

**The University of Akron
School of Law
Legal Clinic**

EXTERNSHIP PROTOCOL

INFORMATION AND EVALUATION FORMS
FOR SUPERVISORS AND STUDENTS



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INTRODUCTION

Periodically, the University of Akron School of Law Legal Clinic's externship program is to provide an outstanding educational experience for our law students. At the same time, we hope our students can assist you in the work that you do and gain exposure to the workings of your office. However, the primary focus is on the educational benefit to the student. In line with that view, the following materials should describe for you our focus and the ways in which we believe the student should be supervised, evaluated, and critiqued by you.

As to the overall parameters of the program, you should know the following. Every law student can participate in this program two times during the student's law school career. Clinical Seminar students are required to attend a weekly class. The class for students who are participating in the program for the first time, Clinical Seminar I, meets every Wednesday. The class for our more experienced students, Clinical Seminar II, is a "To Be Announced" class, meaning that the students' schedules dictate the day and time of the meeting.

Clinical Seminar I focuses on the various aspects of the legal system, the judge's perspective, the lawyer's perspective, and the jury's perspective. The class also affords students the opportunity to discuss generally their placement experiences, the problems they have had, and ways in which they have overcome any problems. We also discuss basic and advanced skills to ensure that all students are able to perform at the level expected of an attorney in your office. For example, we discuss legal research and writing (without Lexis or Westlaw), general lawyering skills, and professional responsibility. We specifically instruct students not to reveal privileged or confidential information that they learn at their placement.

Clinical Seminar II was designed with the idea that the students enrolled have already completed one externship experience. Therefore, in addition to classroom discussions about placement activities and experiences, there is a focus on more advanced skills training. For example, students participate in several simulated trial activities during the semester. There are two class sessions devoted to interactive videodisc computer simulations and another class session during which students conduct a mock voir dire.

Students are required to work a minimum of 90 hours at the placement for 2 credits or 120 hours at a single placement for 3 credits. In rare situations, a student can earn 6 credit hours by working 240 hours at the placement. In addition, all students are required to submit weekly journals of their activities to the Clinical Seminar professor. The journals are intended to allow us to monitor the tasks being done by the student. They also require the student to reflect on the placement experience. The journal is not intended to reveal any placement confidences but rather is a conduit for information between the student and the professor. The student will also submit time sheets to you. The hours are to be filled out by the student. You should sign the sheet, thereby verifying the hours worked by the student. The students are instructed that they can count hours for research or other work done outside the office. For example, students are often assigned tasks that require research to be conducted in the law library, and those hours should count toward their total.

Every year, we visit placements where we regularly place students. During these visits, we will

discuss our student's progress with you. We will be able to discuss whether our student is performing at the level you expect, and what, if anything, we can do to enhance the placement experience for you and your student. If any questions or concerns arise at any time during the semester, please call us. We are here to resolve any problems that may arise, from difficulties with obtaining intern certificates to mediating and resolving problems that might arise with the student assigned to your office.

Finally, we expect you to critique the student's work. Again, the focus is on education. We expect students will gain a greater understanding of the legal system, substantive law, procedural requirements, and the skills required to be a successful lawyer. Thus, it is imperative that you set expectations for the student's work and evaluate and critique that work. The type of work done by the student will be dictated by the nature of the placement. The placement might focus on intake interviews, taking complaints, writing briefs, or assisting judges with opinions. Whatever the task, our expectation is that the students produce a work product of comparable quality to that of an attorney.

At the end of this packet of material are several evaluation forms. We ask that you complete the first form at the beginning of the placement experience. This form requires the student to discuss goals for the placement with you at the outset of the experience. The other forms are short evaluation forms for you to complete at the end of the semester. There are several ways you can return the forms to us. First, you can e-mail your responses to: gspring@uakron.edu (if you would prefer, we can e-mail the evaluation forms to you for you to complete). Second, you can fax the forms to: (330) 972-6326. Finally, you can mail them to us at:

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In addition to these evaluation forms, we would appreciate your thoughts about this program at the end of the student's placement. It is comments from supervisors in the past that have allowed us to modify the classes and the evaluation form to be more responsive to the needs of our students and placements.

If you have any questions, please contact Professor Gary Spring @ 330-972-2358 or Professor J. Dean Carro (330) 972-7751. Thank you for providing this outstanding educational experience for our students.

DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS PLACEMENTS

The externship program allows students to be placed in any court, not-for-profit organization, or governmental agency where there is an attorney present to supervise the student. Quite often these placements will be with legal aid organizations, prosecutors, public defenders, or other governmental or not-for-profit agencies. You cannot pay the student for the work performed; the student may only receive academic credit for the time spent in the placement. The work can be done only in a government/not-for-profit setting under the supervision of an attorney for non-political activities. We also place exceptional students in judicial clerkship positions. These students will be expected to achieve at the highest levels that the Court would expect of its traditionally hired attorney law clerks.

In any setting, the student should be treated as any other employee in the sense that the work expected is legal work, including legal research and writing, and other tasks performed that would be tasks performed by an attorney in that office. Law students shall not be couriers, nor should they perform personal services for supervisors.

Appropriate work for a particular student will be dictated by the specific placement. Thus, if the student is in a setting where attorneys do client interviewing or intake, the student will be expected to do the same. Appropriate placement activities include, but are not limited to, interviewing, intake, letter writing, research and pleading or brief writing, observation, administrative work, and in court activities for students who have their legal intern certificates.

BEGINNING THE EXTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

During each semester, students are notified in a variety of ways that the externship program exists, from information placed in student mailboxes to internet postings and word-of-mouth. Students who have completed their first year of law school are eligible for a placement beginning the summer after their first year.

We have a list of existing placement opportunities, but we also try to locate placements to meet particular student needs. Our goal is to identify the student's needs and interests and find the placement that best fits those needs and interests. Students are required to complete an application form on which the student indicates what type of experience they seek. We then meet at least once with every student who applies, interview the student to determine what experiences that student is seeking, and talk about what placements are available that we believe will fit the student's needs as well as the placements. Students are never assigned to a placement simply because an opening is available.

Following the meeting between the professor and the student, we will contact the particular placement supervisor. The placement supervisor will be asked whether there is a need for a student to work in the office. If there is such a need and adequate supervision will be available, the student's background will be discussed with the placement supervisor and the supervisor will make an initial determination whether to interview the student.

The student will then contact the placement supervisor to set up a time to meet. At this

interview, there should be a mutual evaluation. The placement supervisor should evaluate the student, and the student should evaluate the supervisor. At the conclusion of the interview, should the supervisor accept the student, the supervisor and the student must jointly generate a mutual understanding of the work to be performed by the student. Appendix I, at the end of this protocol, must be filled out with the general tasks to be performed by the students and the expectations of the supervisor (this should be flexible as new and different opportunities frequently arise, but an initial agreement is important to avoid misunderstandings later in the placement).

The student is responsible for notifying the professor of acceptance in the placement. If the student is not acceptable, we expect the placement supervisor to contact the Legal Clinic and offer reasons for the rejection.

YOUR ROLE AS TEACHER

We are more than willing to meet with you to discuss your role as an educator in the externship process. As we have indicated, the focus of the externship program is to provide an educational experience. To achieve this goal, we meet weekly with every student. However, you also have a responsibility to teach the student placed in your office. If you have any questions about what you should do to achieve this goal, do not hesitate to contact us. In general, we want you to act as a teacher and mentor to the student. As teacher, you should explain what you expect of the student for every project you assign. You should provide the student with the assistance and guidance necessary to complete the project. As mentor, you should serve as a role model for the student, demonstrating the high level of competence and professionalism that you expect from other lawyers and from the student.

When we initially set up a placement, we talk with the placement supervisor about our expectations for the semester. During this conversation, we discuss the particular student's experiences and goals, and your needs for the semester. We also discuss some of the possible tasks that the student could perform during the placement. However, other ideas frequently arise during the semester. We ask that you consider whether the project you have in mind will allow the student to gain new experiences, learn something new or apply something already learned, and whether this is the type of project you would assign to an attorney or that you would do yourself if the student were not working with you. If you decide that the project is appropriate, then, by all means, you should assign the student to work on the project. If you have any questions about whether you should assign this project, please call us and we can discuss it.

EVALUATION OF WRITTEN MATERIAL

The supervisor should evaluate at least one legal writing of each student each term, if it is appropriate for the placement. A legal writing will vary according to the placement. In some placements, students will have only the opportunity to write letters. In others, students will write briefs, pleadings, or assist with opinions. Whatever the legal writing in question, we expect each student to complete at least one legal writing. Appendix II is an evaluation form to be used for this purpose. The focus of this evaluation form is on positive and constructive feedback. Supervisors must give students a high level of supervision during the drafting of any writing and

significant feedback as to the strengths and weaknesses of the particular writing. The student gains the most benefit when the placement supervisor actively and continuously evaluates the student's performance, both verbally and in writing. Strong feedback will also allow the student to improve, which will benefit you during the semester.

EVALUATION OF ORAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to critiquing and evaluating the law student's written work, the placement supervisor should also evaluate any oral activities. These would include activities such as interviewing clients, conducting prosecutor's hearings, or other activities in which no writing would be generated, including, for example, a briefing on a project that the student completed. We would expect the supervisor to evaluate and observe at least one of these activities if it is appropriate to the placement. Appendix III is an evaluation form to be used for this purpose.

EVALUATION OF OVERALL PLACEMENT

At the conclusion of the placement, it is imperative that you evaluate both the student and the placement experience. We would hope that you would meet with the student at the end of the semester to discuss the student's work during the semester. Appendix IV is to be used for this purpose, and provides a framework for your discussion with the student.

This evaluation should consider the initial goals agreed upon by you and the student, and the degree to which those goals were met. Also worth considering is whether future students assigned to the placement should have certain predicate coursework completed before working at the placement. We would appreciate your feedback about any information that you believe students should receive in the class component to this course.

APPENDIX I
Goals of the Clinical Placement

I, _____, met with _____ to discuss the placement at
_____ on _____.

We agreed that the above student's work would focus on the following work and skill development areas.

PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR

STUDENT

APPENDIX II
Evaluation of Written Work

Evaluation for _____
(student name and placement)

Date: _____

Writing Task Performed (please describe)

- A. Did the student firmly grasp the purpose of the task?

- B. Did the student properly utilize various research methods? If used, list methods.

- C. How was the student's writing? Was the quality better or worse than expected?

- D. If applicable, did the student anticipate opposing arguments?

- E. Did the student adhere to proper form and procedural rules?

- F. Did the student demonstrate understanding of relevant legal concepts and facts?

- G. If applicable, was the writing persuasive?

PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR

We will share your evaluation with the student you supervised. If you do not want us to share this evaluation, please note that here so that we can contact you. This evaluation form may also be reviewed by an ABA/AALS Accreditation Committee as part of its seven-year review of our Law School.

APPENDIX III
Evaluation of Oral Work

Evaluation for _____
(student name and placement)

Date: _____

Oral Task Performed (please describe)

- A. Did the student develop the necessary information?

- B. Did the student communicate the necessary information?

- C. Did the student establish rapport with the individual being spoken to?

- D. Did the student conduct him/herself in a professional manner?

- E. How effective was the student's oral presentation?

PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR

We will share your evaluation with the student you supervised. If you do not want us to share this evaluation, please note that here so that we can contact you. This evaluation form may also be reviewed by an ABA/AALS Accreditation Committee as part of its seven-year review of our Law School.

APPENDIX IV
Overall Evaluation

Evaluation for _____
(student name and placement)

Date: _____

A. How did the student benefit from this externship experience?

B. How did you benefit from this externship experience?

C. What suggestions or comments do you have about this program? What could we do to make this a better experience for the student and/or for you?

PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR

We will share your evaluation with the student you supervised. If you do not want us to share this evaluation, please note that here so that we can contact you. This evaluation form may also be reviewed by an ABA/AALS Accreditation Committee as part of its seven-year review of our Law School.

Student Placement Evaluation

Name: _____

Placement: _____

Date: _____

Please answer the following questions about your placement:

- A. Did the placement meet your expectations? If not, what expectations were not met and why?
- B. Did your placement supervisor provide you with adequate feedback and support during the placement? If not, what additional feedback or support would you have wanted?
- C. Do you feel that you had a positive educational experience at your placement?
- D. Would you recommend this placement to another law student? Why or why not?

We may share your evaluation with the placement. If you do not want us to share this evaluation, please note that here so that we can contact you. This evaluation form may also be reviewed by an ABA/AALS Accreditation Committee as part of its seven-year review of our Law School.