

**SOUTHWESTERN**

LAW SCHOOL  
Los Angeles, CA

Frequently Asked Questions

# FAQs

Legal Clinics

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# Legal Clinics

## Q. What is a clinical course?

**A.** A clinic is a graded class taught by full-time faculty or adjunct faculty members. In a clinic, students study law and lawyering and work under the supervision of their clinical professor. The low student-faculty ratio and close supervision enables students to develop a meaningful and close relationship with their supervisor. As a result, clinical faculty are often important employment references for students.

Each clinic is focused on a particular area of law and is designed to prepare students to become excellent lawyers. In a clinic, students use their knowledge and skills to provide a valuable public service. It might be one of your most rewarding experiences in law school.

## Q. What clinics are offered?

**A.** Southwestern offers eight clinics:

- Appellate Litigation Clinic
- Children's Rights Clinic
- Community Lawyering Clinic
- Entertainment & The Arts Legal Clinic
- Eviction Defense Clinic
- Family Law Clinic
- Immigration Law Clinic
- Street Law Clinic



Southwestern houses three in-house clinics in the Westmoreland Building, in W408, the Children's Rights Clinic, Immigration Law Clinic, and Community Lawyering Clinic. The Entertainment and the Arts Legal Clinic is in the Bullocks Wilshire Building in BW333.



## **Q. What is the time commitment?**

**A.** Participating in a clinic is a serious time commitment. The clinics are not simulation courses. Students work with real clients and community members and take on significant responsibilities. The clinic credits are about 3 hours per week for each credit hour. For example, in a 5 credit clinic course, you are expected to work about 15 hours per week.

## **Q. How will a clinic benefit your law school education?**

**A.** You will learn core legal skills such as interviewing and counseling, fact investigation, case development, teamwork and collaboration, research and writing, develop problem-solving skills, time management and learning to meet deadlines, and file maintenance. Depending on the clinic, you may work with clients, draft declarations, motions, briefs, and other legal documents and prepare for a hearing.

Students participating in the Street Law Clinic have the opportunity to teach in non-traditional high schools in Los Angeles County. In the Community Lawyering Clinic (CLC), students work with the California State University of Northridge student population. Among other things, CLC students provide brief legal consultations, community outreach and education, and direct legal services on certain matters.

In all clinics, you will begin the lifelong process of becoming a reflective lawyer. You will also learn how you learn best and apply these lessons after you graduate from law school and embark on your legal career. The skills you learn in all of the clinics will be transferable to your work in the future.

## Q. How does a clinic differ from an externship?

**A.** A clinic is a class. All clinical courses include a class seminar and a casework/fieldwork component. Students attend a weekly class session where they learn the substantive areas of the law that supplements the experiential portion of their coursework. Students work on real cases under the supervision and guidance of faculty who are practicing attorneys. Students also provide legal empowerment workshops to community members and Know-Your-Rights presentations to high school students. All clinics strive to create access to justice for underserved communities.

The Externship Program provides students the opportunity to work in a variety of placements under the supervision of an externship supervisor such as an attorney or judge. The fieldwork is complemented by an academic component. Students who are enrolled in an externship course and successfully complete the course receive unit credit (but not an alpha grade). Please contact the Externship Program Office for more information at [externoffice@swlaw.edu](mailto:externoffice@swlaw.edu).

## Q. Can I participate in an externship and a clinic during the same semester?

**A.** Working in a clinic is challenging and requires you to have blocks of time available for clinic work. We recommend that students do not participate in other experiential programs during the same semester that they participate in a clinic. Please reach out to the specific clinic professor if you have questions.



## **Q. How do I apply to a Legal Clinic?**

**A.** The Legal Clinic application is available on the Southwestern SharePoint Portal Clinics webpage. Students can apply to one or multiple clinics using one application on a ranking basis. Students can apply to the Appellate Litigation Clinic, Children's Rights Clinic, Community Lawyering Clinic, Eviction Defense Clinic, Immigration Law Clinic, and Street Law Clinic using the Legal Clinic application. Students must submit a resume and statement of purpose with their application.

The Family Law Clinic also has a separate application on the Southwestern SharePoint Portal Clinics webpage. Students must submit a resume and statement of purpose with their application and send their materials to [legalclinic@swlaw.edu](mailto:legalclinic@swlaw.edu).

To apply to the Entertainment & The Arts Legal Clinic, students should contact the Biederman and Media Law Institute directly at [institute@swlaw.edu](mailto:institute@swlaw.edu).

Applications for the fall and spring semesters open in March and are due in June each year.

## **Q. Are Legal Clinics yearlong commitments?**

**A.** Most clinics are one-semester courses offered during the fall and spring semesters.

## **Q. Can I participate in more than one clinic?**

**A.** Students can participate in one clinic per semester. Clinic professors do their best to ensure all applicants have the opportunity to participate in at least one clinic and will prioritize students who have not yet participated in a clinic. Students may apply to participate in a second clinic during another semester.



**Q. Are there any prerequisites to participate in a Clinic?**

**A.** Some clinics have prerequisites or co-requisites. Please carefully review the course catalog to review the requirements for each clinic.

**Q. I am a part-time student working during the day. Am I able to participate in a Clinic?**

**A.** Students must be available to attend class (often held during the day), and some clinics require students to be available Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Please check the course catalog for the course time offerings and contact the Clinic Professor(s) in charge of the particular clinic with questions.

**Q. I am a SCALE student. Am I able to participate in a Clinic?**

**A.** Yes. Due to scheduling requirements for the SCALE program, we recommend that SCALE students consult with the SCALE office before applying to a clinical program.



# Contact Information

## Reach out to us with questions.

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