



CHOOSING TO DO A PLACEMENT

What is a service learning placement in Law and Legal Studies?

The service learning placement in Law and Legal Studies (placement) provides students with an opportunity to obtain hands-on experience working in the field of law and legal studies. The placement can be with a company, organization or community group that works with legally related issues or provides legal services. Examples of possible placement sites include non-government organizations (NGOS) such as the Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa or ACORN, private law firms, businesses or government departments. The work done on the placement must be of an academic nature – i.e. include experiences such as research, intellectual skills development, communications training, advocacy training.

Students are not paid for the work they do on the placement; instead they earn a course credit. The placement is either a half-credit course (LAWS 4906) or a full credit course (LAWS 4905) which is supervised by someone on site at the host organization and overseen by a faculty member. Students have the opportunity to develop a course aligned with their own interests through which they are able to explore some of the practical implications of what they have learned and are learning. Students are responsible to find the host organization for their placement, as well as a faculty member to oversee and grade the placement.

A placement in Law and Legal Studies offers a great learning experience if the student is a good fit for it and is able to find an appropriate host organization.

What does a Placement in Law involve?

- Drafting a course syllabus (details below).
- This course syllabus must be accepted by the supervisor at the host organization the faculty member in the Department of Law and Legal Studies who agrees to oversee the placement and must be approved by the undergraduate supervisor.
- The assignments submitted as part of the placement will vary depending upon the type of placement and will be outlined in the course syllabus.
- Students are expected to spend 7-10 hours per week on this course and should meet regularly with their host organization supervisor during the semester. In addition, work should be submitted to the faculty supervisor throughout the semester, as set out in the course syllabus.

Is the Placement option appropriate for me?

If you have the following skills and attributes, a placement could be a good match for you:

- Ability to work well independently and to self-direct
- Ability to set priorities and manage time
- Good organizational skills
- Confidence and ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to follow instructions and to seek clarification when necessary

What are the prerequisites for LAWS 4905 and 4906?

Students must be in good standing in the fourth year of the Honours program. Students must meet the prerequisites for the Placement in Law as noted on Carleton Central:

- Written acceptance by the on-site supervisor to supervise the student placement;
- Written acceptance by a faculty member to oversee the placement;
- The required documentation (see Carleton Central) filed with the undergraduate administrator; and
- Permission of the Department, provided by the undergraduate supervisor.

When and how should students search for a placement site?

Students should start looking for a host organization for the placement towards the end of their third year, and no later than a month prior to the start of the term in which they intend to undertake LAWS 4905 or LAWS 4906. Students should consult the undergraduate supervisor before starting to look for a host organization. The most important thing at this point is to confirm that the type of placement being sought is appropriate. In addition, the undergraduate supervisor can clarify the expectations of the course and the requirements for the student.

Students will need to research organizations that do the kind of work that they are interested in exploring in the placement course. The student will need to contact the organizations to determine if they are willing to take a placement student. The student may need to persuade the potential host organization of the mutual benefits that the placement will provide. Prior work and volunteer experience may be helpful in locating and persuading a possible host organization. Faculty members may be able to provide advice and/or assistance in locating possible host organizations in their field.

Once the host organization has been confirmed, the student will need to find a faculty supervisor. Any professor in the Department could supervise the placement. The earlier the student requests supervision the more likely that the faculty member will be able to take it on. The Undergraduate Supervisor may be willing to take on the role of faculty supervisor of the placement.

If students encounter difficulties in securing a placement or a faculty supervisor, whom should they contact?

Students may consult the undergraduate supervisor for guidance on finding a host organization for the placement or a faculty supervisor, on preparing a course syllabus, and for any difficulties that may arise during the process. However, it is up to the student to find an appropriate placement and supervisor. This is an optional course, so the onus is solely on the student to make it happen.

Note: Only professors in the Department of Law and Legal Studies may supervise a placement course. Contract or sessional instructors are not eligible to be supervisors.

THE COURSE SYLLABUS

As part of the process of confirming the placement, the student will need to discuss with the host organization supervisor the tasks that they will be doing in their placement. The student may be required to do some clerical/administrative work, but the bulk of the work done needs to have an academic, scholarly focus. The agreed upon tasks will guide the content of the syllabus for the placement course. Following the model for a regular course syllabus, the placement syllabus should contain the following information:

- ✓ **Course Description:** basic information describing the placement course, including location, placement supervisor and the purpose and goals of the placement as an academic learning experience
- ✓ **Learning Objectives:** a list of the knowledge and skills that will be acquired or developed through the course
- ✓ **Course Requirements and Evaluation:** a mark breakdown and description of the tasks associated with each portion of the mark breakdown, plus due dates for each portion. Tasks might include such things as journal entries, research assignments, attendance and participation in host organization work activities, a final reflection paper.

The course syllabus provides the details of the course and the basis for the grading of the course. The syllabus must be approved by the placement supervisor, the faculty supervisor and the undergraduate supervisor. Any changes to the syllabus must be agreed to by all of these parties.

REGISTRATION

What is the registration process?

Once a placement supervisor and faculty supervisor have been secured, the student needs to complete the **Placement in Law Application Form**. This form can be found on the Department website where course outlines are listed for the current academic year. In addition, the form must be submitted for approval prior to the last day of registration for the term to the Department of Law and Legal Studies (C473 Loeb Building).

The student must then complete a **Registration Override Request** on Carleton Central for LAWS 4905/4906. The approval permitting course registration will be sent to the student's Carleton University Email Account. The student must then register for the course using Carleton Central.

THE COURSEWORK

What can students expect from their supervisors?

The expectations for the placement need to be discussed and decided between the student and the host organization before the syllabus is finalized and the placement is approved. Students should keep in mind that the Placement in Law and Legal Studies course is an exercise in *independent work*. It is not the task of the supervisors to police the student's work habits or cajole them into meeting deadlines or completing assigned work.

It is up to the student to ensure that they are clear about supervisors' expectations, including timelines and the content of the work assigned. If problems arise, the student should consult their faculty supervisor or the undergraduate supervisor.

Is there a dedicated space in which students participating in a placement can convene to discuss their work and share ideas?

While there is no dedicated undergraduate student lounge, the **Chet Mitchell Resource Centre** (D580 Loeb Building) is available for students and faculty members. Commonly referred to as the 'Reading Room', this meeting space is equipped with two computer stations and WIFI.

Note: the Reading Room has specific hours of operation and is monitored by members of the Carleton Law and Legal Studies Society.

COMPLETING THE COURSE

How is the grade for the Placement determined?

The faculty supervisor assigns the final grade based upon the methods of evaluation outlined in the course syllabus. The overall quality of the materials produced will be considered in addition to the grading rationale that is decided upon early in the term.

What if I am unable to complete the course?

Students may withdraw from LAWS 4905/4906 up to the last date for withdrawal from courses in the session in which they are registered. Students should discuss withdrawal with the host organization supervisor and the faculty supervisor. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the withdrawal does not unduly inconvenience the host organization.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE CONTACT;

Undergraduate Advisor: Sarah Cleary - sarah.cleary@carleton.ca
Undergraduate Supervisor: Professor Sean Richmond - sean.richmond@carleton.ca