



THOMAS R. KLINE

SCHOOL OF LAW

Tribone Center for Clinical Legal Education

Pro Bono Handbook

Fall 2026 - Spring 2027

Requirements, Procedures and Responsibilities

MISSION STATEMENT

"*Salus Populi Suprema Lex*" is the motto of the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University, meaning the welfare of the people is the highest law. This is particularly fitting with respect to the Pro Bono Program. The law school's faculty, staff, and students have a long-standing tradition of serving the community and helping those in need. The Pro Bono Program at the law school goes one step further by providing a structure through which students can recognize the professional obligation to serve the disadvantaged.

If you have any questions concerning Duquesne Kline's Pro Bono Program, please contact Beth Licciardello. She can be reached by telephone 412-396-4730 or by email at licciardellos@duq.edu.

Contact Information:

**Tribone Center for Clinical Legal Education
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Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412-396-4704**

PRO BONO REQUIREMENTS

HOURS REQUIREMENT

Students are recognized at graduation if they complete a minimum of 50 hours of pro bono service. Students may complete their pro bono service as early as the second-full semester of their first year of law school. They must complete the 50-hour minimum by the last day of classes of their final semester of law school.

In order for pro bono hours to be considered, all time must be inputted into 12Twenty and will be totaled for students at the time of graduation. For timekeeping instructions, please refer to the Instructions on Entering Hours for Clinics/Programs at the end of this Handbook.

CRITERIA

In order to satisfy the requirements of the voluntary Pro Bono Program, the pro bono service must be law-related. Students may not receive financial compensation from a client or other source for pro bono legal services or academic credit for services rendered. Further, a licensed attorney site supervisor must adequately supervise and review any and all work. The service provided must be:

- a) Done on behalf of people who are not able to afford legal services, have limited access to legal services, or are underserved by the private bar, or
- b) Targeted 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.

AWARDS

Students who complete 50 hours of volunteer (not for credit or pay) service will receive a Pro Bono Service Recognition Certificate. Students performing 61-120 hours will receive a Pro Bono Service Honors Certificate. Students with hours in excess of 120 will receive a Pro Bono Exemplary Service Certificate.

PROCEDURES

PROJECT SELECTION

Pro Bono service projects must be pre-approved by a clinical faculty member. Please contact Beth Licciardello for assistance. The student and their supervisor will then be required to certify hours via school-provided time sheets through the 12Twenty online platform.

If you plan on taking the Bar Exam in a state other than Pennsylvania, there may be mandatory requirements for pro bono service. Requirements for qualifying pro bono service can be found on individual state bar association websites.

DUQUESNE / ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION / PITTSBURGH PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

The Law School has established formal pro bono projects with public interest law organizations, non-profits, bar association pro bono clinics, and private attorneys.

COMMUNITY-BASED LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

Students interested in working individually with a community-based legal services organization must inform Beth Licciardello where they would like to work, and she will assist the students in getting their work approved.

SUBMISSION OF FORMS FOR PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

Upon the completion of the 50 hours of pro bono service, signed timesheets must be turned into Beth Licciardello (via hand delivery, fax or email) or uploaded to 12Twenty by noon on the Wednesday before the final day of classes of the student's final semester of law school.

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 PA Rules of Ethics. Confidential information relating to these cases may not be revealed without express permission of the client. Students are reminded to be vigilant in protecting client information and to preserve confidentiality.

All work provided in conjunction with the pro bono project must be completed in a timely and professional manner. If a student is unable to complete an assigned task, he or she should contact the supervising attorney immediately. Students must comply with all rules regarding academic integrity, including policies related to plagiarism. Further, any potential conflicts of interest or other ethical concerns must be brought to the attention of the supervising attorney immediately.

Students must record their own hours by submitting school-provided time sheets to satisfy the Pro Bono Service Requirement. **Any misrepresentation of the number of hours completed will be subject to discipline under the Honor Code.** It is the student's responsibility to submit time sheets in a timely manner to ensure that proper credit is received.

A PRIMER PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY^[i]

As part of the law school curriculum, you will be required to complete a professional responsibility course on the Rules of Professional Conduct in which you will explore the standards that govern the practice of law and behavior your lawyers the professional and ethical obligations of an attorney. Without simplifying these complex rules, it is important that you be aware of three issues that may arise in the context of pro bono legal work you may participate in while in law school.

UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW

As a law student, you will be viewed by non-lawyers as possessing legal knowledge and skills and are likely to receive requests for legal advice or assistance from family, friends, and even strangers. It is unethical, but more importantly illegal, to offer legal advice or assistance, representation, document drafting, or in any way appear to be giving a legal opinion to a person or entity unless you are licensed to practice in that jurisdiction. If someone were to rely on your advice, you could cause grievous harm. A disclaimer that you are "just a law student" is not sufficient. Not only could you be subject to civil or criminal penalties, but you could jeopardize your admission to the Bar.

In the context of a pro bono placement, it is essential that you do not give anything that could be construed as legal advice to a client or prospective client. That does not mean that you cannot convey legal information that an attorney supervisor tells you to give to a client. It does not mean that you could not provide information in a "know your rights" workshop at a community center or high school. It does mean that if you are asked a question about a specific legal issue you should never try to apply the law to a particular set of facts. Under all of these scenarios, you should seek guidance from your attorney supervisor if you are at all unclear where the line should be drawn.

CONFIDENTIALITY

When volunteering or working in a legal office, you are likely to learn information about the clients and potential clients of the attorney, firm, or organization for which you are working. Almost without exception, this information is considered “confidential” which means it is protected by the ethical obligation of confidentiality regardless of the source of the information and should not be discussed with others outside the office.

Although you are not yet a lawyer, you have an obligation to the attorneys who are supervising you and to the organization’s clients to keep this information confidential. This is true even after you have left the firm or organization and regardless of whether the matter has been resolved.

On a related note, you may feel that something you have prepared during your pro bono placement would be a good a writing sample for a future job search. Be aware that you must first get permission from your supervising attorney and then be sure to “redact” (black out) any confidential information that could identify the client(s).

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

It is also important for you to be aware that the confidential knowledge gained from working in a legal office can place you in a situation that would create a conflict of interest for you in subsequent volunteer positions or employment.

Under the Rules of Professional Conduct, a lawyer cannot work for a client and the adverse party on the same matter. A lawyer is also prohibited from working for the adversary of a former client if the lawyer possesses confidential information about the former client that could adversely affect the client. These situations illustrate a potential conflict of interest.

Although you are not yet a lawyer, the conflict of interest rules apply to you both as a future attorney and as a non-lawyer volunteer working with an attorney. So, for example, if at one point you worked for a firm that represented a spouse in a divorce, then, while volunteering for a legal aid office, became involved in an landlord/tenant dispute against that same spouse, it would be a conflict of interest for you to work on the case against that spouse. You would have an obligation to inform the legal aid office of your conflict.

To avoid potential problems, we recommend that you keep track of the clients and matters on which you work so that you do not place yourself or a subsequent employer in a position that could result in a conflict of interest. You should inform your supervising attorney if you believe there is any possibility of a conflict of interest in any work you are doing.

Furthermore, it is a good practice to keep track of the names and addresses of the employers for whom you work or volunteer during law school as well as the names of your supervisor(s), their phone numbers and e-mail addresses. When it comes time to apply for admission to a state bar, you are likely to be asked this information and it is important that it be as accurate as possible. While the school maintains records of where you have reported to us that you have volunteered, we do not keep track of your supervisors. Furthermore, you should not rely on our records for this important information.

CONCLUSION

It is important to remember that you should not try to determine for yourself how to handle one of these issues should it arise; you must inform your supervising attorney and let him or her make the determination of how to proceed. Under the rules of professional responsibility, your supervising attorney is responsible for overseeing the work done by non-lawyers to be sure they are complying with the rules. Your violation of these rules could subject the attorney to disciplinary actions and could cause the client substantial harm. Furthermore, it could jeopardize your admission to the bar.

Should anything arise during your pro bono placement that you have questions about, whether touching on the issues raised in this memo or anything of a professional or ethical nature that you have concerns about, feel free to contact the Pro Bono Director. You should be aware that there are ethics help lines offered through the Allegheny County Bar Association (ACBA) and Pennsylvania Bar Association(PBA) that are staffed by attorneys who are available to give confidential advice on ethical issues presented to them. Law students are eligible for membership both with the ACBA and PBA.

PRO BONO PROGRAM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

All students must complete a minimum of 50 hours of pro bono service prior to graduation for recognition.

What kind of project qualifies for credit towards the Pro Bono Service Requirement?

In order to satisfy the requirements of the voluntary Pro Bono Program, the pro bono service must be law-related. Students may not receive financial compensation or academic credit for services rendered. However, students may receive funds related to cost of living in connection with their service.

When can a student begin work towards the requirement?

Students can commence voluntary pro bono service in the second-full semester of the first year of law school.

When must a student complete their hours?

Students must complete the minimum 50 non-mandatory hours and turn in their time sheets by the last day of classes of their final semester of law school to receive recognition.

How do students select a Pro Bono Project?

Students may research available pro bono opportunities themselves or they may arrange for an outside pro bono service project with preapproval from a clinical faculty member.

What if I performed pro bono service in the past that I would like to receive credit for?

Students should contact the Pro Bono Department to arrange for certification of previous pro bono service projects. Certification is not guaranteed.

Can I count training hours for a project that I complete?

Yes. You may use the hours you attended in training toward your hours of pro bono work.

Can I get credit for training hours for a project if I don't end up working on that project?

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

Does work performed for a clinic or certain externship programs qualify for credit toward the Pro Bono Service?

Yes, additional hours beyond the 280 hours required for clinics and certain externship programs will qualify for credit for pro bono.

If I receive a stipend from the Public Interest Law Association, does work performed at my summer fellowship qualify for credit towards Pro Bono?

Yes. Any hours above those worked for pay will be recognized for voluntary pro bono service.

Does an unpaid internship at a for-profit law firm qualify for pro bono credit?

No, unless the work performed was a non-fee generating pro bono matter.

^[i] <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/experiential-learning/pro-bono-community-service/what-is-pro-bono/professional-responsibility/>

Instructions on Entering Hours for Clinics/Programs, Externships and Pro Bono

Enter 12Twenty: law-duq.12twenty.com using your duq email address and password

Select **Experiential Learning** from the list on the far left.

Enter **NEW EXPERIENCE** by clicking on the button on the upper right.

NOTES:

1. You will need a new experience each term (fall, spring and summer).
2. If you are entering time for a clinic/program you need to do this twice per term - - once for administrative hours and once for client representative hours.
3. You may have several experiences at the same time - - i.e. externship and pro bono or clinic/program and pro bono.
4. Pro Bono hours are entered throughout your law school years (all 3-4 years).
5. If you are in the Youth Advocacy Clinic, you will need to have 4 new experiences for each term - - Education administrative hours, Education client representative hours, Juvenile Defender/Delinquency administrative hours, and Juvenile Defender/Delinquency client representative hours.

When entering new experiences for the first time, per semester, you will need to enter the employer/placement. For clinic/program hours enter this as **Duquesne Kline School of Law Clinic Office** - - this will be a dropdown option from a list of several Duquesne options. You do not need to put in the street address but are required to put country: USA and city: Pittsburgh – PA. Your supervisor is your Professor for clinic/programs and your supervising attorney for an externship or pro bono work. You will be required to enter the dates for terms which are:

Fall:	8/21/25 – 12/31/2025
Spring:	1/1/2026 – 5/11/2026
Summer 1:	5/12/2026 – 6/30/2025
Summer 2:	7/1/2026 – 8/21/2026

Once your Experience is set up for the semester and by type (Admin/Client Rep Hours), then you can select **HOURS** tab at the top of the page. Then **+Add Hours** to add the date/hours/description (remember you are either already in ADMIN or CLIENT REP so enter only those types of hours per experience).

After entering your hours, you will need to **EXPORT** (download) on a weekly basis for clinics/programs and on a bi-weekly basis for externships. You must then print and give to your supervisor for approval/signature. Finally, please **UPLOAD** the signed hours after they are approved by your supervisor back into 12twenty.