

## INDEPENDENT EXTERNSHIPS & INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL EXTERNSHIPS Guidelines for Faculty Supervisors

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to be a faculty supervisor to a student in the independent externship or independent judicial externship program. As a faculty supervisor, you serve a critical role to advance the educational benefits of our externship program. With your guidance, Mitchell Hamline students will learn to successfully transition from the classroom to the workplace where they can put their legal knowledge and skills to the test.

These set of guidelines contain *suggestions and best practices* for you to use when you supervise students. We recognize there are many vagaries involving the placement site, faculty supervisor, site supervisor and the student. As such, some of the practices suggested here may not apply to all externships. In certain situations, such as out of state placements, you will need to tailor your supervision that works best for you and your student.

Mitchell Hamline's Independent Externship Program is fully described at the following website:  
<http://mitchellhamline.edu/externships/independent-externships/>.

### 2. MITCHELL HAMLINE'S INDEPENDENT EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM GOALS

While the essence of the independent externship is the student's own learning goals, the Independent Externship Program Goals specify what we hope to accomplish by having such a program at Mitchell Hamline.

**Externship Program Goals:** We aim to provide opportunities for our students to:

- Pursue individual learning goals;
- Gain skills and knowledge necessary to work with individuals with life experiences different than the student's own life experiences;
- 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.

### 3. FACULTY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

By signing on to be a faculty supervisor, you are responsible for:

- Meeting with your student;
- Determining how you will be involved to benefit the student's learning and discussing this with the student;
- Assisting the student in guided reflection based on the student's experiences;

- Advising on ethical issues;
- Contacting the site supervisor, by phone or email, to request feedback on the student's performance; and
- Evaluating whether the student achieved his/her learning goals and submitting pass/fail or grade at the end of the externship.

#### 4. PLAN FOR FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

After you agree to serve as a faculty supervisor, you and your student will need to discuss your plan for faculty involvement, which needs to be included in the student's Education Agreement. The Education Agreement is prepared by the student in collaboration with the faculty and site supervisors, each of whom is a party to the agreement. The Agreement sets out expectations for each party and includes a section detailing: 1) student's learning goals 2) field activities 3) plan for site supervision and 4) plan for faculty involvement. When the Education Agreement is completed, initialed, and signed by the parties, it comes to the Externship Director for final approval and registration. Students are responsible for getting the agreement completed, executed, and submitted for final approval.

Please discuss with your student the following:

- *Meetings:* How often and when they will be scheduled.
- *Writing component:* Ideally, students should be assigned a writing component, such as journaling or writing a paper reflecting on their field experiences.
- *Evaluation:* Determine and communicate to the student your method of evaluation. For example, the evaluation may be based on the student's journal entries, attainment of their learning goals, and information from the site supervisor.

#### 5. MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS

The number of meetings during the externship will vary based on each student's needs. We recommend meeting with students at least twice during the externship. You may want to schedule the first meeting a few weeks after the student started her/his externship and one near the end of the externship. Please inform your student at the onset if you will be scheduling the meetings or if you expect the students to set up the meetings.

Let the student know you are available as a resource. Acknowledge that overall, Mitchell Hamline students have positive externship experiences, but should the student have any concerns about the placement site or the site supervisor, the student should contact you. If you receive any information concerning the student's safety, please contact Externship Director Denise Roy or Vice Dean Kate Kruse immediately.

**Learning Goals:** The student's own learning goals, documented in the student's Education Agreement, should be used as a sort of syllabus and can be a helpful point of reference for discussion.

#### **Potential topics for discussion:**

*Workplace:*

- Describe the work culture at the placement site. What is stressed? How does this assist you in defining the type of work environment that you will seek after graduation?

- Have you had the opportunity to work or interact with people who have different life experiences than yours? Describe your experience.
- What has surprised you in your placement?
- What are the difficult aspects of the externship experience, and how have you managed those issues?
- What observations have you made about professionalism? Who is your role model and why?

*Doctrinal:*

- What areas of law are you focusing on during your externship?
- Did you have courses that relate to your externship?
- What are the differences and similarities of what you learned in the classroom and what you are experiencing in practice?

*Career:*

- How has this experience assisted you in evaluating your abilities and your potential career path?
- How are you doing in establishing your professional network?

*Final Meeting:*

- Did you achieve your learning goals? Why or why not?
- How will you describe what you have learned from this experience at your next job interview?
- What additional skill sets and experience will be necessary for you to move forward with your career goals? How can I and/or others at Mitchell Hamline assist you to get to this next level?

## **6. MEETINGS WITH SITE SUPERVISORS**

As a faculty supervisor, part of your responsibility is to assist Mitchell Hamline in having regular contact with the site supervisor to ensure the quality of the educational experience. The student's field site will be vetted by the Externship Director before the externship begins. If the student is being compensated for fieldwork, the student is responsible to organize and you are responsible to attend, at a mutually convenient time, a mid-semester meeting among the student, site supervisor and yourself to review progress toward, re-assess, and adjust the student's learning goals. The meeting must be in-person unless one or more parties is in a remote location, in which case the meeting may be held using telephone or video conferencing technology. A mid-semester check-in with site supervisors of unpaid student externships is also a good idea, but it can be more informal. We also recommend calling the site supervisor to get feedback on the student's performance prior to submitting the student's grade.

## **7. FINAL STEP-SUBMIT YOUR GRADE**

You will receive an email from Jean Backes once the student has submitted all his/her requisite hours. Please respond to Jean's email to provide her the student's grade (pass/fail in all cases except when faculty supervisor is also the site supervisor).

## **8. RESOURCE**

Ogilvy, Wortham & Lerman, *Learning From Practice: A Professional Development Text for Legal Externs* (3d Ed. West Academic 2016).

Recommended readings for students from *Learning from Practice*

- Chapter 3 *Learning from Supervision*
- Chapter 11 *Journals* (pp. 219-226 provides suggestions for journal topics).

## **9. FEEDBACK**

If you have any feedback on the externship process, the site supervisor, or the placement site, or have additional “best practices” for faculty supervision, please contact Denise Roy, Externship Director.