



MITCHELL | HAMLINE  
School of Law

## INDEPENDENT EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM Guidelines for Site Supervisors

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a Site Supervisor to a Mitchell Hamline law student. You will play an important role in our mission to provide education to our students to serve, teach, study, and practice law by being critical observers and active participants. We recognize that extern supervision takes time and effort, but we hope your experience as a site supervisor will also be enjoyable and rewarding. These guidelines are intended to provide information about the Independent Externship Program and assist you in working with our students.

### 2. EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM GOALS

While the essence of the independent externship is the student's specific individual learning goals, the following Program Goals specify what we hope to accomplish by having such a program at Mitchell Hamline. We aim to provide our students the opportunity to:

- Apply knowledge and skills gained from academic studies in class to the rigors of practice;
- Learn to be a reflective professional-- articulate observations, comprehend, and integrate new knowledge for future actions;
- Develop professional responsibility skills;
- Assist in defining career goals and create professional networks;
- Gain skills and knowledge necessary to work with individuals with life experiences different than the student's own life experiences.

### 3. ABA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDY OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Mitchell Hamline's Independent Externship Program is operated in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the American Bar Association's Standards for Approval of Law Schools, ABA Standard 304. For a copy of Standard 304, please contact the Externship Administrator (contact information in 7., below).

### 4. SITE SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

**A. Review student's goals and assist in identifying field activities to achieve those goals.** Prior to the placement start date, the student and supervisor are expected to discuss the student's learning goals for the field placement and identify opportunities for the student to meet those goals. Based on this discussion, the student will write her/his Education Agreement and request that you review and sign the Education Agreement.

**B. Conduct a thorough initial meeting to cover office basics.** Please schedule an initial meeting with the student extern at the very start of the first week of fieldwork to orient the student to the nature of the work, the set-up of the office, and to set the tone for the supervisory relationship. We recommend that you address the following issues with the student at the start of the fieldwork:

**Conflicts Check.** If you have not already asked the student about his or her previous/current employment and affiliations that might potentially be in conflict with your organization's conflict policy, please discuss at the initial meeting.

**Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility.** Discuss professional obligations such as confidentiality, conflicts of interest and permissible communications with those outside the office at the outset of the fieldwork. If there are particular ethical policies that govern your office, please share them as well. It is also helpful for the student to know the title to use on communications, e.g., “law student extern” or “legal extern.”

**Office Function.** Discuss with the student the services provided by your office and who the organization’s clients are (if there are clients), as well as the particular substantive areas of law that the office focuses on. This will help to orient the student extern to her/his new work environment. Please take the time to show your student around the office, including a brief overview of the office space where resources for research are available and introductions to staff with whom they will interact.

**Relevant Office Policies.** Please share with the student the relevant office policies, such as any dress code and the use of office equipment.

**Schedule of Meetings with Student.** It is important to plan early for both formal and informal communications with your student. We encourage you to have at least weekly meetings with each student extern, during which you can review work and discuss other matters.

**Workspace.** Each student extern will need some form of a workspace set aside. Please advise others in the office where the student will be located.

**Work Schedule.** Together with the student, develop a schedule of the specific days and times for fieldwork. A set schedule provides the student extern with the opportunity to develop a sense of commitment and responsibility and also allows you to better plan for the student’s involvement and gather assignments.

**C. Ensure the student is involved, assign meaningful projects, and provide critical feedback.**

**Involvement & Assignments.** Please include your student in the activities of the office. As appropriate, invite the student to attend client meetings, conferences, administrative hearings and trials, negotiations, settlement conferences, either as observers or active participants. Students should not be asked to spend more than de minimis time on administrative duties such as photocopying and phone coverage.

Assign a variety of meaningful legal tasks. Such tasks may include, with appropriate supervision: drafting of documents and policies; conducting legal research; interviewing and counseling clients; negotiating; responding to government agencies, writing letters to constituents, and providing advocacy in court proceedings.

Inform the student the chain of command for assignments, i.e., from whom she/he should accept work. It is always best if assignments go through the Site Supervisor, even if a student will work with others in performing some tasks. Inform your student about the review process for her/his work, as well as whether there are any tasks the student may carry out without a supervisor’s review or approval.

**Explanation of Assignments.** It is always helpful to carefully explain assignments and make certain the student understands what is expected. Set a deadline for each assignment and keep track of whether the student is completing assignments in a timely fashion. Please inform your student of available resources that might be helpful, particularly those resources with which the student might not be familiar. In addition, provide context for each assignment, i.e., how the work product will fit

into the larger picture. For relatively complex assignments, please ask the student to check in early and often to report on his/her progress.

**Feedback.** Site Supervisors are expected to meet with each student extern on a regular basis to provide critical feedback. It is important to identify those aspects of the student's work that are effective, as well as those aspects that require improvement.

**D. Engage in communication with Mitchell Hamline about the externship.** Before the externship, you may be contacted by the Faculty Supervisor, Externship Director, or a member of Mitchell Hamline's Career and Professional Development staff to discuss basic information about externship requirements, the student's preliminary learning goals, and any questions you may have about externships.

Once or twice during the semester, you may be asked to discuss the student's progress with learning goals. In the event the student is paid for externship fieldwork, a mid-semester meeting is required and must be an in-person or video-conference meeting including the faculty supervisor, as well as the student and site supervisor.

At the end of the semester, the Site Supervisor may be asked to complete and submit a brief, written evaluation or the faculty supervisor may call you to ask for feedback on the student's performance.

At any time, please do not hesitate to contact the Faculty Supervisor or Externship Director with any questions, concerns, or requests for additional support. *If you have concerns:* The faculty and administrators at the law school will intervene in situations in which a site supervisor and student are unable to discuss the problem or when there have been attempts to address the issues but the problems have not been resolved. If you have any concerns about a particular student extern, please contact the Externship Director or Administrator.

## 5. TIMEKEEPING

Students are required to log 45 hours per credit earned, including time spent on fieldwork and coursework. The student is responsible for tracking hours using an online timekeeping tool. You will not be asked to verify the student's hours.

## 6. WESTLAW AND LEXISNEXIS

Students may use their Westlaw and LexisNexis educational accounts to conduct legal research and other assignments that are directly related to their learning during their externship. Any other use, including any use in connection with the student's employment or where the student receives remuneration of any kind, is prohibited.

## 7. RESOURCES FOR SITE SUPERVISORS & STUDENTS

**A. Sexual Harassment, Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment, and Sexual Violence Policy.** Although site supervisors are not employees of Mitchell Hamline, we wanted to ensure you are aware of our policy regarding non-discrimination and non-harassment and know that this resource is available:

It is the policy of the Mitchell Hamline Law School of Law ("law school") to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment ..., sexual intimidation, sexual exploitation, harassment, discrimination or sexual violence based on actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender ..., gender identity, marital status,

familial status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, age, family care leave status or veteran status or any other protected class defined by law. The law school prohibits any form of harassment, violence or discrimination based on actual or perceived protected class status. The law school is committed to properly investigating and addressing incidents of sexual misconduct. Retaliation against a person who reports or complains about sexual harassment, harassment, discrimination, or sexual violence or who participates in or supports the investigation of a complaint is also prohibited and will not be tolerated.

In addition, Mitchell Hamline also prohibits dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

For a complete copy of this Policy and the School's Sexual Harassment Policy, please contact the Externship Director.

**B. Faculty.** Mitchell Hamline students who enroll in the independent externship course are required to have a full-time faculty supervisor who will provide educational supervision. The faculty supervisor is responsible for: (1) Meeting with the student during the externship; (2) Assisting the student in guided reflection based on the student's experiences; (3) Evaluating whether the student achieved his/her learning goals; (4) and providing support to the student and site supervisors as necessary.

**C. Externship Program Team.** Mitchell Hamline's Externship Director is responsible for the overall management of the Independent Externship Program and in so doing relies on the expert assistance of the Externship Administrator.

Professor Denise Roy, Externship Director, Mitchell Hamline School of Law,  
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Jean Backes, Administrative Coordinator for Clinics & Externship Programs,  
[jean.backes@mitchellhamline.edu](mailto:jean.backes@mitchellhamline.edu) (651) 290-6351.

Please feel free to call Denise or Jean with any questions.

**D. Independent Externship Program Website.** Contains program details and resources. <https://mitchellhamline.edu/field-placements/independent-externships/>.

**E. Recommended reading for Site Supervisors.**

Leah Wortham & Liz Ryan Cole, *Learning from Supervision* in **LEARNING FROM PRACTICE: A TEXT FOR EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION** 33-58 (J.P. Ogilvy, Leah Wortham & Lisa G. Lerman, eds., 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., West Academic 2016). Please contact the Externship Administrator if you would like to a copy of *Learning from Supervision*.