

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Clinic?

Clinic is an opportunity to represent clients while earning academic credit. It is a course that includes representing clients under the supervision of a faculty member, with ongoing seminars and discussions about your legal work. If you enroll in clinic, you will practice law in the College of Law's in-house law firm, located here in MacNaughton Hall.

How many clinics are there?

There are seven different clinics offered at SUCOL, each specializing in different areas of law.

What are those clinics?

Children's Rights and Family Law
Community Development Law
Criminal Defense
Disability Rights
Elder Law
Low Income Tax Payer
Securities Arbitration/Consumer

What will I do while enrolled in a clinic?

Many of the things that lawyers do. It varies some from clinic to clinic. If you do the Criminal Defense Clinic, you will be doing extensive fact investigation and negotiating plea agreements in criminal cases. In the Disability Rights Clinic, you may draft a complaint for federal court, or negotiate with government lawyers to change policies that fail to accommodate clients who are disabled. In the Children's Rights and Family Law Clinic, you may negotiate regarding custody arrangements in a family law case. In one of our other clinics, you may incorporate a new non-profit, advise a small business on the most appropriate type of corporate entity, assist taxpayers involved in controversies with the IRS, or represent elderly clients who have been denied Medicaid, Medicare, or other public benefits.

Who can apply and enroll in Clinic?

You can enroll in clinic in your 2nd or 3rd year. So, any 1L or 2L student that is in good academic standing may apply for clinic. Depending on the level of student interest, you may not get accepted the first time you apply. If you apply again, you are likely to get accepted.

When can I participate?

You can participate in your 2nd or 3rd year, or in the summer after your first or second year.

Are clinics one semester or two semester courses?

That depends on the clinic in which you enroll.

One Semester Clinics: Criminal Defense, Elder Law, Low Income Tax Payer, and Securities Arbitration and Consumer

Full Academic Year Clinics: Children’s Rights and Family Law, Community Development Law Clinic, and Disability Rights Clinic.

Can I complete a clinic over the summer?

Yes. Students can enroll for four credits of clinic in the summer. Depending on the particular summer and the Clinic’s case mix, you may have an opportunity to work on cases from more than one clinic. There is a seminar that meets throughout the summer term. Students interested in Summer Clinic must have taken, or be taking, Professional Responsibility.

How many credits will I earn when enrolled in clinic?

Again, this depends on the clinic in which you enroll.

The full academic year clinics (Children’s Rights and Family Law, Community Development Law Clinic, and Disability Rights Clinic) are 6 credits each semester, for a total of 12 credits.

The Criminal Defense Clinic and the Securities Arbitration and Consumer Clinic are 6 credits for the semester.

The Elder Law Clinic is 5 credits for the semester.

The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic is 3 credits per semester.

How will I be graded?

Each faculty person will give you his or her specific grading criteria at the beginning of the semester. Typically, your grades are based upon a combination of your legal work on behalf of your clients, your participation in clinic seminars and supervision meetings, and your willingness to reflect on your work.

How do I apply for clinic?

Each year, there is a Clinic “Preregistration Meeting,” usually in late February or early March, and before the College of Law’s regular course registration process. Students interested in applying for Clinic must attend this mandatory meeting to learn about the application process. The application materials (which include the application, a copy of your resume, and a Conflict of Interest form) must be turned in by the date specified. Clinic faculty and staff then sort the applications by class and whether or not you have applied before. When there are more students interested in a clinic than there are slots, students are picked randomly. Clinic assignments are then posted so that students know if they have been accepted for a clinic before they register for other courses.

Once your application is turned in, how are you chosen for a clinic?

Upcoming (or “rising”) 3Ls get priority over 2Ls. People who have applied before get priority over people who have not applied before. If you have already taken a clinic, you go at the bottom of the list, with the exception of those who enrolled in Summer Clinic, which does not “count against you” in the clinic selection process.

Are there any pre-requisites?

There are no pre-requisites for any of the clinics. However, all students must have taken, or be taking, Professional Responsibility. There are also specific co-requisites, which vary depending on the specific clinic.