

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: FOR LEGAL INTERNSHIP STUDENTS

Q: Why should I do a legal internship?

A: Undertaking an internship in a legal environment can help you decide whether you want to eventually practise as a lawyer. If you have already decided that you want to be a lawyer, an internship can help you identify the area of law you would like to practise in. It can also assist you to make contacts in the legal profession. Finally, it can give you meaningful experiences to refer to when applying for graduate roles.

Q: I don't have an internship or any contacts in the legal profession, can you help me find one?

A: Yes absolutely, provided you have completed or are concurrently enrolled in Legal Clinic (LAWS3005). We have good relationships with the Magistrates Court, barristers, community legal centres, in-house legal teams and law firms and can place you with one of them. By undertaking the Legal Clinic unit, you will gain essential practical legal skills and experiences to give you the confidence to get the most out of a legal internship placement.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. All decisions regarding the placement of interns remain solely at the discretion of the Legal Internships Unit Co-ordinator and Curtin Law School.
2. We cannot guarantee any student an internship even if you have completed, or are concurrently enrolled in, Legal Clinic.

Q: What if I don't have enough optional units to do both Legal Clinic and Legal Internships?

A: No problem. If you don't have enough optional units to undertake a legal internship (as part of your undergraduate Bachelor of Laws degree), you can undertake a co-curricular, or not-for-

degree placement (provided you are enrolled in a program of studies at Curtin University). The University will provide insurance coverage for you for up to 20 days provided you are not paid and are currently enrolled as a student (undergraduate or postgraduate) at Curtin University. Through these arrangements, you can undertake multiple placements, of up to 20 days each.

Q: I have my own internship, do I have to enrol in Legal Clinic (LAWS3005)?

A: No, but we strongly encourage you to do so. In the John Curtin Law Clinic, we offer you greater client interaction and responsibility for files than you are usually able to get elsewhere in practice.

If you have sourced your own placement, you will need to complete and submit the following documents to legal.internships@curtin.edu.au

- [BYO Legal Internship Application](#)
- [Fieldwork Agreement](#)
- [Confirmation letter](#) from host organisation

Q: I don't have an internship and I don't want to enrol in Legal Clinic, do I have any other options?

A: You can write to law practices and other organisations with an in-house legal team and ask if they are willing to provide you with work experience.

We have created a [template letter](#) that you are encouraged to use when writing to potential host organisations. It sets out the information that the hosts will require.

A list of lawyers can be found on the website of the Law Society of Western Australia here: <https://www.lawsocietywa.asn.au/find-a-lawyer/>.

Once you have secured a placement please complete and submit the following documents to: legal.internships@curtin.edu.au.

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- [BYO Legal Internship Application](#)
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Q: Can I be paid while undertaking my legal internship?

A: No, not if you are undertaking the placement through the University's work experience arrangements or if you are enrolled in the Legal Internship (LAWS2011) unit. You are covered by the university's work experience insurance arrangements on the basis that you are not being paid during your placement.

Internship and employment arrangements should not be in place concurrently between you and your host organisation.

If you are already an employee of your host organisation and you wish to undertake a period of internship, or if your host organisation would like to offer you employment after your internship placement, we ask that the periods of time for each of these arrangements be separate and distinct.

For example, if your host organisation wishes to offer you employment, the employment should only start after your internship placement has ended.

Q: I've heard that Legal Clinic and Legal Internship are Pass/Fail units. What does that mean and how does it affect my grade point average (GPA)?

A: That is correct, both are Pass/Fail units. No mark is recorded on your transcript and it does not affect your GPA. The units are excluded from calculating your average in order to determine, for example, entry into the Honours program.

Q: Are there any assessments for the legal internships?

A: Yes, if you are undertaking the internship as part of the Legal Internships (LAWS2011) unit. You should check the applicable unit outline for your study period for the latest assessment information but generally, there are 5 assessment components:

1. **CLS student record of hours:** to be completed and signed by you and counter-signed by your supervisor at the end of the placement – a sample can be found [here](#);
2. **reflection journal:** to be completed by you and submitted to, and assessed by, the Unit Coordinator of the Legal Internships (Laws 2011) unit;
3. **written research paper:** of no more than 2,500 words (excluding footnotes) on a topic which is of interest to your host organisation, and which has been approved by your supervisor;
4. **oral presentation of research paper:** of around 10-15 minutes, during which you will present your key findings from the written research paper and respond to questions from your supervisor and/or your host organisation (if a presentation to the host organisation is not possible, you are asked to consult with the Unit Coordinator);
5. **student evaluation form:** to be completed by your supervisor at the end of the placement (this includes, among other things, a request for feedback in relation to your written research paper and oral presentation referred to above) – a sample can be found [here](#).

There are no assessments if you are undertaking the internship on a co-curricular, or not-for-degree, basis. However, your supervisor will be asked to sign and complete:

1. **CLS student record of hours:** to be completed and signed by you, and counter-

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signed by your supervisor at the end of the placement – a sample can be found [here](#); and

2. **student evaluation form:** to be completed by your supervisor at the end of the placement – a sample can be found [here](#).

Q: Am I permitted to use my Curtin University student login to access subscribed databases for internship research?

A: No, you are generally not permitted to use the Curtin Library's resources for work that you do while undertaking your internship placement under the terms of the relevant licence agreements.

Q: Do I need to have a minimum GPA or have completed any specific units to undertake a legal internship?

A: It depends. There is no minimum GPA requirement for most placements.

However, for a placement with the Mining Warden at the Magistrates Court of Western Australia, you must generally have achieved a minimum of 75 in the Mining and Petroleum Law (BLAW3009) unit.

Q: Can my legal internship placement hours be counted towards my Practical Legal Training work experience hours?

A: It is possible for your legal internship placement hours to be credited towards your PLT work experience hours if you enrol in the Curtin PLT program **provided that** the placement meets all requirements of the Curtin PLT [Work Experience Rules](#).

Some of the key requirements of the Curtin PLT Work Experience Rules are:

- the supervisor must hold a current unrestricted Australian practising certificate or fall within one of the other categories of the Curtin PLT Workplace Experience Rules;
- the work performed must be meaningful legal, or law-related, work that includes most or all of the following: (a) significant interaction with external or in-house clients; (b) drafting documents; (c) legal research; (d) using a file management system;
- the placement must be undertaken within 2 years of the student starting (or finishing) PLT coursework; and
- the placement must be undertaken on a minimum attendance pattern of either:
 - (i) 1 x 7 hour day per week; or
 - (ii) 2 x 4 hour days per week (excluding breaks).

Students seeking to have their legal internship placement hours recognised by another PLT provider should contact the provider to determine whether such credit will be provided under that provider's PLT work experience rules. Links to the national and WA PLT work experience requirements are included below:

- National standards:
https://www.lawcouncil.asn.au/files/web-pdf/LACC%20docs/240769433_9_Standards%20for%20PLT%20Workplace%20Experience.pdf
- WA standards:
<https://www.lpbwa.org.au/Documents/Becoming-A-Lawyer/Admission-Forms/LPB-Form-A5-Application-for-approval-of-PLT-course>.

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Q: How many hours is my placement required to be?

A: In the Legal Internships (LAWS2011) unit, placements are for a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 days.

Under the not-for-degree or co-curricular legal internship arrangements, placements are for a maximum of 20 days.

Placement time and frequency must be arranged directly with the host organisation.

For the purposes of PLT work experience, a maximum of 7 hours can be accumulated in any 24 hour period.

You will need to check the number of hours required for PLT work experience as they can differ, depending on the PLT course you enrol in.

Information on the Curtin PLT work experience requirements is available here: PLT [Work Experience Rules](#).

Q: Can I do my internship at the law firm I'm already working at?

A: For the purposes of the Legal Internship (LAWS2011) unit, yes, provided that you are not paid during the period of your legal internship or exhibit other indicia of being an employee during your legal internship placement.

Internship and employment arrangements should not be in place concurrently between you and your host organisation.

If you are already an employee of your host organisation and you wish to undertake a period of internship, we ask that the periods of time for each of these arrangements be separate and distinct.

Q: I want to do an international legal internship, is that possible?

Unfortunately, international internships are currently unavailable due to the COVID19 travel restrictions

A: Yes, we have two international legal internship programs with funded places and language and cultural immersion training as part of the program.

These international internships take place in Jakarta, Indonesia (through ACICIS <https://www.acicis.edu.au/>) and Beijing, China (as part of the New Colombo Plan).

For more information on these programs, please contact the Legal Internships team using the following email address: legal.internships@curtin.edu.au.

Please note that you may not be able to enrol in, or receive credit for these international legal internship placements as part of the Legal Internship Unit. They may also not count towards your PLT work experience hours.

Q: I want to do an interstate or a rural / regional WA legal internship legal internship, is that possible?

A: We have secured two online internship placements with Community Legal Services in rural/regional WA.

However, we note that there are generally some additional considerations for other interstate and rural / regional internship placements.

If your supervisor does not hold an unrestricted Western Australian practising certificate, this will impact on whether the legal internship placement hours can be counted towards your Practical Legal Training work experience hours (for more information, see earlier FAQ on this topic).

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If your placement location is more than 50kms from metropolitan Perth, additional insurance arrangements will apply.

In each case, we recommend that you speak with the Legal Internship Team. You can contact this team at the following email address:

legal.internships@curtin.edu.au.

Q: When can I start my legal internship placement?

A: You are required to attend an induction session delivered by Curtin Law School staff **prior to** the start of your placement.

The induction days are held before the start of each trimester study period (usually in mid-January, mid-April, and mid-August). You can start your internship placement after completing the induction.

Q: What material does Curtin Law School cover during the induction?

A: During the induction, we instruct students how to make the most of available supervision during workplace experience and how to obtain feedback on their performance. We specifically cover the following topics:

- working in a professional environment;
- communicating with your supervisor; and
- assessment information if applicable (described above).

In relation to communications with their supervisor, students are instructed that:

- they must communicate with their supervisor at least once on each day;
- all communications with clients (written and verbal) must have their supervisor's prior approval; and
- if working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the student must not have

direct client contact in the absence of their supervisor.

Q: Where are the inductions held?

A: They are generally held at Curtin Law School's city campus at 57 Murray Street, Perth.

Q: I know a lawyer at an organisation that would like to take on student interns. Who should I refer them to?

A: Please refer all potential host organisations and supervisors to the Legal Internships team using the following email address:

legal.internships@curtin.edu.au

Q: I have further questions that have not been covered in these FAQs. Who should I speak to?

A: Please refer all legal internship queries to Legal Internships Team using the following email address: legal.internships@curtin.edu.au