



**National Center for Justice  
and the Rule of Law**  
*University of Mississippi School of Law*

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**PROSECUTION EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

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- ▶ **NCJRL Summer Jobs Initiative**

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## PROSECUTION EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Prosecution Externship Program is designed to prepare law students for careers as prosecutors by combining academic training with real life experience. The program offers three components: the Prosecution Function class, the Prosecution Externship Placement, and the National Center for Justice and the Rule of Law Summer Jobs Initiative. The academic training consists of the Prosecution Function class offered each semester. The real life experience comes from students being placed as prosecution externs with local, state, and national prosecutor offices. As externs students not only get the opportunity to observe the workings of a prosecutor office, but also the opportunity to assist experienced prosecutors prepare and try misdemeanor and felony prosecutions. Finally, through the Summer Jobs Initiative, highly qualified students are placed as law clerks with prosecutor offices and prosecution policy organizations throughout the country. A student who has participated in all three components will be prepared to step into any prosecutor office upon graduation and fulfill his or her duties as a competent, effective, ethical and professional prosecutor.

"Working in the D.A.'s office was the absolute highlight of my law school experience. Not only did it allow me to actually participate in a number of trials as a felony prosecutor, but it taught me many invaluable lessons about how the courtroom really works. You simply cannot gain that experience from any law school class. My only regret was that I only signed up for 3 credit hours instead of 6!"

Prosecution Extern  
Office of the District Attorney.  
17<sup>th</sup> District - Tupelo.

## PROSECUTION EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM: OVERVIEW

- The Prosecution Function. Law 685.
  - Seminar course with limited enrollment
  - The Prosecution Function Class is a pre- or co-requisite for placement as a prosecution extern
  - 3 credit hours
  - Regular registration
  - Regular graded paper course
  
- The Prosecution Externship Placement. Law 654.
  - Placements with prosecutor offices
  - Local placements during the semester
  - Local and national placements during the summer
  - 3 - 6 credit hours
  - Z graded
  - Registration: Special application, approval required
  - 3L's only (2/3 of required hours for graduation)
  - Pre- or co-requisite - The Prosecution Function
  - In exceptional cases, summer externs may take the Prosecution Function class in the fall semester following their placement
  
- The NCJRL Summer Jobs Initiative
  - Paid clerkship positions with local and national prosecutor offices and prosecutor policy organizations
  - Eight to ten weeks during the summer
  - No academic credit
  - Competitive application process

## THE PROSECUTION FUNCTION

### The Prosecution Function (Law 685)

The Prosecution Function is the classroom component of the program. The course is a three hour, ABC graded, twenty-five page paper class. The class covers the history, substantive, procedural, ethical, professional, and special subject areas a good prosecutor should be familiar with. The focus is on Mississippi law and procedure. The course is a seminar class with enrollment limited to students who are placed as prosecution externs that particular semester, or in the spring semester, who will be placed as prosecution externs the following summer term. Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure are co or pre requisites for the course.

The Prosecution Function class goes hand in hand with placement as a prosecution extern. By taking the Prosecution Function class before or during his or her placement in a prosecutor's office, or in the case of summer externs, immediately preceding such placement, the student is better able to understand the concepts of law, procedure and ethics which a prosecutor deals with on a daily basis.

Note that in certain instances, a student who has not taken the Prosecution Function course may be placed as a prosecution extern for a summer term and take the course the following fall semester.

"I was amazed at how much I learned from the Prosecution Function Class. I didn't realize it at the time, but the material we studied had real life application. [My externship at the United States Attorney Office] was by far the best experience I had in law school. I would recommend it to anyone."

Prosecution Extern.  
Office of the United States Attorney. Oxford, MS.

## PROSECUTION EXTERNSHIP PLACEMENT

### The Prosecution Externship Placement (Law 654)

The second component of the Prosecution Externship Program is the placement of students as externs in prosecutor offices. The students are sworn in as limited practice student-attorneys. Through such placements the students gain hands on experience by participating in the preparation and prosecution of criminal cases.

Placements can be with local, statewide or nationwide prosecution offices. A student who has a specific prosecutor office he or she would like to extern with, should see Professor Sinha during the semester prior to the eventual placement.

The prosecution externship is open to third year students who have completed two thirds of the required number of hours for graduation, and who are in good academic standing. They can earn between three and six credit hours, which equates to between 140 and 280 on site hours. Students assigned to United States Attorney Offices must sign up for six credit hours.

Positions with local prosecutor offices generally fill up fairly quickly. Every effort is made to meet a student's preference. However, there may be times when alternate assignments have to be made.

Students participating in the program as prosecution externs engage in a dual experience wherein they both gain practical experience through their placement, and earn academic credit. As such, there are certain academic components pertaining to such participation. A complete list of these academic components, and an application packet, can be found in the blue bordered brochure entitled "*Prosecution Externship Program: Extern placement.*"

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW  
SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE**

The third component of the Prosecution Externship Program is the annual NCJRL Summer Jobs Initiative. These summer placements are paid clerkships for students entering their third year of law studies in prosecution related organizations. The placements are for highly motivated students interested in public service as prosecutors.

The NCJRL Summer Grant Initiative is designed to place exceptional students with prosecutor offices and prosecution policy organizations across the country as paid law clerks. Through this initiative, the NCJRL has contracted with several organizations to create clerkships for University of Mississippi law students. Students work with experienced prosecutors or policy makers in their respective organizations.

Students are paid a competitive salary through a grant provided from the National Center for Justice and the Rule of Law to the place of summer employment. Students are paid directly by the placement organization. Academic credit cannot be offered for these summer employment positions. Participating students are selected through a competitive application process. Past clerkship placements have included: the National Association of Attorneys General in Washington, DC., the National District Attorneys Association, Washington, DC., the Mississippi Attorney General's Cyber Crime Division, the Mississippi Attorney General's Identify Theft Unit, the Los Angeles County (CA) District Attorney's Hard Core Gang Unit, as well as local District Attorney offices in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Information pertaining to the 2011 Summer Jobs Initiative can be found in the green bordered application packet entitled *Prosecution Externship Program: NCJRL Summer Jobs Initiative - Summer 2011*.

“My experience as an extern in the latter part of law school was both enjoyable and very valuable. Having been kind of burnt out on the normalcy and predictability of student life, the Externship shook things up and allowed me to get a hands-on feel for the real world practice of law.

While one may say that the venue is narrowed to criminal, one should also understand that [the externs] will be communicating with seasoned lawyers and judges, state and/or federal, who handle many areas of the law. [You will] be dealing with real people on both sides of the law and explaining the policies or laws that affect them, whether it be the public at large, victims, or alleged criminal defendants.

Also, it will be the first time for most of you to actually apply the practice and procedure in the real world that you've been studying. You will find there is much to learn after law school in this area. From research and writing, record keeping and time management to suspect and witness interviews, indictments, actual filing matters with the courts, producing and requesting discovery, negotiations between parties and handling actual matters in court, whether it be before a grand jury, judge, or jury.

...I would advise that anyone interested in the actual practice of law, not to mention criminal law, take advantage of this window of opportunity to serve themselves, their local communities and the “Great State of Mississippi.”

Prosecution Extern.  
Office of the District Attorney. Third District.  
Oxford. MS.