

Central Washington University
Department of Law & Justice

Field Placement Handbook 2021-2022



2021-2022 Directory

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Field Education in Law & Justice

Field education is a vital component of the B.A. in Law & Justice curriculum at Central Washington University. Field education contributes to the curriculum by allowing students to:

- demonstrate communication skills;
- demonstrate an understanding of the principal components of the criminal justice system;
- demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues in criminal justice; and
- display professionally appropriate behavior.

What is field placement?

Field placement is an experiential learning activity that allows students to integrate classroom knowledge with agency practices in the 'field' of criminal justice, legal services, or community-based organizations. Field placement is an elective option for Law & Justice majors. Field placements must be approved in advance by the field placement coordinator. Students must also comply with the policies established by CWU for an internship experience. To earn credit for field placement, a student must complete the requirements of the placement agency and any assignments established by the field placement supervisor. The student must also complete the requirements in the field placement seminar.

Benefits of field placement

Field placement is an important activity for a Law & Justice student because many students seek employment with agencies or organizations similar to their field placement. The learning experience has many benefits, including:

- Bridge course content with practical applications.
- Expose the student to agency/organization settings.
- Make the transition from academic to workplace.
- Provide an opportunity to develop, test and polish skills.

For the field placement supervisor and the field placement agency, there is the challenge of enriching professional experiences and services through the sharing of knowledge, information, and outlook.

Learning Objectives

The specific learning objectives for the field placement program are:

1. Provide opportunities for Law & Justice students to interact with the accused or convicted persons, victims, or members of society to gain insight into the social, economic, psychological, educational and other aspects of these diverse populations.
2. Prepare students by developing practical skills (speaking, writing, presenting, listening) with the aim of increasing professional competency.
3. Provide opportunities for students to consult with professionals in understanding criminal justice, legal services, community-based social justice and the people they serve.
4. Encourage ethics and standards; help students learn to assess their own professional development.
5. Provide the opportunity to work as part of a professional team under supervision of field supervisor.
6. Allow students to have contact with other professionals, agencies and service-providers that comprise the criminal justice system or legal system.

What is the difference between a field placement and an internship?

LAJ 490 Cooperative Education, also known as an internship, is arranged by the student with assistance of Career Services. It requires an academic supervisor and a learning agreement. It *does not* count toward credit needed for the Law & Justice degree. LAJ 493 Field Placement is arranged by the field placement coordinator in the Law & Justice Department. The student does not complete a learning agreement with an academic supervisor. Credits earned through LAJ 493 and LAJ 499 *do* count toward elective credit needed for the B.A. in Law & Justice.

When does the student take field placement?

Generally, field education occurs in the final year. LAJ 493 Field Placement Experience is completed for variable credit. It can be taken during Summer, Fall, Winter or Spring Quarter. It can be repeated in subsequent quarters. However, LAJ 499 Field Placement Seminar must be taken during the first quarter of LAJ 493.

Field placement credit

Students can count up to 8 credits of LAJ 493 Field Placement Experience toward the electives needed for the Law & Justice degree. Students earn 2 credits for completing LAJ 499 Field Placement Seminar. So, a total of 10 credits can be acquired through field placement that count toward the elective credit needed for the B.A. in Law & Justice. Students can take up to 12 credits of LAJ 493 Field Placement Experience. The

additional 4 credits can be counted toward the 180 total requirements needed for a baccalaureate degree at CWU but not as a LAJ elective credit.

Field placement program roles

To complete a field placement, student will work with three people.

The field placement coordinator helps arrange placements, verifies eligibility, and assures that CWU policies for internships are met. Before a student can begin field placement, the field placement coordinator must be able to verify that the student has completed pre-placement training, acquired liability insurance, and read the *Field Placement Handbook*.

The field placement professor leads the LAJ 499 Field Placement Seminar and oversees the academic learning component. Students must complete all of the assignments for the seminar to receive credit for field placement. As the professor of record for LAJ 499, the professor is responsible for assigning the student's grade.

The field placement supervisor oversees the placement experience at the field agency or organization. Students must complete the hours assigned by the agency supervisor as well as other tasks assigned by the agency supervisor. The field supervisor's input may account for a portion of the student's grade, but the final decision resides with the professor.

The student needs to be an active learner. Communicate the kinds of experience sought and follow the field supervisor's guidance and instruction. It is the student's responsibility to make sure all assignments, from seminar professor and agency supervisor, are clearly understood.

Agency placement options

All placements must be approved by the field placement coordinator prior to beginning any placement. The Department of Law & Justice has signed memoranda of agreement with many agencies across the state. Students have been placed in federal, state, and local agencies. Traditional placements include law enforcement, institutional and community corrections, juvenile treatment facilities, juvenile probation agencies, prosecuting attorney's offices, and law offices. Agencies which are not part of the criminal justice system or legal system can be approved, provided the placement has academic value consistent with the goals of the Law & Justice program.

Selection of agencies for field placement

Discussion may be initiated either by the agency, field placement coordinator, or field seminar professor to determine if an agency would be interested in providing field placement for Law & Justice students. Here are some guidelines for approving agencies for field placement:

1. Agencies and institutions must be committed to the goals of Law & Justice education. This includes providing a safe environment with the potential for student learning and appropriate supervision.
2. Agencies will be reviewed at regular intervals regarding their suitability for field placement.
3. The agency must have the student perform tasks that are related to the goals of the field placement program. The Department of Law & Justice has the obligation to deny placements that are not related to experiential learning in Law & Justice.
4. The agency should not use the field placement student solely as a clerical worker. While it is understood that a student should complete some clerical tasks, the student should not be used primarily as unpaid office assistant.

Time Required

Field placement students receive 1 credit for every 40 hours in the field. For a 10 hour-a-week placement during an academic quarter (120 hours in placement), a student could receive 3 credits. The field placement seminar meets once per week for two hours. Details about the field placement seminar can be found on the syllabus for LAJ 499 Field Placement Seminar.

Admission

Students interested in a field placement must apply *at least* one quarter before placement would begin. The field placement coordinator is *not* available during summer which means that arrangements for Fall Quarter placements must be made during the previous Spring quarter. The application can be found on the website for the Department of Law & Justice.

Steps in acquiring a field placement

1. Submit the declaration of interest form found on the CWU Law & Justice Dept webpage: [Declaration of interest in Field placement | Central Washington University \(cwu.edu\)](https://www.cwu.edu/law-justice/field-placement)
2. Schedule an appointment with the field placement coordinator to discuss your interests and learn more about how the program works.
3. Reach out to site supervisors and secure a placement. In addition to an interview, agencies may require a background check, polygraph and fingerprints.

4. Complete the Memorandum of Agreement
5. Complete sexual harassment
6. Acquire non-medical setting liability insurance:
[https://secure.touchnet.net/C20530_ustores/web/classic/product_detail.jsp?PR
ODUCTID=20&SINGLESTORE=true](https://secure.touchnet.net/C20530_ustores/web/classic/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=20&SINGLESTORE=true)
7. Submit a field placement enrolment request form found on the CWU Law & Justice Dept webpage: [Field Placement Enrollment Request | Central Washington University \(cwu.edu\)](#)
8. Register for two co-requisite courses during the normal registration period through MyCWU.

Requirements for field placement

To be admitted to the field placement program, the student must:

1. Be a declared Law & Justice major (field placement is not open to Law & Justice minors);
2. Be in good academic standing at the time of application. Students with less than a 2.0 GPA are not eligible for field placement.
3. Be acceptable to the agency. Field placement supervisors are not required to accept all students recommended to them.

Attendance

Law & Justice students are required to work in their agency for 40 supervised hours for each credit received. In case of an absence due to a medical or family emergency, students are responsible for contacting their field agency supervisor. Whether the student works at their placement on holidays, weekends, or spring break is a matter to be agreed with the field placement supervisor.

Field seminar

Students must participate in the discussions and complete the assignments required in LAJ 499 Field Placement Seminar. While the seminar does not require weekly in-person attendance at a specific location, it is not an online class. The seminar takes place at a specific time each week by video conference (synchronous distance education). The discussion provides a forum for students to raise issues related to experiential learning in Law & Justice, and compare and contrast issues and experiences with students in other field placements. Discussions are led by the field seminar professor who has extensive knowledge and experience in criminal justice settings. The seminar also provides an opportunity for students to raise issues or problems, within the limits of confidentiality and professionalism in order to find a solution.

Evaluation

Written evaluation by the field agency supervisor is required at the mid-point of the quarter. The field seminar professor will review mid-quarter evaluations and adjustments may be made in the placement experience as a result.

Grades

Students enrolled in LAJ 499 receive a traditional letter grade. Students enrolled in LAJ 493 Field Placement Experience received a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade. The grades are determined by the field placement professor. While the field agency supervisor may contribute to the evaluation process, the final grade determination resides with the field placement professor.

Frequently asked questions

1. Am I required to take LAJ 493 or LAJ 499?

LAJ 493 Field Placement Experience is an option for Law & Justice majors. LAJ 499 Field Placement Seminar is a co-requisite. If a student decides to take the LAJ 493 option, LAJ 499 must be taken during the same quarter.

2. Can I take field placement during more than one quarter?

LAJ 493 Field Placement Experience can be repeated for credit during more than one quarter. LAJ 499 Field Placement Seminar cannot be repeated. If the placement extends for more than one quarter, LAJ 499 must be taken during the first quarter of placement.

3. May I use my current employment as a field placement?

Field placements can be paid, but credit cannot be earned for performing regular job duties. In exceptional cases, credit can be given to students who are temporarily re-assigned to a new department/unit at the same employer. The re-assignment needs to provide new learning opportunities and a new experience for the student that differs from their regular job duties. Students would need to provide a statement detailing how this re-assignment differs from their regular position and the value it offers as a learning experience. This statement will need to be approved by both the site and course supervisors.

4. I worked as a police officer (or corrections officer, paralegal, etc) in the past. May I receive field placement credit for this?

No. A student can only receive credit by enrolling in LAJ 493 and LAJ 499 and completing the requirements.

5. Will the field placement coordinator find a placement for me?

The Department of Law & Justice maintains a list of agencies that we have partnered with in the past to use as a guide, and the field placement coordinator will facilitate placement of students in agencies of their choice, but we cannot guarantee placement in an agency of the student's choice during a particular quarter.

6. Can I find my own field placement agency?

Yes. But the placement must be approved by the field placement coordinator, all of the admission requirements must be met, and the agency must agree to sign the MOU with CWU.

7. What would be an example of a field placement that would not be approved?

Generally, proposed field placements that are not related to criminal justice, legal services or social justice, such as part-time employment in a commercial setting, volunteer work for a political campaign or fire district, or National Guard duty. Or that would not contribute sufficiently to academic learning appropriate for credit toward a baccalaureate degree.

8. My aunt (or other family member) is a probation officer (or other professional in criminal justice). Can I do my field placement with her?

No. Students may not be supervised by a relative, whether parent, spouse, aunt, uncle, cousin, grandparent or sibling. A student may complete a placement at an agency where a family member is employed. Students may not be supervised by anyone with whom they have an intimate or romantic relationship. If the field seminar professor or field placement coordinator learns of such a relationship, the placement may be terminated.

9. I am a Law & Justice major. Can I do LAJ 490 Cooperative Education if I want to or am I required to do LAJ 493 Field Placement Experience?

Law and Justice majors can complete an internship and receive credits for LAJ 490 CoOp. This will count toward overall graduation requirements (180 total credits), but not the Law and Justice program

Do's and Don'ts for Successful Field Experience

Do choose clothing appropriate for your professional setting.

Don't "stand up" an agency for an appointment or interview. If you decide not to pursue a field placement, do not leave the agency hanging.

Don't complain about or criticize your agency in social media or in conversations with professionals from other agencies. If you have questions about the way things are done, ask your field placement supervisor.

Don't complain about or criticize the Department of Law & Justice while at your agency or in conversations with professionals from other agencies. If you have questions about the way things are done, discuss this with your field seminar professor.

Do remember to be professional and courteous in email communication, whether with your supervisor, professor, the coordinator, or other students.

Do share your career aspirations with your field placement supervisor and your field seminar professor.

Do feel free to request particular experiences or opportunities to learn with your field placement supervisor.

Do use the field placement as an opportunity for networking and learning about career opportunities at your agency or other agencies you come into contact with.

Don't pursue romantic relationships with anyone you meet in connection with your agency placement.

Don't forget you are a student at CWU, not an employee of the agency, and CWU determines your academic credit for the experience.

Do abide by the standards of conduct required of professionals at your agency, both while at your agency and during off-hours.

Don't think that your status as a student makes you an expert at your agency or exempts you from clerical tasks required of entry-level employees.

Don't circulate gossip, take sides in disputes, or get involved in office politics. Think of yourself as a guest, not a member of the family.

Do abide by any confidentiality/nondisclosure agreement even after you have completed your placement.

