instead of payment for work produced. Because a sponsor will not be paying taxes and benefits, a stipend saves them money. You may receive a Form 1099 at tax time from your sponsor, stating the amount of stipend you received. The stipend should then be declared as income on your income tax return.

Many internship sponsors do not offer stipends. You should not assume that a sponsor will do so. Many state offices, federal agencies and non-profit organizations do not offer stipends.

After Completing Your Internship

Letter of Evaluation

At the end of the internship, you need to obtain a letter of evaluation from your supervisor (to be reviewed by your faculty adviser). Please submit this signed letter (in a sealed envelope) to Jett Vaden, MELP/LLM Internship Coordinator.

The letter must include an assessment of your overall performance and a recommendation of pass/fail. It is a good idea to remind your supervisor that these letters are due a week after the end of your internship in order to make sure the letter arrives in time for you to receive a grade. Therefore, you should obtain this document during the last day of your internship.

Student Evaluation

Each student must complete and turn in an evaluation of the internship and their experience. This needs to be turned in to the Internship Coordinator (jvaden@vermontlaw.edu) upon completion of the internship.

Once all the journals are submitted to your faculty sponsor, the letter of evaluation from your supervisor has been received, and you return your evaluation, your faculty sponsor can submit your final grade to the VLS Registrar.

Questions? Contact Jett Vaden, Internship Coordinator, at jvaden@vermontlaw.edu.

MELP/LLM Internship Registration Form

Internship Date: Summer Fall Spring Year _____

Name _____ Class _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Name of Supervisor _____

Agency/Firm Address _____

Phone _____ Number of Credits _____

Start Date _____ End Date _____

VLS Faculty Sponsor _____