Learning through direct experience is an essential part of the best legal education. Boston College Law School’s Center for Experiential Learning brings clinical, externship, and oral advocacy programs together to provide students with a deeper understanding of how to practice law and be career-ready upon graduation.

We begin in the first year when students participate in a three-credit legal practice course. They are also able to choose from a wide range of experiential opportunities during their three years—from clinics that provide services ranging from civil litigation to overturning wrongful convictions, to externships at law firms, corporations, government agencies, and nonprofits, to our award-winning oral advocacy programs. Unlike most law schools, first-year students have the opportunity to participate in our internal client counseling and negotiation advocacy competitions.

More than 45 years ago, we founded the Boston College Legal Services LAB, an operating law firm that served as a model for clinics across the country. LAB is a central component of our new Center and includes six different clinics working in areas such as civil litigation, housing, immigration, juvenile rights, corporate and IP law. Our new Ninth Circuit Appellate Project gives students the opportunity to brief and argue immigration cases before the Court of Appeals in California. BC Law is part of a special Ninth Circuit program with a limited number of law schools—the only school outside of the court’s boundaries that is included.
**IN-HOUSE CLINICAL PROGRAMS**

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM**
The integration of prosecution and defense perspectives is a unique feature of the criminal justice clinical experience at BC Law. In the classroom, students receive skills training and are exposed to different perspectives on the criminal justice system.

- The BC Defenders represent clients charged with crimes and probation violations in the Boston Municipal Court.
- On the prosecution side, students handle arraignments, motions, and trials under the supervision of an assistant district attorney.

**INNOCENCE PROGRAM**
Students study the problem of wrongful convictions in the classroom while also working in legal practice and nonprofit settings to remedy or prevent these injustices. Students choose from a diverse range of practice settings including an in-house Innocence Clinic or externship placements (see Clinical Externship). All of the students in the clinic and externship placements come together for a weekly seminar.

**LEGAL SERVICES LAB**
LAB is a legal services law firm housed within our Center for Experiential Learning. It includes the following clinics:

- **CALIFORNIA NINTH CIRCUIT APPELLATE PROGRAM** In court, students brief and argue immigration cases brought by indigent clients who would otherwise be without counsel. Cases include asylum, withholding and CAT claims, immigration consequences of criminal convictions, and issues of first impression.
- **CIVIL LITIGATION CLINIC** Students represent clients in every aspect of civil litigation, including discovery, settlement negotiations, trials, and employment, family, housing, and public benefits matters.
- **COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CLINIC** Students provide corporate, employment, tax, and other legal services to local small businesses and nonprofits.
- **HOUSING LAW CLINIC** Students litigate cases in local district courts and the Boston Housing Court on behalf of individuals who are homeless or risk becoming homeless. Activities also include working with housing authorities and community organizations.
- **IMMIGRATION CLINIC** Students represent noncitizens in applications for legal status.

**EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

**JUVENILE RIGHTS ADVOCACY PROJECT**
Students represent youth in special education advocacy, in school disciplinary proceedings, in advocacy before agencies, and in Juvenile Court status offense cases. Students also work as guardians ad litem and on policy development.

**CLINICAL EXTERNSHIPS**

**SEMESTER IN PRACTICE [ISP]**
Students work around the country in government agencies, law firms, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and courts under the supervision of experienced attorneys.

The ISP program has three other specialized options:

- **ISP: BC IN DC** Students work full time at a federal agency, public organization, or law firm in Washington, DC, with each placement chosen to fit the student’s educational and career goals. The students in the program attend a weekly seminar, held in DC, addressing regulatory, lawyering practice, and access to justice topics.
- **ISP: INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**
- **ISP: LONDON**

**SPECIALIZED EXTERNSHIPS**
Specialized externships allow students to gain professional experience part-time over an entire semester at a state or local government agency or court.

- **ATTORNEY GENERAL PROGRAM**
- **DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE TAX PROGRAM**
- **DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

**EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM EXTERNSHIP**

Students study the problem of wrongful convictions and provide pro bono legal assistance to prisoners who maintain their innocence. Participants choose an externship placement at the New England Innocence Project or the Committee for Public Counsel Services.

**JUDICIAL PROCESS—TRIALS**

Students work with Massachusetts Superior Court Judges in both civil and criminal proceedings and compare and discuss the experiences with different judges during a bi-weekly seminar.

**JUDICIAL PROCESS—APPEALS**

Students work with a judge in the Massachusetts Appeals Court, assisting in drafting judicial decisions and observing oral arguments. They discuss their experiences at biweekly seminar meetings.

**THE GOVERNMENT LAWYER**

This externship course provides a clinical experience in the Superior Court Division of the Middlesex County District Attorney’s Office. Each student is paired with one or more prosecutors and assists with trial preparation, legal research and writing, motions, and interviews of police officers and civilian witnesses.

**LEGAL PRACTICE EXTERNSHIP [LPE]**

LPE offers students a more flexible opportunity to create their own experience.

Students secure their own placements in consultation with the LPE instructor, who monitors each placement to ensure that the supervisors are providing a significant educational experience, including opportunities for observation and feedback on legal work product, specific legal assignments, and the discussion of legal principles and skills.

LPE offers a more flexible opportunity to create their own experience. Students secure their own placements in consultation with the LPE instructor, who monitors each placement to ensure that the supervisors are providing a significant educational experience, including opportunities for observation and feedback on legal work product, specific legal assignments, and the discussion of legal principles and skills.

LPE students also take the Legal Practice Externship Seminar, which meets every other week to discuss students’ experiences at their placements.
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

**SIP: INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS**
Students work in international organizations focusing on human rights, immigration, and other public interest issues.

**SIP: LONDON**
Students are placed in London private businesses, law firms, and public organizations and participate in a weekly seminar. The program also offers externships throughout Europe, where students use videoconferencing to participate in the seminar.

**PARIS EXCHANGE**
Students participate in an exchange program with Hautes Etudes Appliques du Droit (HEAD) law school in Paris, France, and work at placements with businesses and law firms.

(for more on international exchange programs, please see our website).

ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Unlike most law schools, we encourage our first-year students to participate in American Bar Association negotiation and client counseling competitions. In the second year, the Wendell F. Grimes Intramural Moot Court competition focuses on appellate advocacy. In the third year of law school, the internal mock trial competition is held and there is the opportunity to compete with students from other law schools in nearly a dozen national and international competitions:

- Business Transactions
- National Client Counseling Team
- National Moot Court
- National Negotiation Team
- Braxton Craven Moot Court
- European Union Law Moot Court
- Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court
- National Administrative and Environmental Moot Court
- National Criminal Procedure Moot Court
- National First Amendment Moot Court
- National Mock Trial Team

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS:

- UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
- Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- Jesuit Refugee Service
- Massachusetts Office of Attorney General
- Greater Boston Legal Services
- Intellectual Property Practice at MIT Tech Transfer Office
- Corporate Counsel Practice at Massachusetts General Hospital
- US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
- Boston Immigration Court
- IBM Software Group
- Los Angeles Waterkeeper
- Partners HealthCare System
- United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
- Innocence Project
- The Constitution Project
- Office of Senator Carl Levin
- Texas Civil Rights Project
- Indiana Public Defender’s Office
- Brookstone
- US Securities & Exchange Commission
- US Department of the Treasury
- Disability Law Center
- Boston Redevelopment Authority
- Staples
- US District Court, District of Massachusetts
- Massachusetts Appeals and Superior Courts

EXAMPLES OF CLINICAL OPPORTUNITIES:

- Indigent client representation in the Legal Assistance Bureau’s Civil Litigation and Housing clinics
- Representation of small businesses in the Community Enterprise Clinic
- Criminal justice prosecution in district courts of Middlesex County
- Criminal defense in Dorchester District Court
- Remedy wrongful incarceration through the Innocence Project in the New England Innocence Project

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC INTEREST OPPORTUNITIES:

- Federal Defenders of San Diego
- Greater Boston Legal Services
- Legal Aid of Cambodia
- Legal Aid Society of New York
- National Women’s Law Center
- UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
- U.S. Magistrate Judge James Orenstein
- U.S. Court of Appeals, First Circuit, Judge Bruce Selya
- U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Fraud Section
- Vermont Supreme Court
- Women’s Link Worldwide
- US District Court, Southern District of Florida
- US Bankruptcy Court
- US District Court for the Eastern District of New York
- US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
- US Securities and Exchange Commission
- US Trade Representative Office of Chief Counsel for International Commerce