



Post-Doctoral Litigation and Policy Fellowship, Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law

Time Type: Full time

Application Instructions

Please submit the following documents via cerl@global.upenn.edu

Multiple attachments are permitted.

- Resume/CV
- Cover letter
- List of 3 references
- Writing sample

University Overview

The University of Pennsylvania, the largest private employer in Philadelphia, is a world-renowned leader in education, research, and innovation. This historic, Ivy League school consistently ranks among the top 10 universities in the annual U.S. News & World Report survey. Penn has 12 highly regarded schools that provide opportunities for undergraduate, graduate and continuing education, all influenced by Penn's distinctive interdisciplinary approach to scholarship and learning. As an employer Penn has been ranked nationally on many occasions with the most recent award from Forbes who named Penn one of America's Best Large Employers in 2023.

Penn offers a unique working environment within the city of Philadelphia. The University is situated on a beautiful urban campus, with easy access to a range of educational, cultural, and recreational activities. With its historical significance and landmarks, lively cultural

offerings, and wide variety of atmospheres, Philadelphia is the perfect place to call home for work and play.

The University offers a competitive benefits package that includes excellent healthcare and tuition benefits for employees and their families, generous retirement benefits, a wide variety of professional development opportunities, supportive work and family benefits, a wealth of health and wellness programs and resources, and much more.

Posted Job Title

Post-Doctoral Litigation and Policy Fellowship, Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law

Job Profile Title

Post-Doctoral Fellow

Job Description Summary

The Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law (CERL) is a non-partisan interdisciplinary institute at the University of Pennsylvania dedicated to preserving and promoting ethics and the rule of law in national security, warfare, and democratic governance. CERL draws from the study of law, philosophy, and ethics to answer the difficult questions that arise in domestic and transnational crises and conflicts.

For this project, CERL partners with The National Institute of Military Justice (NIMJ). The NIMJ is a private non-profit organization, founded in 1991 and dedicated to the fair administration of justice in the armed forces and improved public understanding of military justice. NIMJ's leadership includes former judge advocates, private practitioners, and legal scholars.

Reporting directly to the CERL Executive Director, with a dotted line to the Faculty Director, the litigation and policy fellow will conduct legal and policy research and analysis, develop and support CERL's and NIMJ's litigation strategy, draft model policies and legislation, write memoranda, legal briefs, testimony, and articles, and provide event and meeting support.

The substantive work of the fellow will focus on the distinction between lawful and unlawful orders, as this is central to the conscientious performance of duty by commanders as well as those they command. Military personnel are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, a federal statute that criminalizes the disobedience of lawful orders, among numerous other offenses. U.S. military members have a duty to obey all orders, however that also have a duty to reject orders that are “patently illegal.” The ability to distinguish between lawful and patently unlawful orders is thus critical. The litigation and policy fellow will conduct research to support the work of CERL and NIMJ leadership on that issue and will write, generate content, and field direct outreach from active-duty members of the U.S. military on these questions. This outreach work will be part of and in support of NIMJ’s current initiative: The Orders Project. The Orders Project connects military service members with knowledgeable civilian attorneys to advise on the legality of orders they receive. The Fellow is not expected to provide such counsel but will support the Project in a background capacity.

In addition, the fellow will work alongside CERL staff to support impact litigation, policy work, and legislative efforts related to ethics, national security and national security. The fellow will work closely with CERL’s leadership team and will engage in a wide variety of work to transform national security practices, gaining experience in litigation, policy, and legislative efforts.

The fellow will also work with legal externs and summer interns as they conduct research and draft memoranda in support of CERL’s litigation and policy efforts. They will assist the executive director in coordinating the summer internship program.

The fellow will perform additional duties related to the above themes. Responsibilities will include conducting a wide range of factual and legal research for our impact litigation challenging unlawful practices, drafting model policies, statutes, and public-facing materials, and providing event and meeting support, such as planning agendas and supporting the events and communications teams in organizing closed door and public events. The fellow may also support CERL’s research and public-education projects, including drafting and reviewing essays, white papers, op-eds, and blog posts.

The fellows must commit to a normal 40-hour work week throughout the academic year, attend CERL weekly staff meetings and any additional meetings pertaining to projects throughout the year, and attend CERL and NIMJ public events.

Qualifications

- Applicants must have a Juris Doctor degree, Ph.D. or equivalent professional experience (the responsibilities and expectations of the position are generally commensurate with zero to four years of litigation experience). If you are a recent law school graduate with a commitment to public service and justice and an interest in building litigation skills, we welcome your application for a Litigation Fellowship. We also accept applications from LLM graduates. Candidates need not have completed any particular classes or postgraduate clerkships to be considered. Candidates also need not present a project proposal or obtain independent funding to apply. Bar admission is not required.
- An interest in issues relating to ethics, national security, democratic governance, fair administration of justice in the armed forces and improved public understanding of military justice.
- Excellent research, analytical, writing, and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated track record of attention to detail, organization, and ability to work with a team.
- Familiarity with the complex issues arising at the intersection of national security and new technology is preferred but not required.
- Demonstrate excellent organizational, interpersonal, and verbal communication skills. Demonstrated ability to manage multiple projects while meeting overlapping deadlines.
- Have interest or experience in CERL's mission of protecting and promoting ethics, democratic governance, and the rule of law in government and public life.
- Have experience within a university or research institution setting (preferred) or other experience evidencing suitability for this position.
- Strong interpersonal skills with a high degree of competency and comfort in interacting with people at all professional levels.

Job Location - City, State

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Department / School

CERL, Penn Global & Penn Carey Law

Compensation

The current 2025-2026 stipend rate begins at \$68,300.

Consistent with the University's postdoctoral trainee policy, appointments are for one year. Annual reports on the postdoc's progress are required.

The University also provides a benefits package to their respective fellows. Successful candidates will receive highly mentored scholarly and research training and have access to courses and workshops provided by partners on campus to enhance their research skills and prepare them for faculty positions in a major university.

The program is designed to provide postdocs with time to focus on research and publishing activities that will enhance their career prospects for either a faculty appointment in an academic institution or an appointment in other sectors of the economy such as industry, government, or nonprofit organizations. Start dates will be arranged in consultation with the faculty mentor and will begin as early as July 1, 2026.

Equal Opportunity Statement

The University of Pennsylvania is an equal opportunity employer. Candidates are considered for employment without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, creed, national origin (including shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics), citizenship status, age, disability, veteran status or any class protected under applicable federal, state or local law.

Special Requirements

Background checks may be required after a conditional job offer is made. Consideration of the background check will be tailored to the requirements of the job.

University Benefits

- **Health, Life, and Flexible Spending Accounts:** Penn offers comprehensive medical, prescription, behavioral health, dental, vision, and life insurance benefits to protect you and your family's health and welfare. You can also use flexible spending accounts to pay for eligible health care and dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars.

- Tuition: Take advantage of Penn's exceptional tuition benefits. You, your spouse, and your dependent children can get tuition assistance here at Penn. Your dependent children are also eligible for tuition assistance at other institutions.
- Retirement: Penn offers generous retirement plans to help you save for your future. Penn's Basic, Matching, and Supplemental retirement plans allow you to save for retirement on a pre-tax or Roth basis. Choose from a wide variety of investment options through TIAA and Vanguard.
- Time Away from Work: Penn provides you with a substantial amount of time away from work during the course of the year. This allows you to relax, take vacations, attend to personal affairs, recover from illness or injury, spend time with family—whatever your personal needs may be.
- Long-Term Care Insurance: In partnership with Genworth Financial, Penn offers faculty and staff (and your eligible family members) long-term care insurance to help you cover some of the costs of long-term care services received at home, in the community or in a nursing facility. If you apply when you're newly hired, you won't have to provide proof of good health or be subject to underwriting requirements. Eligible family members must always provide proof of good health and are subject to underwriting.
- Wellness and Work-life Resources: Penn is committed to supporting our faculty and staff as they balance the competing demands of work and personal life. That's why we offer a wide variety of programs and resources to help you care for your health, your family, and your work-life balance.
- Professional and Personal Development: Penn provides an array of resources to help you advance yourself personally and professionally.
- University Resources: As a member of the Penn community, you have access to a wide range of University resources as well as cultural and recreational activities. Take advantage of the University's libraries and athletic facilities, or visit our arboretum and art galleries. There's always something going on at Penn, whether it's a new exhibit at the Penn Museum, the latest music or theater presentation at the Annenberg Center, or the Penn Relays at Franklin Field to name just a few examples. As a member of the Penn community, you're right in the middle of the excitement—and you and your family can enjoy many of these activities for free.
- Discounts and Special Services: From arts and entertainment to transportation and mortgages, you'll find great deals for University faculty and staff. Not only do Penn arts and cultural centers and museums offer free and discounted admission and memberships to faculty and staff. You can also enjoy substantial savings on other

goods and services such as new cars from Ford and General Motors, cellular phone service plans, movie tickets, and admission to theme parks.

- Flexible Work Hours: Flexible work options offer creative approaches for completing work while promoting balance between work and personal commitments. These approaches involve use of non-traditional work hours, locations, and/or job structures.
- Penn Home Ownership Services: Penn offers a forgivable loan for eligible employees interested in buying a home or currently residing in West Philadelphia, which can be used for closing costs or home improvements.
- Adoption Assistance: Penn will reimburse eligible employees on qualified expenses in connection with the legal adoption of an eligible child, such as travel or court fees, for up to two adoptions in your household.

Additional Information on Joint Roles and Responsibilities

The University of Pennsylvania acknowledges that postdoctoral fellows are trainees operating in an apprenticeship mode as they prepare for future roles in industry or academia. The mentorship offered by faculty mentors plays a pivotal role in this preparation. Postdoctoral fellows are typically expected to function responsibly and independently. Independent thinking and action are essential elements for cultivating successful research careers.

Responsibilities of postdoctoral fellows include the following:

- Reside in the Philadelphia area unless their research program has global implications. Any remote work arrangement needs review and approval by the university, school, and faculty mentor.
- Participate in the intellectual life of the Center by attending and engaging in department meetings, seminars, colloquia, conferences, etc.
- Focus primarily on research endeavors leading to publications or other significant contributions.
- Identify and pursue training and professional development activities.
- Schedule regular meetings with mentors to review and document research and professional achievements.
- Collaborate with faculty mentors to complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP) upon arrival, outlining both short-term and long-term research goals.

- Utilize the provided templates for IDPs tailored to law, social sciences, and humanities for guidance.
- Participate in scheduled professional and social programming with other Postdoctoral Fellows across campus.
- Offer programmatic feedback upon request, such as through surveys, to ensure continued engagement and success in the postdoctoral fellowship program at Penn.
- Adhere to the obligations and expectations as outlined in the university's policy for postdoctoral appointments.

Responsibilities of faculty mentors include the following:

- Prior to writing a letter of support, the proposed mentor should meet or engage with the applicant to determine compatible research, scholarly, or creative work interests with the applicant and agree to serve as a mentor.
- Provide a recommendation letter for the application. The letter in the applicant's submission should provide details on the research project, research goals, and plans for mentoring.
- In consultation with the postdoctoral fellow, develop an Individual Mentorship Plan (IDP) shortly after their arrival on campus. This includes defined expectations for scholarly work to be completed.
- Provide a mutually agreed-upon timeline for implementing the fellow's proposed goals or plan.
- Schedule annual meetings to review IDP and review fellow's accomplishments.
- Submit annual reports on the postdoc's progress.
- Respect the postdoctoral fellow's individuality, working style, and career goals, and be aware that the rate of progress of PDTs will vary.
- Provide support and guidance in the fellow's work while allowing a high degree of autonomy to cultivate research independence.
- Maintain an atmosphere in which the postdoctoral fellow feels comfortable to approach you for advice or discussion of differences.
- Establish clear plans for how projects will be divided when fellows complete their training.
- Serve as a bridge to assist the postdoctoral fellow in establishing a visible, active presence in the department, school, and with colleagues.

- Meet regularly (for example, once a month) to establish and foster a career development plan and to assess important aspects of the postdoctoral trainee's progress.
- Encourage the postdoctoral fellow to attend orientations, training, and professional development activities. Facilitate professional development opportunities when available.
- Assist the postdoctoral fellow in networking with mentors from variegated backgrounds and disciplines, thereby facilitating a comprehensive and multifaceted experience.
- Serve as a professional resource, advise them about the job market, and help facilitate connections.
- Promote ethical standards for conducting research, including compliance with all institutional and federal regulations.
- Accord full recognition of the postdoctoral fellow's contributions to scholarship, including appropriate authorship of published work.
- Support the postdoctoral fellow's use of the full benefits available to them, including personal time off.
- Applicants may send mentors to this direct page with instructions.

Responsibilities of the school and/or department include the following:

- Provide adequate workspace within the first week, which should include a private office, shared office space, or a private cubicle with a name/office plate. This space should include a desk, chair, computer (laptop or desktop), and a light fixture.
- Onboard and assist in establishing a Penn presence (ID card, email address, etc.)
- Welcome the postdoctoral fellow and provide information about departmental meetings, colloquia, seminars, other events, and essential matters.
- Add the postdoctoral fellow to the appropriate department, center, and school website and listservs.
- Provide contact information for administrative staff in the department.
- Provide information about department business and administrative practices.
- Provide information about stipends and benefits. Ensure that stipend amounts are updated on an annual basis.
- Administer the postdoctoral fellow's research and professional travel funds.
- Commit to providing a successful training environment for the postdoctoral fellow.

- Please note that schools and faculty mentors are responsible for reappointments, including issuing reappointment letters to the postdoc and copying the Office of the Vice Provost for Research before the renewal date.

To learn more, please visit: <https://www.hr.upenn.edu/PennHR/benefits-pay>