CLINICAL PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When am I eligible to participate in a clinic?

For most clinics you have to have completed three semesters of law school, or the equivalent academic credit hours, be in good standing and have taken or be co-enrolled in the following courses: Evidence, Professional Responsibility, Criminal Law and Civil Procedure.

Exceptions: Patent Clinic and the Lodestar Mediation Clinic accept students during their third semester.

What kind of work will I be doing in a clinic?

Depending on the clinic, you may be interviewing clients, drafting pleadings, drafting comments to proposed legislation, representing the client at a hearing, drafting a bill, testifying before a governmental agency, mediate cases up to $10,000 in controversy, mediate employment discrimination cases at the EEOC, etc.

What kind of lawyering skills will I learn?

Depending on the clinic, you may learn to interview clients, enter evidence into the record, conduct a press conference, draft a contract, draft affidavits, negotiate settlements, or deliver a closing argument. You will improve your skills in listening, questioning, problem solving, persuasion, professionalism, and professional judgment. You will also improve your abilities to work well with clients, to understand client interests, to balance legal and non-legal issues, to advocate for clients in a mediation setting, and to come up with creative solutions for resolving legal problems.

How do I apply?

You will find an online application for each of the clinics in the Clinical Program page. Your best chances of being accepted are if you apply during the open enrollment recruitment period.

How will I know if I have been admitted?

The director of the clinic will contact you.

I did not get in. Do I need to wait until next semester?

Not necessarily. Sometimes students drop their enrollment. Keep in touch with the director so you know if a spot opens up. Also, there may be openings in other clinics so contact the clinical program coordinator to see if there are other clinical openings.
How do I find out when applications are due?

The deadline is advertised on “daily disclosure.” Also, the clinical program holds a clinic fair and clinical program information table at the rotunda during the week leading up to the deadline. Stop by.

What is Rule 38 certification?

It is the Arizona Supreme court rule that allows students enrolled in a law school program to appear before the Arizona tribunals to represent a pro bono client. Students in the Patent Clinic and the Lodestar Mediation Clinic do not need to be certified under Rule 38.

Can I participate in more than one clinic?

You can only be enrolled in one clinic during a given semester but you can apply to a different clinic in a subsequent semester. However you cannot exceed 12 clinic credits.

Can I do the same clinic more than once?

You may be permitted to re-enroll as a returning student in a clinic, but you will need permission from the faculty director and you can only earn up to three credits for your additional time in the clinic.

I’m an LLM/MLS student; can I participate in a clinic?

Generally, under the Arizona student practice rule only JD students can represent clients. Having said that, some of the law clinics do not perform work that requires Rule 38 certification, and others may be willing to let you participate in the clinic in some capacity. Currently, the mediation clinic, juvenile clinic, post-conviction clinic, patent clinic, and the immigration law & policy clinic accept LLM/MLS students in limited circumstances. Contact the director of the clinic you have an interest in for details on the work available to you and the acceptance process.

What is the difference between a clinic and an externship?

Clinical students generally provide direct representation to a client. You conduct interviews, draft pleadings, briefs and appear before an agency or a judge on behalf of your client or clients. You can also assist a client in drafting bills or educating policy makers on important legal issues. The faculty member mentors and guides you in the representation process. In addition, you will participate in a structured legal skills classroom component designed and taught by a faculty member to teach you the skills necessary to represent your assigned client and the practice in a particular field of law. In a clinic, your field work is supervised directly by a college of law faculty member.
In an externship, you work closely with judges and governmental or non-profit lawyers to draft research memos, pleadings, and Orders which can then be used in practice. The externship requires an academic component of five classroom hours and submission four journals throughout the course of the semester. There are several placements which allow a student to be Rule 38 certified so that you have the ability to represent actual clients. In an externship your field work is supervised by a member of the legal community. Contact the Director of the Externship Program to find out more about externship placements.

Can I do both a clinic and an externship?

Probably not. It depends on the demands of the placement vis-a-vis the clinic, whether there is a potential conflict between your placement and the work the clinic performs, and whether the director will permit it. Contact the director of the clinic you want to participate in to get a more specific answer.

Do I have to travel outside the law school?

It depends on the clinic. Some clinics do most of their legal work within the confines of the law school. Others regularly appear at area courts. While still other clinics are fully contained outside the law school.

I have questions that have not been answered or need to be specifically asked to the clinic director of the clinic I am interested in. How do I contact him/her?

You can find a link to a list of college of law faculty teaching in the clinical program and the clinics with which they are associated on the clinical program page. Send them an email or call them, they will be glad to answer your questions.