

PROCESS FOR PETITIONING FOR ADMITTANCE TO THE SEMESTER-IN-PRACTICE PROGRAM

Background: The Law Student Handbook provides that “[s]tudents whose cumulative class rank is in the bottom quartile of the class are not eligible for Semester in Practice unless the Externship Director and Dean of Students grant a waiver.” See University of Idaho College of Law Catalog /Law Student Handbook 2013–2014, p. 40. In addition, all students must obtain permission from the Externship Director to participate in a Semester in Practice (“SIP”).

Accordingly, even students in the top 75% of the class are allowed to participate only at the Externship Director’s discretion, based on criteria similar to that described below in relation to the factors considered when evaluating whether a student in the bottom quartile of the class may participate in the SIP program. Students in the top 75% of the class are required to submit a course and experience planning worksheet to assist the Externship Director in determining whether to grant permission to the student to participate in the program.

Students in the bottom quartile are not eligible for SIP but may seek a “waiver” by filing a petition to be accepted into the program, following the procedure described below. Students in this category should be aware that they must demonstrate compelling reasons to overcome their ineligibility and should carefully construct their petition to that end.

How & Where to File a Petition: The petition consists of:

- (1) A *statement* explaining, among other things, (a) why the student wants to participate in the SIP program, (b) any challenges that may have led to the student’s academic performance, (c) any improvements in that performance, and (d) a summary of the student’s plan for successfully completing law school and passing the bar exam. This statement should touch on all of the “factors considered” by the petition committee, which are set forth in more detail below. Considering that the petition will be granted only for compelling reasons, this statement is a critical piece of the student’s petition process.
- (2) A copy of the student’s most recent *transcript*. An unofficial transcript from Vandalweb is acceptable.
- (3) A *resume*, along with a list of three references.
- (4) A *writing sample*, along with a *cover sheet* describing any editing or guidance that may have been contributed to the writing sample by others.
- (5) A *course and experience planning worksheet*. Contact Director of Academic Success to obtain a recommended form to use.
- (6) An *SIP application* form that lists the student’s top choices for externship placements. This application is available in the Symplicity Document Library.

These materials shall be emailed to the Externship Director for the SIP program in which the student wants placed (*i.e.*, Boise or Moscow), with a copy to the Director of Academic Success, on or before *April 10th* of each year.

Timing and Decisions: The Externship Director shall distribute all of the petitions to the Committee by April 15th. The Director of Academic Success shall confirm that the list of petitions distributed is complete and accurate. The committee anticipates making a decision on all petitions by the end of April.

Committee Members and Number of Approvals Needed: The committee voting on a petition for SIP eligibility is comprised of the Associate Dean of Students, the Director of Academic Success, the Career Development Director, the Clinical Director, and all Externship Directors. Students will be declared eligible to participate in the SIP program only if a majority of the committee members vote in favor of their petition.

Factors considered:

The committee will consider a variety of factors in determining whether a student has demonstrated compelling reasons to participate in the SIP program, including the following:

- (1) Does the student have a well-thought-out reason for participating in the SIP Program?
- (2) Has the student shown steady academic improvement?
- (3) Have personal circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., illness, injury, family concerns) affected academic performance?
- (4) Has the student signed up for a bar review course?
- (5) Has the student submitted an academic plan that, at a minimum, includes taking BA, at least one UCC course, evidence, and criminal procedure?
- (6) Will the student have totally completed (not just started) the UDWR by the end of the semester preceding SIP?
- (7) Will the student have totally completed (not just started) his/her pro bono hours by the end of the semester preceding SIP?

Students may address other factors they believe are relevant to the petition process.