

# Clinic FAQs

## General Information

### Is clinic required? How many credits do I need to take to fulfill the requirement?

All third-year students are required to complete four (4) semester credits of clinical training. Subject to law school requirements as well as the approval of the supervising attorney and the faculty supervisor, some clinic placements may allow students to opt for additional credits up to a maximum of 15 total credits (available only in certain placements), and eight (8) for the summer semester.

The clinic requirement is fulfilled by interning in an approved in-house clinic, regular field placement, or independent field placement.

Students are expected to intern at their placement for the entire semester. You may not “front-load” your hours at the beginning of the semester in order to finish early. You may add or drop credits up until the last day of classes each semester provided you have approval from you faculty supervisor and supervising attorney.

Credit hours are calculated as follows:

### Academic Year

1-10 credits: 4 hours per credit per week for 13 weeks

12-15 credits: 2.7 hours per credit per week for 15 weeks

### Summer (If Available)

4-8 credits (8 credits is max): 5.2 hours per credit per week for 10 weeks

### What are the requirements for clinic?

- Students are required to have successfully completed the **Professional Responsibility** course.
- Individual Clinics and field placements may have additional course pre- or co-requisites. Please refer to the [Clinic Offerings](#) document for further information.
- The [Montana Student Practice Rule](#) requires students to have completed a minimum of 55 credit hours. However, students with fewer than 60 credit hours may be restricted from some Federal field placement choices. (See the Associate Dean for Clinical and Experiential Education if this applies to you.) Students with fewer than 55 credit hours are ineligible for clinic.
- The **Montana Student Practice Rule** requires that students have a Dean's Certification of Student's Moral Character and Legal Competence. This form must signed by the Dean or Dean's designee. Students must have a signed Dean's Certification form before beginning a clinic internship. **Failure to obtain the required signature will prevent a student from satisfying the mandatory clinical education requirement necessary to graduate.** If you feel you may be

in this situation, please make an appointment to speak with the Associate Dean of Students.

### **How is clinic graded?**

Clinic is graded by the designations High Competent, Competent, and No Credit. A description of the criteria for each of the designations is in the [Clinic Grading Criteria](#).

### **What are my options for fulfilling the clinic requirement?**

The clinic program currently has four in-house clinics: (the **Land Use & Natural Resources Clinic**, the **Margery Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic**, and the **Veterans Advocacy Clinic**). These clinics are supervised by law school faculty and are located in the clinic suite at the law school.

In addition, the program has 23 external field placements co-supervised by clinic faculty and placement attorneys. External field placements cover a variety of practices, including civil legal services, criminal defense, criminal prosecution, environmental law, judicial clerkships, and transactional work. The complete list of clinics including their descriptions is located on the clinic web page.

The clinic program also offers students the opportunity to create their own clinical experience through an Independent Field Placement. This option requires an application and is subject to approval. Completed applications must be turned in no later than **February 15** of the year prior to when you plan to intern at the placement.

### **When can I take clinic?**

#### Summer

The clinic program usually offers clinic during the summer for a 10-week semester. However, this is not guaranteed. There are a limited number of spaces and fewer placement options. You must register for a minimum of 4 credits and cannot take more than 8 credits during the summer semester. Because this is a 10-week program credit hours are calculated at 5.2 hours per credit per week.

#### Academic Year

During the academic year, there are several credit options for placements. These can vary by clinic. Please refer to the [Clinic Offerings](#) document for the options in each placement.

### **The Placement Process**

#### **What is the Clinic Fair? Am I required to attend?**

In March of each year, the clinic program holds a clinic fair where the supervising attorneys, clinic faculty, and current students are available to answer questions about their placement offices and what you can expect to learn from your experience. Yes, you are required to attend, unless you have already been approved for an Independent Field Placement.

### **What is the placement process?**

Placements are done anonymously based upon information you provide on a preference form that will be handed out at the fair. You will receive an anonymous number to use on your form and any required attachments. While placement in a particular clinic or field placement is not guaranteed, the more information you provide the more likely you are to be placed in your area of interest. Students interested in a judicial placement are required to include a resume and writing sample of **five pages** with all identifying information removed except for the anonymous number.

Students who are enrolled in a Certificate Program will be given preference of a placement that will meet the requirements of their certificate. Students who are planning to graduate in December will be given preference of a summer- or fall-only placement.

### **When will I be notified of my placement?**

Summer placements are completed first, generally before spring break. Academic year placements are generally completed before registration begins in April.

### **What if I have other questions?**

If you have additional questions, you can visit with any of the clinic faculty:

- Professor Hillary Wandler, Clinic Program Director and Veterans Advocacy Clinic Director
- Professor Bari Burke (Judicial Field Placements Supervisor (Fall))
- Professor Jon Byington (US Bankruptcy Court Field Placement Supervisor)
- Professor Craig Cowie (Civil/Legal Service Field Placements Supervisor)
- Professor Elaine Gagliardi (Transactional Field Placements Supervisor)
- Professor Jordan Gross (Defense and Civil Rights Field Placements Supervisor)
- Professor Anthony Johnstone (Judicial Placements Supervisor (Spring))
- Professor Andrew King-Ries (Prosecution and MT Domestic Violence Field Placements)
- Professor Monte Mills, Margery Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic Director
- Professor Sandi Zellmer (Land Use & Natural Resources Clinic Director and Environmental Field Placements Supervisor)
- Geri Sturgill (Assistant Clinic Director)

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