

Winter Extern Program 2012

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION ESSAYS

These essays serve to introduce you to the sponsor and are sent to the sponsor if you are placed in an externship. They will explain how your interests are a good fit for the externship, articulate your goals for the experience, and suggest activities that would help you attain those goals. The thought and care you take in preparing the essays reflect your genuine interest in the opportunity, your professionalism, attention to detail, etc.

- These are sample answers to specific questions, not complete sets of any one individual's introduction essays. (Also note that the samples may not have the exact same question as is currently required.)
- We recommend 2-3 paragraphs per question, to sufficiently develop each answer.
- Remember, make your essays personal to your interests, do not copy these samples. A sponsor may have hosted the original author, or host more than one student, and could receive almost identical essays.

SAMPLE A

Describe your career interests and/or goals.

I have always had a diverse cluster of intellectual interests. After much deliberation, I decided to focus on Biology and French Literature at Cornell. I chose to major in Biology upon my arrival at Cornell because I enjoy learning facts about nature, particularly about neurobiology (my concentration). I also wanted a rigorous major that would hone my analytical skills for whatever career I may choose in the future. My second major, French Literature, was chosen much later. I have always loved literature, and since I grew up in Canada, we were taught French at a very young age. I wanted a major that would allow me to read and write, something the biology major lacks. After two years at Cornell, I finally realized that French Literature would be the perfect compliment to Biology.

Though I enjoy both of my majors, I do not want to pursue a *career* in either area. In line with the diversity of my interests, I want a career that is multidisciplinary and that requires many different kinds of skills. I feel that law will allow me to do this. On the one hand, lawyers need sound logical analysis and reasoning to formulate arguments, not unlike the kind I used in biology. On the other hand, they also need to read and write a great deal, a heavy element of French Literature. Being a lawyer would allow me to continue using the same skills and characteristics I enjoy in both Biology and French Literature

Give specific reasons why you have selected THIS sponsor's externship.

I have selected an externship with "*Extern Organization Name*" because the sponsor is the Head of Litigation at a large law firm. As I stated above, law is an area that I am interested in but, unfortunately, have not had much first-hand exposure to. My parents studied biology and engineering in college and we have no lawyers in the family. By shadowing this sponsor, I would, first of all, be able to see up-close what law is all about, specifically litigation, and also see the day-to-day functioning of a prominent NYC law firm. Since this is a very large law firm, I imagine I would also have the opportunity to interact with lawyers with other specializations as well. In addition, I am curious to know why the sponsor thinks the practice of law is a splendid way to spend one's working life.

Explain how THIS externship would help you explore your interests or better define your career direction.

I see an externship as a quick and clever way to experience life as a lawyer without actually going to law school. Law is a long and difficult path and while I am interested in it, I do not want to take the path unless I have seen for myself what the result is like. By shadowing a real lawyer and speaking to him about his experiences, I would get an insider's edge to help me make my decision. I feel that this is much more valuable than anything I could learn from books. This experience would help me decide whether this area of law, or even law itself, is what I truly want to do for a living.

In addition to personally observing the practice of law, I would also be able to ask my sponsor his or her opinions about many aspects of law, law school, and career options since he or she has likely been in my situation before.

What specific questions would you like answered during this extern experience?

- Why did you choose to become a lawyer, and why litigation?

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- What is the most satisfying part of your job?
- How much do you “specialize” in law school?
- Do you find that your job leaves you with adequate time/energy to build a family life?
- What advice would you give to someone who is unsure about law?
- What is a typical day like for a litigator?
- I’ve heard that most people who go to law school majored in either history or government. Is there any disadvantage in having an unconventional major(s)?
- How important is the quality of the law school you go to in relation to your future job opportunities?
- What are the different options for a litigator in terms of employment?
- What is it like heading a team of litigators? Do you find it stressful?
- I am also interested in international law but have only read about it. Can you tell me a little bit more about it or introduce me to someone who practices it?
- I speak French and Mandarin fluently. Is there any way I could put my language skills to use in litigation?

What extern activities would help you answer your questions or realize your goals?

The most important activity for me would just be to follow the sponsor around on his or her daily tasks. Of course, it would be nice to get to see a variety of tasks, such as meetings and interviews with clients, not just routine paperwork. But I realize that much of the time routine paperwork is what lawyers and other professionals do, so it is useful in that sense. If at all possible, I would greatly appreciate if the sponsor gave me a little work to do to get a taste of what his or her duties are like. Secondly, I would like the opportunity to pepper the sponsor with questions about all the different law specializations, and the lifestyle of a lawyer. To me, there is no better way to learn about what being a lawyer is like than to ask questions. Finally, I would enjoy the opportunity to speak with the sponsor’s colleagues within the firm who practice different areas of law.

If applicable, describe or list coursework, jobs, volunteer activities, or other experiences, which are not included on your resume but are relevant to this externship.

Most of my important experiences are listed on my resume. However, most of them up to now have also been outside the field of law. I only started to seriously consider law during my sophomore year and so have not yet had much exposure. Of my past experiences, I would say that the most relevant is my research. Although my experiments have been in neurobiology, I think that there are still elements common to law, such as doing background research and writing papers. One relevant course that I took during my sophomore year was Psychology and the Law. In this course, we learned about the law from the perspective of psychology. It was fascinating to see the reasoning lawmakers use in making new laws or modifying existing ones, such as the definition for legal insanity.

SAMPLE B

Explain how THIS externship would help you explore your interests or better define your career direction?

The Extern Program will help me extremely in my career exploration. I know that I want to work with the environment, but I am not quite sure how. An externship with the EPA will expose me to one way of involving myself in the environment. It will expose me to the political side of environmental issues and how these decisions are implemented. If I find that I am extremely fascinated and excited about their work, I will take more policy, economics, and statistics courses in later semesters and follow the idea of joining an organization and helping the environment through policies and regulations. I may also find that I am more inclined to the actual scientific and research side of the environment, in which case I will focus more on biological and ecological courses in later semesters. The Extern Program will also give me much needed exposure to my field of study, letting me see how environmental organizations run and confirm my interest in environmental management.

What specific questions would you like answered during this extern experience?

There are a few questions that I would like to be answered by this experience. I would like to see if I am interested in the more policy-oriented side of natural resources. I would also like to know how these types of organizations and how work is carried out. Observing meetings and daily procedures would be very helpful in determining these questions, along with meeting or seeing various posts throughout the organization. I would love to see how the EPA goes about deciding and implementing decisions and what type of work and/or data is considered in the process. This could be shown by a general overview of the system that is followed for making decisions. I would also like to know how the organization knows about when these problems arise and which ones need to be acted upon first or at

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all. Finally, I would like to know once these decisions are made, how they become implemented and what happens if they are not passed or rejected by citizens.

If applicable, describe or list coursework, jobs, volunteer activities, or other experiences which are not included on your resume but are relevant to this externship.

I have taken at Cornell an introductory course in natural resources and am currently taking courses in environmental economics and biometry. I also took plant biology and chemistry.

SAMPLE C

Describe your career interests and/or goals. What specific goals do you have for this externship?

I am considering a Natural Resources major for various reasons. Since I was a child, I have been fascinated by the world around me. When I traveled to South Africa and Australia, the conservation efforts of these two countries interested me and I knew that I wanted to do something related to the environment. The summer of my junior year, I attended an environmental program at Stockton College. I learned about the problems facing migratory birds and how terrapin populations were dwindling because of human interaction. During this time, I confirmed my desire to protect the environment and find a way to balance the interaction between natural and urban ecosystems. I took a natural resources class my first semester at Cornell to see if this major was right for me. We learned about the deer problems in New York and various other situations such as the effects of dwindling numbers of horseshoe crabs on migratory birds and the tragedy of the commons. With all the problems, we analyzed various solutions and how the public reacted to each one. I found the decisions organizations made and how they were implemented fascinating and now know that this is the major that best fits me.

I am interested in different aspects of the environment. I love the outdoors and would like to do field research somewhere, possibly in Costa Rica. I also feel that I am interested in trying to implement solutions to various environmental problems though I have not yet taken any policy courses. I am pretty sure I do not want to be directly involved in politics, but instead work for an organization and help them to find possible solutions to the problem. One of my goals is to reconcile a problem between the environment and humans – to be able to save the environment at little cost to people. I would also love to research and work with the effects of decreasing biodiversity on our planet. I feel it is a crucial issue that is not addressed enough. I am also highly interested in working on projects of reintroduction of species back to certain environments. I would love to know that I helped re-establish a stable population of threatened animal to a site where they use to thrive.

SAMPLE D

Describe your fields of interest, and what careers you are considering or exploring.

I am in Cornell's College of Engineering and considering a major in Electrical Engineering. I enjoy every aspect of electrical engineering. Even when I was young, I used to take things apart to see how they worked. Now that I've actually started learning how these things work and getting hands on experience with electronics, I think that electrical engineering is the perfect choice for me.

My interests are varied. I am extremely interested in electronics, but that interest does not stop at just electronics; it extends to computers. I have always been very strong in the area of computers. From software to hardware I have a natural inclination to understanding and operating computers. But I have always been more interested in the hardware side of computers, so I am more interested in digital electronics.

As far as my career goals, there are two areas in which I would love to work. First of all, I would love to work for NASA on their space probes. I feel that I would find that type of research and problem solving oriented work interesting. You have to come up with creative solutions to very hard problems presented by the environment of space. On the other hand, I would like to work as a project manager in a high-tech company where I would have to lead my team through challenging projects. This high-tech company work is very similar to the work at NASA.

What specific questions would you like answered during this extern experience?

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There are many questions that I want answered by this experience. First, I want to know about the company in general, such as: what does the company do, what do people at the specific site do, and what does my mentor do? These questions would most easily be answered by a tour of the company and a small explanation of the company. Also, I want to know about what electrical engineers do daily and I want to see if that is interesting. That could most easily be answered by having me follow my mentor around for the day so I could see what he does. Also, I feel that it would be very interesting if I got the chance to work on a small daylong project. A hand-on project would give me the chance to learn about aspects of electrical engineering in a real world situation.

If applicable, describe or list coursework, jobs, volunteer activities, or other experiences, which are not included on your resume but are relevant to this externship.

All of my experiences are listed on my resume, but I would like to highlight some of them that are especially important to this externship. I have had a number of internships before. First I interned at Enron International where I worked with the Vice President of Development who was in charge of the Latin American group. Then, I worked for Enron Energy Services in which I worked in the information technology group. I am currently working at the Cornell Theory Center where I am working on developing parallel computing solutions. Also this summer I have an internship at Schlumberger where I will be working in their product center with some electrical engineers. See my resume for more information about what I did during my previous internships and jobs. Also, I have worked on some very interesting projects. Currently, I am working on the RoboCup project (<http://www.mae.cornell.edu/robocup>). This project involves making 5 robots that play soccer against a group of five other robots. The robots are autonomously controlled by a computer that uses a camera to "see" the position of the robots and uses wireless communications to send them commands. Last year, I worked on the Largest Guitar in the World. It was a high school project where we built a 43 ft. long guitar for the Guinness Book of World Records. The main challenge and what I worked on for a majority of the time was getting the guitar to play sounds. With a guitar so large, it is virtually impossible to get enough tension on its long strings to produce an audible sound, so we converted the strings vibration into a digital signal and synthesized a tone based on the digital signal. I also made an mp3 player for my car for the Houston Science Fair. It was a stripped down computer that fit in my glove compartment and was controlled via a palm pilot. See my resume for more information on my accomplishments.

SAMPLE E

Describe your career interests and/or goals.

I am considering a major in psychology because I have always enjoyed working with others. I was trained and worked as a peer counselor during high school, and found a niche for myself working with people one-on-one. As a volunteer at the Rockland County Center for Alcohol and Substance Abuse, I manned a hotline, answering questions and offering advice to teens in need. As a volunteer for an organization called TOUCH (Together Our Unity Can Help), I was trained as a peer educator, and presented educational workshops to students and church groups throughout the country about HIV, AIDS and STD's.

Currently I am in my second semester of training for a program on campus called EARS (Empathy, Assistance, and Referral Services). EARS is a peer counseling service to which students with problems can call or visit a trained counselor to discuss any problems they may have. I am constantly drawn to activities that allow me to help individuals.

One of my long-term goals is to earn my PhD in clinical psychology. After getting my doctorate, I feel there are so many opportunities to fulfill my dreams of helping others. Right now I am considering opening up a private practice. I am also interested in working with students – possibly working as a psychologist on a college campus. The transition from home life to college can be a very difficult one for young people. I have seen first hand the toll that the pressure of college life can take on one's mental health. If I were to become a psychologist on a campus, I would hope to be able to help students cope with the academic, social and family pressures.

Family counseling may also be a satisfying career choice. Problems within the family unit can make it difficult for individual members to have a functional and productive life. Also, family structures are changing with the times. As a family counselor I could see myself helping family members to understand each other, cope with difficulties, and open their lines of communication.

Explain how THIS externship would help you explore your interests or better define your career direction.

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While I am confident about my plan to get a degree in clinical psychology, I am still unsure about how I want to apply my education. By talking to someone in the field, I will be able to get a good idea of the career possibilities out there. I am also hoping to get a handle on what my options are based on what level of degree I attain (BS, MA, or PhD). Moreover, I realize that the only way to gain a true understanding of what a job really entails is to talk to professionals in your field of choice. Hopefully, by shadowing a psychologist, I will gain a clearer view of what life is really like in my dream job.

While I know that privacy laws might prevent me from observing a psychologist treating a patient, I would like to get an idea of what a clinical psychologist's daily schedule is like and the kinds opportunities that are available for psychologists outside of clinical psychology – in both public and private sectors. I would also be interested in an informational interview. As the top of my list of questions: What personality traits must a good psychologist possess? I want to know how psychologists cope with the stresses of their profession, and manage to separate themselves emotionally from patients while treating them with compassion.

SAMPLE F

Describe your career interests and/or goals.

I am considering a major in biology with a concentration in Molecular Biology because of my interest in research. In the past year and a half I have worked continuously at a laboratory, first at University of Massachusetts Medical School and then at Cornell. At UMass, I became interested in molecular biology because of the work I was doing with the maturation of B-lymphocytes. Because of the educational atmosphere of UMass, I became very involved with the graduate students and was on the cutting edge of research. Everyday I spent at that lab I was contributing to a major breakthrough in the understanding of B-cells. That, to me, what the most exciting environment I could be in. At that point I decided that I wanted to study molecular biology. My interest in molecular biology has been enhanced by my work at Cornell on an edible vaccine for Hepatitis B out of plant tissue. I am also very interested in animals and have considered being a veterinarian for a long time. I was also directed towards biology for that reason.

I am also considering a double major in communications. I became interested in communications through my ongoing interest in the music industry. Recently I have become involved in the promotion of several new artists. This led me to an intense interest in marketing and the communications major. The communications major could add to my education in biology because I plan to try to be an executive in a pharmaceutical company. Knowledge of communications and marketing could help me in this facility.

My career goals are to become an executive in a pharmaceutical company. I like the application basis of a pharmaceutical company. Most of my experience is in academia however, so I would be interested to get a more of a behind the scenes look at research and management at a pharmaceutical company, and the Extern Program would enable me to do that. Also I would possibly like to work for a pharmaceutical company as a patent lawyer. I am considering becoming a DVM/PHD and developing drugs for animals. This would be ideal because it would relate my interest in animals and medicine in general. On the other end of the scale I am also interested in animals and my interest in research. This would be ideal because it would relate my interest in animals and my interest in research. However, I am also interested in a career in veterinary medicine in general. On the other end of the scale I am also interested in a career in marketing and advertising, particularly in the music industry. I have only begun to explore all the careers available to me and my interests are highly varied and can be used in many different fields. So far I only have experience in the areas of academic biological research and as time goes on I am increasingly concerned that I am being pinholed in a certain career because all my experience and connections are in that area. The Extern Program gives me an opportunity to explore other possibilities and to confirm my interests in my career path.

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SAMPLE G

Other Requirement or Preference

The Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy at New York University externship has requested that the extern have some music background and psychology and child development coursework. I have an extensive music background, which includes 8 years of voice lessons as well as 7 years in flute and 4 years in piano. I have had two years of child development in high school. I have also completed psychology 101 and 102 at Cornell.

SAMPLE H

What career related goals do you have for this externship and what activities would help you realize these goals? Be as specific as possible.

I have yet to work in a private law firm, so my main goal is to see what practicing law is like for an attorney who works in a private firm as opposed to a government agency or for a corporation. Another goal is to learn about cases dealing with environmental, product liability, commercial and labor law because I do not know what actions these particular types of cases require on the part of attorneys. I want to come out of the externship knowing how the job of one type of attorney differs from that of another who specializes in a different field or who works in a different type of law, and what type of setting, I ultimately want to practice.

Talking with attorneys in the firm would best help me to attain my goals. Specifically, asking about the specialties will help me to get a clearer understanding of what exactly each type encompasses. Learning about the average day activities for the attorneys would tell me that processes that certain types of cases require of attorneys. Thus talking with and observing a handful of attorneys would give me a better understanding of what litigating for a private firm involves.

SAMPLE I

Other Requirement or Preference

I have demonstrated an interest in foreign affairs and government, as reflected by my independent research in France and Italy on political debates around immigration law, media and politics, and secessionism. I have also pursued an interest in journalism by writing for the Cornell Chronicle as a student reporter, and by contributing articles to the Cornell Political Forum.

What career related goals do you have for this externship and what activities would help you realize these goals? Be as specific as possible.

Having spent most of my undergraduate experience studying and researching specific political movements in France, Italy and Germany, I have produced many term papers and will soon complete a senior thesis on western European politics. Since much of this work has been highly specialized and academic in nature, though, I would benefit greatly from meeting with someone who writes intelligently and clearly – on European politics one day for a mass, educated audience, and it would be very interesting for me to talk with someone who is well-practiced at summarizing and taking stands on major events and trends in foreign affairs, retaining detail yet eliminating academic minutiae.

I am also interested in the role of the media as an agenda-setting instrument, a topic which is a major component of my senior thesis on an Italian political party and its relationship with Italian press and television. I would be very excited to speak with a member of the editorial board at the New York Times about the ways in which subjects for editorials are chosen, and how editorials interact with each other and with politicians both here and abroad.

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SAMPLE J

Other Requirements or Preferences: The student should have an interest in writing, reading, the US Civil War, and a good sense of humor. Student should have a pronounced interest in answering the question: why is the practice of law a splendid way to spend one's working life?

When I read this description, I was delighted. As an English major, I have a *great* interest in reading and writing. I love history. I write for the Cornell Lunatic – the descendant of what was in this alumnus' day the Cornell Widow – Cornell's only humor magazine.

Furthermore, I find that the author of these preferences and I would complement each other very well. My particular field of interest within the English major is Modern Poetry, not simply literature. My favorite eras of history are Ancient Greece and Rome, as well as recent American history. Our interests are related, but slightly different, indicating that we would have much to discuss. We would learn and benefit each other.

SAMPLE K

Explain how THIS externship would help you explore your interests or better define your career direction.

A few years ago, I was flipping through a TIME magazine, and I came upon a two-page photo that sent a chill through my body. It made me feel and think about my life and ultimately the lives of the unfortunate. The title of the article in which the photo belongs is entitled "Death of a City", and is about the Civil War in Afghanistan. The photo, framed and sitting right in front of me, as I write, depicts a woman covered almost entirely in a black sheet kneeling in a dreary, desolate cemetery. The only part of her body that can be seen is her wrist and hand resting upon the grave of her brother – killed in a rocket attack. The photo had such an impact on me because it was not a photo of the past, but a photo of the present, and it hit me that there were so many horrible things going on in the world today. It made me feel petty for all the little complaints that I had in life, such as getting pimples or having too much work in my calculus class. (The photo still has this affect on me, and I am feeling really petty right now for getting frustrated over my housing situation for next year.) More significantly, it sparked my concern for the welfare of the unfortunate in our world today. Being that my mother is Asian, I must admit that I am slightly biased towards the welfare in Asia today. One of my main concerns is human rights violations.

The reason why I am applying to this externship is because I am a sophomore in college and I am really trying to figure out what I want to do for the rest of my life. I want to help the unfortunate in our world today, but I am not exactly sure hot I would like to do this. I am considering being a doctor and getting involved with Doctors Without Borders. However, I am also considering getting involved in law and politics, specifically dealing with international affairs. I have some experience in the medical field, but I really have no experience in law or politics. Therefore, any bit of experience would be greatly beneficial to me.

SAMPLE L

What questions would you like answered by this extern experience?

Some questions I have are:

- What do you find most satisfying about your job?
- What do you find most frustrating about your job?
- How do you handle your on-call schedule?
- Are you able to meet the responsibilities of your practice and have time for other activities?
- What do you see in the future of clinical medicine?
- How has managed care affected your practice?
- What is a typical day for you like?

I believe many of these questions can be answered by shadowing a physician in a clinical setting. In addition, having the opportunity to discuss some of these topics with a physician would be helpful. I would appreciate any insight the physician might offer.