

FIELD PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR GUIDELINES

1. ROLE OF THE FIELD SUPERVISOR

Field placement supervisors play a key role in the extern program. By supervising the day-to-day work of student externs, these practitioners provide the direct clinical training that complements the academic training provided by the College of Law. In addition to being a licensed attorney with at least five¹ years post-bar experience, the College of Law requires that field placement supervisors pursue and abide by certain goals and guidelines as detailed below.

2. SUPERVISOR GOALS.

The goals of each participating field placement supervisor should be:

- To expose students to a broad range of lawyering skills, which may include client interviews, counseling, negotiation, court appearances, administrative proceedings, settlement conferences, discovery, legal research and analysis, and formulation of case strategy.
- To encourage development of legal research and writing skills through work on legal documents such as motions, complaints, briefs, memoranda, agreements and opinion letters.
- To further students' understanding of, and ability to apply, legal principles learned in the classroom to actual problems.
- To foster, through experience and critical reflection, a greater understanding of the importance of the fundamental values of fairness, justice and competent representation; and ongoing professional growth, professional responsibility, and self-assessment.

¹ The five years of experience requirement may be waived under certain limited circumstances, at the discretion of the Externship Coordinator. The requirement that an attorney supervise the student cannot be waived.

3. ORIENTATION FOR THE STUDENT.

Students should be assigned to field placement supervisors on a one-to-one basis. At the beginning of the externship, the field placement supervisor should provide a detailed orientation to:

- the organization's work, history, structure and objectives;
- office policies and procedures;
- office resources; and
- members of the office staff.

4. SETTING OF GOALS.

The field placement supervisor and the student should meet to discuss the specific goals of the externship and how the practical externship experience will meet and complement the student's learning goals and needs. The student should not be expected to do large amounts of menial task work such as photocopying, filing and updating records. The student's caseload should include projects that cover a range of substantive legal issues and are representative of the field placement supervisor's caseload.

5. CASELOAD MANAGEMENT.

The field placement supervisor should provide the student with an overview of the matters or cases in which the student will be involved and how the student's particular projects and assignments fit into the matter as a whole. The nature and extent of the projects should be commensurate with the number of hours the student will be working at the organization. The field placement supervisor should explain clearly:

- the desired finished project;
- the amount of time the student should spend on the project;
- the due date; and
- other conditions or requirements of the project.

If possible, the field placement supervisor should communicate this by means of a brief written memo, and the student should respond with a confirming memo.

6. WEEKLY MEETINGS BETWEEN THE STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR.

The field placement supervisor should meet with the student at least once a week to:

- review progress
- answer questions
- provide ongoing feedback on the student's performance
- schedule assignments
- discuss any specific issues, including policy, professional or ethical considerations raised by the assignments.

Ideally, the field placement supervisor should be available for informal, brief conferences on individual issues in addition to the weekly meeting. Routine oral feedback can provide great educational value to the student, above and beyond the substantive and practical experience gained during the externship. The feedback process should also allow dialogue that encourages the student to assess the student's progress and identify areas in which the student needs improvement.

7. CONTACT WITH THE DIRECTOR AND/OR EXTERNSHIP COORDINATOR.

The External Programs Director and/or the Externship Coordinator will be available during the course of the semester to confer with the field placement supervisor regarding placement issues and problems. If there is a problem or dispute regarding the placement that cannot be resolved directly with the student, the field placement supervisor is encouraged to contact the External Programs Director or the Externship Coordinator for assistance.

The field placement supervisor should be available to meet with the student and the External Programs Director or Externship Coordinator at least once during the semester. During the site visit, the field placement supervisor should plan to spend some portion of time alone with the External Programs Director or Externship Coordinator and some portion of time with the External Programs Director or Externship Coordinator and the student.

8. EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT.

At the end of the externship, the field placement supervisor is required to provide the student with an overall oral assessment of the student's performance, including both strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the field placement supervisor must complete the final evaluation form to provide a comprehensive assessment of the student's work. In evaluating the student's performance, the field placement supervisor should pay particular attention to the student's

- research ability;
- legal analytical skills;
- intellectual capacity and creativity;
- writing skills;
- oral expression;
- common sense, judgment and ability to set priorities;
- initiative and responsibility;
- ability to relate well and effectively with clients and co-workers; and
- enthusiasm, temperament, office demeanor and behavior.

To the extent that the student works closely with other attorneys or employees within the organization, the field placement supervisor is encouraged to secure the input and assistance of such persons in completing the evaluation of the student.

Supervisors are encouraged to provide periodic reviews of the student's work, either in person or with written feedback.

9. FORMS.

Forms for use by the field placement supervisors are as follows:

- Application
- Supervisor Review Form