

[Your LETTERHEAD]

[Date]

The Honorable _____

[Address]

Dear [Judge/Justice] _____;

I am writing to express my interest in working with you as an unpaid judicial extern during the [summer/fall/spring] semester as part of the Judicial Extern Clinic at the Southern Illinois University School of Law. For the reasons given below, I am confident that the externship would be productive and beneficial for both of us.

I am very interested in an externship under your supervision because _____.
[Personalize the letter by explaining the reason you are interested in this particular judge/court.]*

As you will see from the attached resume, I would bring a number of relevant skills and motivation to the externship. [Explain/highlight skills]**

I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you or a member of your staff about possibility of working with you during the [summer/fall/spring semester] and what steps I should take to secure the position. I will follow up this letter with a phone call to your chambers within the next 10 days. Alternatively, you may contact me at your convenience at _____ or by email at _____.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]

[Typed Name]

[Attach copy of resume]

*Identify reasons why this particular judge, the type of court, or the location interests you. For example, you might be interested in practicing in that particular location and would welcome the opportunity to learn more about the judges and lawyers in the area. Alternatively, you might be interested in working with a trial court judge because you are planning to become a litigator after you graduate. These are just two examples; what you ultimately want to do with this paragraph is demonstrate some special interest in this particular externship placement – i.e., something that shows initiative and interest.

** Highlight something from your past experience, academic record, or personal character that demonstrates your work ethic and/or abilities. For 1Ls, this is a great place to highlight the high-quality legal education you're receiving at SIU, with a strong focus on practical skills. You may wish to note, for example, that we have a nationally ranked Lawyering Skills program and we are one of the few law schools in the country with a Writing Across the Curriculum program.

SAMPLE LETTER WRITTEN BY AN EXTERN APPLICANT

The Honorable XXXXXXXX
STREET
CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear Judge _____:

I am writing to express my interest in working with you as an unpaid judicial extern during the _____ semester of 20__ as part of the Judicial Extern Clinic at the Southern Illinois University School of Law. For the reasons given below, I am confident that the externship would be productive and beneficial for both of us.

I am currently a third year student at Southern Illinois University School of Law. Over the past eleven years I have lived in several different parts of the country including California, Missouri, and Texas but am looking forward to returning to my hometown of _____ upon graduation to practice law with the firm of _____. A judicial externship in _____ County would be a great opportunity for me to meet local judges and attorneys as well as learn the local rules and interworking of the Court. I noticed in my research that you are a graduate of Southern Illinois University of Law and thus familiar with the quality and type of legal education that I am currently receiving with focus on practical application of legal skills and writing. I have also noted that you are currently assigned to “L” type cases and civil jury trials. I feel that this would be a good learning environment for me and that my analytical and writing skills would be of use to you.

As you will see from the attached resume, I would bring a number of relevant skills and motivation to the externship. Prior to entering law school, I held the position of _____ with a _____ agency. During the five years I held this position, I developed excellent written and oral communication skills, the ability to meet deadlines in a timely manner, and the ability to effectively interact with both employees and customers. Since commencing law school, I have excelled at research and writing, course work, and oral arguments as evidenced by my GPA, class rank, and Moot Court Board participation. I have also spent two summers as a law clerk for _____ in _____, IL. During my time as a law clerk I performed research, drafted several motions and pleadings, and participated in a jury trial.

I feel that my continuing legal education and professional and legal background would be well suited for the type of work required as a judicial clerk. I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you or a member of your staff about the possibility of working with you during the upcoming spring semester and what steps I should take to secure the position. I will follow up this letter with a phone call to your chambers within the next 10 days. Alternatively, you may contact me at your convenience at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or by email at _____-. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosure