



THE JOHN MARSHALL LAW SCHOOL

COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a clinic and what does it offer?

The Community Legal Clinics are a large in-house law firm at the law school, made up of the nine subject matter areas of clinic activity. All services in the clinics are provided without cost to clients, who are usually unable to otherwise find or afford access to counsel. In the clinics, you have the opportunity to work on real-life cases and projects. You will work under the supervision of a faculty member, attorney, or other clinic supervisor. Clinic pedagogy focuses on the skills, ethics, and values you need to effectively practice law. The skills elements focus on the essential work of all practicing lawyers: interviewing, counseling, case theory, fact investigation, case planning, legal research, and advocacy, both written and oral, among others.

Where can I get more information on the clinical programs at The John Marshall Law School?

General information about individual clinics can be found on the John Marshall website at <https://www.jmls.edu/clinics/>.

We will hold a clinic open house for interested students to gather information on the clinics each semester, well in advance of regular pre-registration. Clinic faculty and current clinic students will be available to tell you “everything you ever wanted to know about clinics at The John Marshall Law School.”

What is required to successfully complete a clinic class?

Completing any clinic for the first time requires that you complete two separate components: a seminar class and fieldwork.

How many credits are basic clinic courses?

All clinics that you take for the first time are five (5) total credits with the exception of the Domestic Violence Clinic, which is six (6) total credits. Basic clinic seminar is a two-hour course (except Domestic Violence, which is three), and all basic clinic fieldwork is three credits. Each part of clinic is graded separately. Unlike the

seminar portion, there is no set time for fieldwork. Instead, you will schedule your fieldwork around your case or project, and in conjunction with your colleagues and supervisors.

How am I evaluated?

You are evaluated on your class component and fieldwork separately. The class component is based on a seminar where you learn the practical legal skills needed in the legal profession, as well as the necessary law and procedure in the area in which that clinic practices. You are evaluated for the seminar portion, like any other seminar at JMLS, based on your performance in the seminar along with any assessments assigned by the clinical faculty or supervisor. The fieldwork component is based on clinic cases and projects. You are evaluated on the work that you perform on clinic cases and projects, and your overall engagement in the clinic. Each clinic will provide you with evaluation guidelines at the beginning of the semester and assessment as a regular part of the semester work. Both clinic elements – seminar and field work – are graded.

How do I apply for clinics?

Beginning in the fall semester of 2018, clinic applications for the next semester will be available online. Complete the application and submit it online before the deadline for that semester, which will happen well in advance of regular pre-registration. Our goal is to have you know which clinic you are in before you pre-register for any other classes, so you can know how to allocate your remaining course hours.

When do I need to apply for clinics?

Applications for the spring semester will be available in early October and due before the end of that month. Applications for summer term and fall semester will be available by late February and due before spring break. Watch your JMLS e-mail account for more information on application availability and deadlines.

Oops! I totally missed the deadline. What do I do?

You can turn in your application late, but you will only be included on a waitlist for available clinic space.

How do I know if I've been placed in a clinic?

You will receive an email advising you of your acceptance, together with a letter of commitment (see next question) that must be signed and returned by the deadline, or you will be placed on the waitlist. Waitlist offers will be conveyed by clinic directors as openings occur.

Wow! I got a clinic placement. What happens next?

If you've received a clinic placement, you will receive a letter explaining the commitment you are making to clinic work that you must sign and return by the deadline. Your timely return of the signed letter constitutes completion of enrollment, which will occur before preregistration, so you need not take further action. The clinic director will be in touch regarding clinic orientation information. Also, many clinics may have readings or trainings that need to be completed before classes officially start. Please check your JMLS email and Moodle periodically for this information.

Do clinics fulfill the experiential learning requirement?

Yes. To graduate, you must take three credits of clinical or externship coursework (part of the law school's experiential learning requirement), which can be satisfied by enrolling in either a clinic or an externship.

Do I need to be a 3L to take a clinic?

No, as long as you have completed all required first-year core courses, as well as any additional pre-requisites of individual clinics, or you are simultaneously enrolled in a co-requisite for a clinical course. The clinics have differing requirements, as set out in the application form, which contains complete information on pre and co-requisites.

There are advantages to enrolling in a clinic when you are a 2L2 or 3L1. If you have completed 45 credit hours, you can apply for an Illinois Supreme Court Rule 711 license, which will permit you to appear in court under the direct supervision of an attorney. Note that not all clinics require a 711 license. The 711 license application and additional information is available at: <https://www.jmls.edu/registrar/711-license.php>.

I'm an evening law student. Can I still take a clinic?

Yes. Several clinics hold evening seminars: Business Enterprise Law Clinic, Family Law & Domestic Violence Clinic, Pro Bono Litigation Clinic, and IP Trademark Clinic. You may, in addition to the evening classes, need to be available on some occasions for daytime commitments in court. The Jackson student workspace will be open Monday through Thursday until 10 p.m., Fridays until 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. to accommodate both evening and day students.

Can I take more than one clinic at The John Marshall Law School?

Yes. Admittance into the Clinical Programs is based on availability. If you have already taken a clinic but would like to take another, you may apply to a different clinic in a subsequent semester. Every clinic that you take for the first time must be for the five total credits of all basic clinics.

There are often opportunities to continue in an advanced section of the clinic after the basic clinic has been completed. Students who are interested in enrolling in an advanced semester of the same clinic should contact the clinic director regarding the advanced clinic requirements. Advanced clinic courses permit you to enroll in variable credit hours from 1–3 credits, as arranged with the clinic director in question.

Is there a limit on the total number of experiential credits I can earn?

Yes. You may enroll in a maximum of 15 experiential credit hours toward the JD degree, with a maximum of 6 credits permitted for externships. The only limit regarding clinic credits is the fifteen credit maximum.

Is there a limit to the number of students any clinic can take?

Yes. To ensure adequate supervision of student work, enrollment in the basic clinic courses is limited to a maximum of 8 students per full-time supervisor in that clinic. The number of advanced students in any clinic is at the discretion of the professor (up to 8 students per full-time supervisor).

If I have completed 5 or 6 credits in one clinic, including the seminar and fieldwork, can I enroll in a different advanced clinical course?

No. If you wish to enroll in a different clinic after completing the seminar component and fieldwork component in a first clinic, you must enroll in both the seminar and fieldwork components of the second clinic.

Are clinics available during the summer term?

Yes, for some clinics. The Fair Housing Clinic, IP Trademark Clinic, Conflict Resolution Clinic, Advanced Family Law & Domestic Violence Clinic, Pro Bono Litigation Clinic, and Veterans Clinic offer summer enrollments, and the International Human Rights Clinic is periodically offered in the summer. Credit hours in summer are under discussion and will be announced prior to the opening of the spring application process.

How are clinics different from externships?

The clinics are in-house law firms at the law school. You will be supervised by qualified clinical faculty, and you will work with clients of the clinic. Eligible clinic students can apply for an Illinois Supreme Court Rule 711 License, which provides student authorization to practice under the supervision of an Illinois-licensed attorney, during their time in the clinic. The license allows you to appear in court and speak on behalf of clients, within the limits set out in the rules. In an externship, you will be working for a judge or for an attorney at a government or private law office outside the law school. In general, you will have less responsibility for cases and clients in an externship. Both clinics and externships have a weekly classroom component. Both clinics and externships satisfy the experiential learning requirement for graduation. Clinics provide more credits, and thus require more time, based on our belief that work for real clients requires significant work on research, fact investigation, client and witness meetings, and possible court appearances to prepare students to change lives. You may take both an externship and a clinic, but you should not take them simultaneously.

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