Externship Program

Judicial Extern Supervisor Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your willingness to mentor a Washington and Lee University Law student. Your commitment serves an important role in the externship student’s professional development while allowing him or her to obtain invaluable practical experience. It is our goal to make the experience mutually beneficial.

This guide serves to facilitate your mentorship and supervision of your extern. Should you need any additional information or have suggestions for the externship program please do not hesitate to contact Tammi M. Hellwig, Director of Externships and Professor of Practice at hellwigt@wlu.edu.

OVERVIEW OF AN EXTERNSHIP

Externships provide students with the opportunity to pursue off-campus experiential placements. For each externship course, there is a contemporaneous classroom component with required attendance. Students are assessed on both their classroom and on-site work.

Student externs spend one to two days at their externship site each week, depending on the credit hours sought, and must enroll in an accompanying course taught by the designated faculty member. Washington and Lee’s Director of Externships and Professor of Practice, Tammi M. Hellwig and other designated externship faculty maintain an ongoing “conversation” with each of you about the student’s performance and development.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Externships at Washington and Lee University School of Law are governed by the American Bar Association’s Standards for Approval of Law Schools as well as the curriculum established by the School of Law. Washington and Lee’s innovative third-year curriculum is entirely experiential. Expanding upon the lessons and law of the first- and second-year curriculum, students move out of the classroom and into the real world of legal practice. A primary focus of the curriculum is to develop in law students the habits of mind and judgment of legal professionals, in short, to learn and apply law the way lawyers do in the process of solving problems for their clients. Each third-year student must enroll in a course in which the student engages in an actual legal setting in a representational capacity. Externships are one elective that satisfy this requirement. We strive for students to accomplish four things in an externship:

Improve their legal skills, such as research, writing and analysis or negotiation, client communication and courtroom demeanor;

Increase their knowledge of a substantive area of law such as criminal justice, administrative law, corporate law, or employment law;
Learn the mission and administration of an agency, court, or non-profit or for-profit entity and explore how the organization accomplishes its mission; and

Perhaps most importantly, begin to develop a concept of professional identity.

Overall, the externship curriculum is designed for students to be reflective – to think critically and open-handedly about the externship experience and consider how it has helped their growth in career and professional development.

**COURSE CREDIT, HOURS AND GRADING**

Students are assessed on both their classroom and on-site work, with the classroom component structured as a two-credit graded course and concurrent fieldwork assessed on a pass/no pass basis. Fieldwork is assessed on the completion of the requisite hours and a satisfactory evaluation from you, the Judicial Extern Supervisor. Depending on the externship course, the fieldwork component is either two or three credits (judicial externships are full-year and are limited to two fieldwork credits per semester). Two credits are equivalent to 100+ hours on-site, and three credits are equivalent to 200+ hours on-site. Each student is responsible for tracking and logging fieldwork hours with externship faculty.

**GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF JUDICIAL EXTERN SUPERVISORS**

Judicial Extern Supervisors are an integral part of the externship students’ educational and professional experience. We appreciate the mentoring role you are providing. Below are general guidelines that should assist you and your student in achieving a successful externship. More detailed explanations follow.

- Students must be engaged in substantial, authentic legal work at the site. To the extent possible, the work should place the student in a lawyer’s role.
- The students’ work may not be compensated nor may it be billed. This does not preclude a Judicial Supervisor from reimbursing a student for travel or other expenses incurred as a direct result of the program.
- Nothing in this program precludes the student from working with other attorneys and staff on-site.
- The Supervisor will give students the opportunity to perform a variety of tasks in order to develop various skills.
- The Supervisor will complete a final evaluation of each student.
- The Supervisor will have routine contact with designated externship faculty teaching the corresponding classroom component, Jon Apgar, and/or the Director.
of Externships, Tammi Hellwig. The Supervisor will work with externship faculty to develop and encourage appropriate learning goals and objectives for the students.

- The Supervisor will provide adequate work space in a safe environment. Sufficient resources will be available to allow the student to successfully perform his or her work.
- The externship is primarily an educational opportunity for the student. While the student should be able to contribute to the work of the placement, the student should not serve as a substitute for other employees within the placement.

**ORIENTATION**

Your student will reach out to you a few weeks prior to the start of the externship to discuss a mutually accommodating schedule. In preparation for your student’s arrival, please consider an orientation similar to that of a new employee. This includes workspace considerations, access issues, account generation, and so forth. Such preparation will help place the student at ease in a new environment, and facilitate efficient use of your time as well as the student’s. Attached as *Appendix A* is a checklist you may wish to consider in preparation for your extern’s arrival:

*Appendix A: Techniques for Effective Supervision - Orientation*

**GOAL SETTING**

Externs will likely be required by their externship faculty to establish learning goals for the semester with measurable objectives to serve as a guide to the externship. Please meet with your student to discuss educational goals for the term. This will allow you and the extern to have a mutual understanding regarding the kinds of work and experiences that will be available to the extern.

Attached as *Appendix B* are suggestions for goal setting, assignments and feedback designed to assist with your mentoring role and facilitate a successful externship for you and your student:

*Appendix B: Techniques for Effective Supervision – Goal Setting/Assignments*

**ASSIGNMENTS AND FEEDBACK**

Washington and Lee University School of Law students receive academic credit for their engagement in an externship. It is therefore critical that each student has the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the work of the externship site, and to fully engage in and observe the environment. Careful explanation of an assignment, your expectations, and associated deadlines
are important to convey to your externship student. It is equally important that your externship student receive regular, specific feedback on his or her work. Detailed feedback includes specific information about your student’s work product, as well as concrete suggestions on how to enhance future performance. Both will further each student’s professional development and ensure the educational integrity of the externship.

Attached as Appendices B and C are resources that are designed to assist with your mentoring role and facilitate a successful externship for you and your student:

*Appendix B: Techniques for Effective Supervision – Goal Setting/Assignments*

*Appendix C: A Practical Guide to Cooperative Supervision for Law Students and Legal Employers*

**STUDENT EVALUATIONS**

You will be asked to complete a written evaluation of your externship student at the close of the semester. A form will be provided to you; however, you are free to provide an alternative narrative if you wish. Your students will be evaluated (pass/no pass) in part on the basis of your evaluation. Attached as Appendix D is a copy of the final student evaluation used in the Spring of 2013:

*Appendix D: Evaluation Example*

**CONFIDENTIALITY AND OTHER ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OR CONCERNS**

Class discussion and assignments must redact any client identifying, confidential or otherwise protected information. It is likely that one of your student’s initial classroom assignments will be to consider issues of confidentiality and non-disclosure. Be sure to discuss with your student any specific issues of confidentiality that may govern with respect to your workplace.

Although rare, significant issues of concern may arise during an externship. Please do not hesitate to contact your designated externship faculty or Tammi M. Hellwig, Director of Externships and Professor of Practice at hellwigt@wlu.edu with any questions, concerns or suggestions. In many instances, it is best that the student and an individual supervisor communicate and resolve issues when possible. If an issue is unable to be resolved after meaningful communication, we are available to assist.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Please note that Washington and Lee does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran’s status, or
genetic information in its educational programs and activities, admissions, and with regard to employment. Washington and Lee is committed to partnering with prospective externship sites who comply with this non-discrimination policy.
APPENDIX

RESOURCES FOR JUDICIAL EXTERN SUPERVISORS

A. Techniques for Effective Supervision – Orientation

B. Techniques for Effective Extern Supervision – Goal Setting/Assignments

C. A Practical Guide to Cooperative Supervision for Law Students and Legal Employers

D. Final Evaluation

Thank you for your participation!