

PRO BONO SERVICE HANDBOOK

INFORMATION AND FORMS



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Thomas R. Kline

School of Law

PRO BONO SERVICE HANDBOOK

Mission Statement

The motto of The Thomas R. Kline School of Law at Drexel University, *Scientia, Ars, Officium* – Knowledge, Skill, Duty – reflects the goals Drexel has for its law student graduates. The third element of our school’s mission, *Officium*, means “the duty to the public good owed by a public official.” It is an essential element of the Law School because it recognizes the lawyer’s obligation to serve the public good by providing uncompensated legal service to people and organizations that cannot afford to retain lawyers.

“*Pro Bono Publico*” service, “For the Public Good,” is at the heart of the legal profession. Providing pro bono service to individuals or groups traditionally underserved by the private bar is the goal of Drexel’s mandatory 50-hour Pro Bono Service Requirement. Students will make an immediate impact in the world by helping those most in need. In addition, the program strives to educate students about their ethical responsibility to provide assistance and improve access to legal services throughout their professional careers. Finally, the program highlights public service opportunities that students may want to pursue as a career path.

The Pro Bono Service Requirement complements Drexel’s long and proud tradition of integrating classroom experience with the real-world environment. Under close supervision, students will develop their legal skills and gain practical, hands-on, experience in a real work setting. The Pro Bono Service Requirement is a vital part of Drexel’s curriculum and demonstrates the faculty and administration’s commitment to the development of professionalism in its students.

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PRO BONO SERVICE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Hours Required

All students are required to perform a minimum of 50 hours of pro bono service to graduate. Students can begin performing pro bono service in the second full-time semester of the first year of law school and must complete all 50 hours by the last day of classes of the final semester of law school.

Pro Bono Service Work Criteria

In order to qualify for credit towards the requirement, the pro bono service must be law-related. In addition, students may not receive financial compensation or academic credit for providing pro bono service. Moreover, a licensed attorney or other qualified supervisor must adequately supervise and review any and all work. The service must be:

- a) On behalf of people who cannot afford to pay for legal services, have limited access to legal services, or are underserved by the private bar, or
- b) Aimed at protecting the rights of an individual or individuals in situations raising important public interest concerns and/or important rights belonging to a significant and underserved segment of the public.

Government work, including working for the district attorney or public defender (or their federal/local equivalents) qualifies for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement under our definition of pro bono. Judicial internships, however, do **not** qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement because they do not fall within the parameters of pro bono service for Drexel's program.

Awards

Students who significantly exceed the 50-hour requirement will receive a Pro Bono Recognition Award and be specially acknowledged in the graduation program. Students will receive a certificate based on the total number of pro bono service hours completed: Service Honors (101 - 200 hours), Outstanding Service Honors (201+ hours).

PRO BONO SERVICE PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Project Selection

After researching the available pro bono projects listed on the Pro Bono Opportunities page in the Pro Bono Service Program section of the website, students must select a pro bono project and notify the Director for Pro Bono and Public Interest Programs (Director) of their selection. Students seeking guidance can meet with the Director to discuss all of the Program's existing options. Students wanting to initiate new projects or student organization pro bono projects must meet with the Director to discuss such opportunities.

DREXEL PRO BONO PROJECTS

The law school has established a wide variety of formal pro bono projects with public interest organizations, non-profits, and private attorneys. These opportunities are listed on the Pro Bono Opportunities page in the Pro Bono Service Program section of the website and information about them will be circulated over email from the Director as it becomes available. Project information is also on file in the Director's office. Students interested in participating in one of these pro bono projects must let the Director know on which project they would like to work. The Director will organize training sessions and scheduling.

STUDENT ORGANIZATION PRO BONO PROJECTS

Students interested in participating in a project coordinated through a student organization should contact the organization directly. Training sessions and scheduling will be organized by the individual student organization. Students are still responsible for letting the Director know they are participating in the student-run project in order to receive credit for the work performed.

COMMUNITY-BASED LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

Students interested in working individually with a community-based legal services organization must let the Director know with which legal services organization they would like to work. If the organization permits, students may directly contact the supervising attorney to inquire about volunteer opportunities. Otherwise, the Director will contact the supervising attorney on behalf of the student and inform the interested student of any volunteer opportunities within the legal services organization. As opportunities become available within these organizations, information about them will be circulated by email from the Director.

Project Registration

Upon starting their volunteer work, students must fill out the Project Registration Form, have it signed by the supervisor of the pro bono project, and return it to the Director. This form is available on the Pro Bono Forms page in the Pro Bono Service Program section of the website and in hard copy in the Director's office, as well. During the initial meeting with the supervisor, the student volunteer should be sure to discuss the project in detail and clarify deadlines, responsibilities, and the student's work schedule. Please note that a new Project

Registration Form must be signed and submitted to the Director for each pro bono project a student chooses to work on to fulfill the 50-hour requirement.

Submit Forms to Director for Pro Bono and Public Interest Programs

Upon the completion of any pro bono project, each student must submit the following forms to the Director. These forms are available on the Pro Bono Forms page in the Pro Bono Service Program section of the website.

- Student Timesheet
- Student Evaluation
- Supervisor's Evaluation (submitted by Supervisor)

Confirmation Sent to the Dean of Students

Upon completion of the 50 hours of pro bono service and submission of all required time sheets and evaluation forms, the Director will inform the Dean of Students that the student has satisfied the Pro Bono Service Requirement. The Director will monitor student activity throughout the year to ensure both quality performance and placement satisfaction.

Pro Bono Service Requirement Completion Date

The 50 required hours of pro bono service, as well as submission of all required time sheets and evaluation forms, must be completed, at the latest, on the last day of classes of the student's final semester of law school.

PRO BONO SERVICE PROGRAM STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- All work completed on active cases with real clients is protected under the attorney-client privilege and must be kept confidential as required by law and ethics rules. Confidential information relating to these cases may not be revealed without express permission of the client. In general, students must be mindful to protect client secrets and to preserve confidentiality.
- All work provided in conjunction with the project must be completed in a timely and professional manner. If a student cannot complete an assigned task, he or she should contact the supervisor immediately. Students must comply with all rules regarding academic honesty and integrity, including policies on plagiarism. Additionally, any potential conflict of interest or other ethical concern must be brought to the attention of the supervisor immediately.
- Students must maintain their own records and chart the numbers of hours completed towards satisfying the Pro Bono Service Requirement. Any misrepresentation as to the number of hours completed will be subject to discipline under the Honor Code. It is the student's responsibility to submit the time sheets and evaluation forms to the Director in a timely manner to receive credit.

PRO BONO SERVICE PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

All law students must perform at least 50 hours of pro bono service through a project that has been approved by the Director in order to graduate.

What kind of service qualifies for credit towards the requirement?

In order to qualify for credit towards the requirement, the pro bono service must be law-related. In addition, students may not receive financial compensation or academic credit for providing pro bono service. Moreover, a licensed attorney or other qualified supervisor must adequately supervise and review all of the student's work. The service must be:

- (1) on behalf of people who cannot afford to pay for legal services, have limited access to legal services, or are underserved by the private bar, or
- (2) aimed at protecting the rights of an individual or individuals in situations raising important public interest concerns and/or important rights belonging to a significant and underserved segment of the public.

Government work, including working for the district attorney or public defender (or their federal/local equivalents) qualifies for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement under our definition of pro bono. Judicial internships, however, do **not** qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement because they do not fall within the parameters of pro bono service for Drexel's program.

When can a student begin work on the requirement?

Students can start work on the requirement beginning in the second full-time semester of the 1L year of law school. Traditional 3-year law students who start school in the Fall can begin pro bono work in the Spring semester of the first year. 3-year law students who start school in the summer can begin pro bono work in the Spring of the first year. Accelerated "Fast-Forward" law students can begin pro bono work in the Fall of the first year.

When must students complete the requirement?

The 50 required hours of pro bono service, as well as submission of all required time sheets and evaluation forms, must be completed, at the latest, on the last day of classes of the student's final semester of law school.

What happens if the 50-hour Pro Bono Service Requirement is not met?

The Pro Bono Service Requirement is mandatory for graduation. If the requirement is not completed, the student will not be allowed to graduate or be certified for admission to the bar.

How is a Pro Bono Project selected?

After researching the available pro bono opportunities listed on the Pro Bono Opportunities page in the Pro Bono Service Program Section of the website, students must select a pro bono project and notify the Director of their selection. Students seeking guidance can meet with the Director to discuss all of the Program's existing options. Students wanting to initiate new projects or student organization pro bono projects must meet with the Director to approve such opportunities.

Do all the hours of service have to be on one project or may they be on more than one project?

Students have the option of performing all their hours on one project or electing to provide services on more than one project. Note that not all pro bono projects are structured to yield 50 hours of work.

What forms have to be filled out and returned to the Director for Pro Bono and Public Interest Programs?

To receive credit for pro bono service, all required forms must be completed and returned to the Director:

- Project Registration Form
- Student Timesheet
- Student Evaluation
- Supervisor's Evaluation

Can I get credit for training hours if I don't end up doing work for that project?

No. Training is connected to service and you may only get credit for training hours if you participate in the project.

Does travel time count?

No. Travel time does not count. If you have an exceptional circumstance, please meet with the Director for special consideration.

Does work performed for a public interest co-op placement or clinic qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

Work performed for a public interest co-op placement or clinic will not qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement. However, with approval from the Director, work performed beyond the requirements of a co-op placement or clinic, so long as it meets the definition of pro bono service, will qualify for credit.

If I receive a Public Interest Summer Stipend or Work Study, does work performed at my summer internship qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

Work funded by a Public Interest Summer Stipend or Work Study will not qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement. However, with approval from the Director, work performed beyond the terms of the Summer Stipend or Work Study, so long as it meets the definition of pro bono service, will qualify for credit.

Does work performed on a political campaign qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

No. Work performed on a political campaign does not qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement because it does not fall within the parameters of pro bono service for Drexel's program.

Does an uncompensated judicial internship qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

No. Judicial internships generally do not qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement because they do not fall within the parameters of pro bono service for Drexel's program. However, court projects assisting pro se litigants are eligible for pro bono credit.

Does uncompensated work for an attorney in private practice qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

Uncompensated work performed for an attorney in private practice will qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement so long as the attorney is handling the case as a pro bono matter, meaning the attorney is not receiving compensation for the work performed and the case itself falls within the parameters of pro bono service for Drexel's program.

Does judging or acting as a bailiff for mock trial and moot court competitions qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

No. Some full time coaching and teaching (such as Marshall-Brennan) may count, but, in general, simply judging a competition or acting as a bailiff does not qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement.

Does research help for a professor qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

Assisting a professor on scholarship generally does not count. However, if a professor is doing work that would otherwise qualify under our definition of pro bono service, and you are assisting on that project, then it will qualify for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement.

If I am sitting for the bar in a state with a pro bono admissions requirement, how do I know if my pro bono work during law school will meet that state requirement?

While most of our projects will meet state pro bono bar admission requirements, please meet with the Director to review the state requirement and confirm that you have a pro bono project that will satisfy it.

PRO BONO SERVICE PROGRAM FORMS

- Project Registration Form
- Student Timesheet
- Student Evaluation
- Supervisor's Evaluation