THE FIRST-YEAR SUMMER

The first summer is an ideal time to explore career options that look interesting based on your experience and research. It is a time to develop skills, make good contacts, and become focused for the second-year job search when students seek to land a summer job that can lead to a permanent job offer. The first summer might include one or more of the following options:

• Public or private externship placement
• Private or public employment
• Faculty/law school research assistant
• Law and Religion Research Fellowship
• Study Abroad

The Externship Program

Externships are placements in the public or private sector that are designed to provide a real-life capstone experience for students completing their first or second years of law study. In a typical summer, about 200 students (both 1Ls and 2Ls) complete externships with private firms, governmental entities, public interest offices, and judges in over 20 different states and 20 foreign countries. The CSO recommends that all first-year students plan to do a summer externship.

Benefits of an Externship

One of the most appealing aspects of the externship program is the flexibility and diversity available to the student. If you would like to try out a particular area of law or get first-hand experience in a specific geographical location, an externship is one of the best ways to do so. An externship is also a valuable opportunity to develop connections and increase networking prospects for the all-important second-year job search. Externships may also provide legal experience that would not otherwise be available due to the extreme competition for paying, first-year summer clerkships.

Another benefit of a summer externship is the chance to accumulate law school credit. Students earn one unit of law school credit for each 50 hours of work, up to a maximum of six units. Most students participate in the externship program full-time for four or five weeks and earn three or four
credits. Earning credits during your first summer means that you can take a somewhat lighter course load during your second and third years.

Students usually prefer to begin their externships when school ends (i.e., the first part of May). However, the flexibility of the program allows for the number of hours and dates of work to be mutually arranged between the student and the employer. An early start leaves anywhere from 10 to 12 weeks of the summer break for other employment options. Although employers occasionally invite externs to remain as paid clerks for the remainder of the summer, there is no expectation that employers will hire students for the balance of the summer or that second-summer offers will be extended.

**Transportation and Housing Expenses**

The student is responsible for finding housing and for transportation and housing expenses during the externship. To locate other BYU law students in the area you are applying to, visit: www.law2.byu.edu/lawfriends.

**Selecting an Externship**

**Evaluate Options**

First, a student should evaluate the available externship options. This includes choosing areas of law that interest the student, as well as geographic areas of practice. During early fall semester, first-year students can learn about law practice in a variety of settings by attending the Career Services Orientation Week session, fall semester Lecture Series, brown-bag externship events, and the Fall Externship Meeting.

**Select an Externship**

There are a variety of ways to get an externship. While we will discuss these methods throughout the fall semester, here is a quick preview.

**Matched Externship Program**

During the fall semester, the CSO conducts the Externship Match Program in which first-year students are matched with employers using a medical residency model. Participating employers receive resumes and cover letters from interested students, evaluate the applicants, and rank them in order of preference. Students also rank the employers in order of preference. The highest mutual interest between student and employer is a match.
Self-Initiated Externship

Students may arrange their own externships directly with public or private sector employers. Students who want to pursue self-initiated externships must submit an online externship petition form which must be approved by Dean Mary Hoagland or Professor Jim Backman. Employers who have participated in the externship program in the past are identified on the CSO externship website. The CSO will also assist students in locating employers for externships. The externship petition form, and other paperwork, can be found online at:

www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers > Externships > Access Externship Database/Paperwork). Contact the CSO for the password.

International Externships

In addition to some matched externships in foreign countries, the CSO helps to arrange international placements through three other programs which are explained in more detail below: (1) Summer Clerkships, (2) Law and Religion Research Fellows, and (3) the International Request Program.

For more information on obtaining externships, see the CSO website or contact a member of the CSO staff.

Externship Program Requirements

Attend Mandatory Training Sessions

All BYU law students must attend two externship training meetings during their first year. Watch for email announcements from the CSO with the dates and times.

Complete the Application Process

Prior to beginning an externship, students must complete the required paperwork, including the Externship Registration Checklist, and meet with Law School Registrar, Nancy Hamberlin. The paperwork can be found at:

www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers > Externships > Access Externship Database/Paperwork). Contact the CSO for the password.
Submit Learning Plan and Self-Evaluation

Students must also write a learning plan that lists the experiences they hope to have during their externship. They will discuss this plan with their supervising attorney at the beginning of the externship. At the end of their externship, students will prepare a self-evaluation of their progress toward their goals.

Put in the Hours

Externs perform a variety of work assignments and can participate in the full range of activities available through the employer’s office. The supervising attorney provides work assignments (or puts the student in the normal assignment channels for summer clerks) and evaluates the student’s performance. Students can obtain one hour of law school credit for every 50 hours worked.

Submit Externship Journals

Throughout the externship, students are required to submit weekly journal entries by email. Faculty members involved with the program read and respond to these entries. Students are provided a list of topics to address when writing their externship journals.

International Opportunities

First-year students interested in international work have numerous opportunities for international experience during their first summer, in addition to externships they may arrange on their own.

International Summer Clerkships

The law school has two eight-week paid summer clerkships in London and South Korea. Students apply and interview for these positions during October.

Law & Religion Research Fellows

The BYU International Center for Law and Religion Studies provides eight to ten fellowships each year. The fellowship program consists of two parts. First, students complete a five-week externship working in area legal offices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world. When fellows return, they work the remainder of the summer
as paid research assistants for the BYU International Center for Law and Religion Studies.

Research fellows are selected by the Center each October. ALC offices are located in Salt Lake City, Chicago, Mexico City, Guatemala City, Auckland, Hong Kong, Frankfurt, Moscow, Lima, Sao Paulo, Santo Domingo, and Accra.

*For more information:*

The International Center for Law and Religion Studies is located in the Law School and administers this fellowship program. For further information, contact the Center by calling (801) 422-6842, or stopping by room 452 JRCB.

**International Request Program**

The law school is extremely fortunate to have its International Request externship program, which is made available through the generosity of very kind friends. Students who are interested in traveling abroad and working in a legal office may submit the names of three countries for an externship placement. You are expected to earn three units of law school credit which takes approximately four weeks. Students should be able to speak the language of the country they are requesting. If needed, you may receive a travel stipend through the CSO, which will help cover a portion of your airfare. Students submit their request in October, to Karen Andrews, the Externship Advisor. Placements are made on a rolling basis from November to April.

**Study Abroad**

Many law schools host study abroad programs in numerous countries throughout the world. These programs give you the opportunity to earn law school credit, meet students from other law schools, and gain an interesting learning experience. Study abroad programs can last from just a few weeks to several months, so you may be able to participate in an externship or work at a paid job in addition to participating in the program. Information about study abroad programs is available online.

**First-year Paid Employment Opportunities**

No matter which law school you attend, paid employment with a law firm may be difficult to obtain as a first-year law student because employers generally focus on hiring second-year students. The externship program is
designed to provide students with professional experience to assist them in narrowing their career goals and obtaining marketable skills to use as they look for employment during their second and third years.

Students who obtain paid summer employment often devote an enormous amount of time to landing their jobs. If you are serious about finding paid employment after your first year of law school, be prepared to make finding that employment a regular job in and of itself.

Persistence is essential if you hope to obtain a paid summer job. Many employers receive hundreds of resumes for only one or two spots, so you may want to try to meet with employers during placement break or the holiday season. During the holiday season, however, it may take several phone calls to reach someone who can offer you an interview.

Some employers may require your grades before granting you an interview. If so, and especially if your grades are particularly good, make a phone call or send an email to the hiring partner or recruiting coordinator as soon as you receive your grades. Additionally, make an attempt to obtain an interview as soon as possible after grades come out.

**Research Assistants**

Many professors hire law students at the end of their first year to assist them with research. These are paid positions through on-campus employment. The hours are usually flexible and can be worked around another job or an externship. Working as a research assistant is a great way to build a mentoring relationship with a law school faculty member.

Professors needing research assistants often post the job opening around the law school and on the job search board, or advertise openings by email or on the law school website. However, if you are interested in being a research assistant for a particular professor, you may also want to contact the professor directly.

**Law Firms**

There is a variety of summer work available in law firms, but you are competing with second-year students who have more training that you do. So, it’s important to use all of your connections, start early, and realize that you will likely have more success in a medium or small firm.
Competition is fierce for first-year law firm positions, so do not wait until the spring placement break to visit the town where you are concentrating your efforts. If you will be in that city during the semester break, a law firm may be willing to interview you while you are there.

**Small and Medium Firms**

Small and medium law firms hire law students for the summer if there is a need. These firms may hire as late as April or May if they cannot forecast their summer hiring needs until later in the year. If you really want a law firm experience your first summer, do not give up on finding a job if you do not have an early offer. Because small and medium firms may not have the resources to conduct on-campus recruiting of first-year students, you may need to make yourself available to visit the firms to interview.

**Large Firms**

The Association for Legal Career Professionals (NALP) is an organization used by hiring attorneys, recruiting coordinators, and law school career service professionals in the U.S. and Canada. The legal employers in NALP tend to be large law firms (100+ attorneys) in big cities.

Be realistic in your efforts to obtain paid employment from a large NALP firm as a 1L. Large firms tend to accept second-year law students, but demonstrating your interest in them as a 1L will reflect positively on you.

**Winter Recruiting Programs**

Several employers come on campus to interview students (especially 1Ls) during February and March of winter semester. These employers often hire only one or two first-year law clerks, and tend to be grade conscious. Most employers who come on campus to hire first-year students tend to be from the Rocky Mountain region (a majority of them being from Utah). Given this limited exposure, first-year students should not rely solely on spring on-campus interviews for finding a summer job.

In February, BYU participates in the Northwest Public Service Career Fair, which is held in Seattle and Portland. The Seattle day of the fair largely features employers from Washington, and the Portland day features employers from Oregon. Students who want employment in the northwest can meet with a wide variety of public interest employers at the fair.
Self-Initiated Searching

If you have an idea about what you want to do, do not be afraid to get out and knock on doors. For instance, one first-year student received a paid offer from a congressional committee in Washington, D.C., by literally knocking on office doors when she was in town for a few days. Other students have found jobs at law firms in their home towns using the same method. Someone needs to get these jobs, so it might as well be you if you are willing to ask! Even if you do not receive a job offer, you will meet interesting people and may even make valuable networking contacts.

Types of Employment During Law School (Other Than Clerking for a Firm)

Externships

Externships are a wonderful opportunity to get class credit while learning more about the legal profession. The CSO has a long list of employers who would like to have law students work for them during the 2L and 3L school years or over the summer in exchange for law school credit. For a list of these employers, visit the Externship Database: www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers > Externships > Access Externship Database/Paperwork). Contact the CSO for the password.

Moreover, unlike paid positions, first-year students can start looking for an externship position before November. All first-year students should seriously consider an externship as part of their first summer experience.

Judicial Externships/Clerkships

Many judges throughout the country like to have law students work for them during the summer or school year. This can be an invaluable learning experience for students interested in doing a judicial clerkship after they graduate or for students wanting to improve their legal reasoning and writing skills. Law students have commented positively on the advantages of working for a judge, including experiencing actual trials and working on the various motions, orders, and sentencings that come before the court. Most often, a judicial extern is able to see things that they learn in law school, such as the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, applied to real life situations. This practical application of the law augments the extern’s knowledge in these areas. Interested students can obtain one hour of law school credit.
for every 50 hours worked. Judicial externships are highly recommended, especially for those interested in doing a post-graduate judicial clerkship.

**Public Interest Externships**

Many public interest organizations accept law students as externs or interns. Although many of these positions pay little, if anything, students who work in the public interest sector can gain important practical experience to use later on, either in a public interest job or in a law firm. In particular, students working in public interest law gain an increased appreciation of the diverse legal problems that face communities and individuals. As with other externships, students doing public interest externships can earn one hour of law school credit for every 50 hours worked. Grants and scholarships are sometimes available for students doing public interest externships.

For more information, see the CSO Public Interest Guidebook: [www.law2.byu.edu](http://www.law2.byu.edu) (click on: Current Students > Careers > Guidebooks > Public Interest Guidebook).

**Research Assistants**

Most of the law school faculty members hire law students to perform legal research on a variety of topics. These are often paid positions, and the work environment is conducive to a law student's hectic life, as the hours are generally flexible. Some professors announce the positions during their classes or post announcements around the school. Students may also perform research for professors for law school credit through directed research. These research positions look good on a resume, provide a source for future employment references, allow students to learn about new areas of the law, and, most importantly, foster rewarding personal relationships with faculty members that can last long after graduation.

**Preparing for Your Second-year Job Search**

Use your first year and your first summer to establish contacts and to plan for your second-year job search. For instance, if employers in your area are not interviewing in one of the on- or off-campus placement events, you may want to contact them during the summer. Law firms and other organizations may be willing to talk to you while you are in their city. You can also use your summer to attend Continuing Legal Education (CLE) events, Law
Society functions, and other events where attorneys are likely to be present (such as Federalist Society events), to build your contact network and find out about the practice of law in that area.

THE SECOND- AND THIRD-YEAR JOB SEARCH

During your second and third years you will focus on selecting a career and finding a job. The CSO has a number of programs that are specifically designed to assist you in your search.

Recruiting Programs

During August, September, October, and February, employers large enough to anticipate future hiring needs will interview students either on or off campus. These employers generally recruit second-year students for summer programs, giving them offers for permanent employment at the end of a successful summer. However, some employers participate in fall recruiting to hire third-year students for permanent associate positions. Employers who recruit in the fall include:

- Medium to large-sized firms
- Large state and federal government agencies
- Very large public interest organizations
- Small firms that are specifically interested in hiring BYU students

Fall Recruiting Programs

- Early Interviewing Program (August), cities/areas include: Southern California, Northern California, Dallas, Houston, Washington, D.C., New York City, Las Vegas, and Phoenix
- On-Campus Interviews (August–October)
- Equal Justice Works Public Interest Career Fair (October)

Winter Recruiting Programs

- CSO Annual Winter Job Fair (January)
- Northwest Public Service Career Fair–hosted in Seattle and Portland (February)
- On-Campus Interviews (February)
Annual Events

The CSO encourages all students to participate or assist in hosting the following CSO-sponsored annual events:

- Law Society Leadership Small Group Discussions
- Alumni Board Small Group Discussions
- October Alumni Weekend Events
- October and April General Conference Receptions

Participating in such events gives students the opportunity to network with attorneys from many different practice areas and geographic regions.

Job Announcements

During the year we receive numerous job postings from employers who want students to take the initiative to contact them directly. These positions are posted in Symplicity. We encourage students to utilize both on-campus, off-campus, and direct application opportunities to maximize their chances for obtaining employment.

YEAR-ROUND CSO SERVICES

The CSO welcomes the chance to assist you throughout the year by providing you with opportunities to participate in mock interviews and by reviewing resumes and cover letters. In addition, the CSO hosts several events where students can network and ask questions, such as: lecture series presentations, Q&A sessions, and General Conference receptions in October and April.

Additionally, the CSO invites all students to come in for individual counseling. No substitute exists for such in-depth counseling sessions. During counseling appointments, the CSO can help you evaluate career options, suggest helpful contacts, and determine whether your resume is customized for your target market. The CSO can also help you reevaluate your job search strategy if it is not working for you. The CSO can be an excellent resource in your search for meaningful employment, during, and even after, law school.

To make an appointment with a CSO advisor, visit: www.law2.byu.edu (click on: Current Students > Careers > Counseling).