

Student Guide for Independent Residency Program

I. Introduction

The Independent Residency Program gives students at Mitchell Hamline School of Law (MHSL) the opportunity to earn academic credit for an immersion experience of 30-40 hours per week doing legal work in private law firms, corporations, government agencies, and other settings. Its educational integrity relies on careful supervision and role modeling of site supervisors, who help students design a set of practice-based experiences that will further the students' learning goals; provide them with appropriate supervision and constructive feedback on their legal work; and provide opportunities for observation and de-briefing of the work that lawyers do.

II. Goals and Objectives of the MHSL Independent Residency Program

The Residency Program shares the objectives for the MHSL externship program, which include:

- Developing students' ability to be self-directed and reflective practitioners;
- Promoting a sense of professional responsibility in students;
- Giving students greater insight into the workings of the legal system;
- Supporting students in their exploration of career choice through practice in a specific substantive area or broad category of lawyering;
- Training students in lawyering skills, which may include research and writing, client interviewing and counseling, advocating in court or other settings, marshalling and analyzing facts and documentary evidence, critical reflection, effective oral communication, collaboration/team work, negotiation and problem solving, and other lawyering tasks; and
- Assisting students in networking for future job searches and professional development.

III. Fieldwork Component

The fieldwork component of the Residency Program is designed to give you an immersion experience in a legal practice setting. The educational model is based on self-directed learning under the direct supervision of an Site Supervisor. It is up to you and your Site Supervisor to structure assignments and experiences that will expose you to this area of practice and help you grow professionally. Goal-setting, reflective writing, and mid-semester evaluation components are designed to help you get the most you possibly can out of this experience by articulating specific learning goals for yourself and finding ways to structure your experiences to meet those goals.

We encourage you to think of this experience broadly by looking for opportunities to shadow attorneys as they attend court hearings, meetings with clients or other lawyers, etc., and to ask attorneys to debrief/discuss these events with you.

Students in the Residency Program receive 10-12 academic credits. The number of credits you receive depends on the number of hours you spend at your placement site over a fifteen week semester:

- 12 credits: 540 hours (36 hours/week)
- 11 credits: 495 hours (33 hours/week)
- 10 credits: 450 hours (30 hours/week)

You will be keeping track of these hours on a weekly timesheet that will be submitted in the same way you would submit your hours for an externship. For questions on this process, please contact Meghan Sjolund (meghan.sjolund@mitchellhamline.edu).

We also encourage you to think of this semester as an opportunity to develop your skills of how to ask for and receive good feedback and supervision. We are asking your Site Supervisors to focus on giving you detailed and constructive feedback on your work, but there are also things that you can do to receive effective feedback.

- Give permission to receive feedback by telling your Site Supervisor that you want and value feedback. When you finish an assignment, reinforce the message that you welcome specific feedback on what you did well and how you could improve.
- When you get an assignment, make sure you understand the expectations as to format and the timing of the assignment. Clarify expectations by telling your Site Supervisor what you understand the expectations to be and inviting further direction.
- Learn your Site Supervisor's work style and communication preferences. Does he/she prefer to discuss things in person? Get a memo? Communicate by email?

If you are having problem at your placement site with communication or work assignments, feel free to talk it over with your Faculty Supervisor, who can help you trouble-shoot how you want to handle it. They are there as a resource for you. If there are major ethical or misconduct issues at your placement site, we will want to intervene. For more minor workplace issues, we will want to help you figure out how to approach them.

IV. Academic Component

In addition to the fieldwork component, students complete an academic component under the supervision of a Mitchell Hamline faculty supervisor. In the academic component, you will complete reflective writing assignments, a mid-semester evaluation involving your site supervisor and faculty supervisor, and a final semester evaluation. You will also work with your Faculty Supervisor to explore an additional topic of law or policy relating to your Residency experience.

Reflective Writing Assignments

These assignments will be submitted directly to your faculty supervisor; in some cases, information from these assignments may be shared with your site supervisor.

Student Learning Goals (weeks 1-2 of semester)

Students are required to develop personal goals and planned activities for their externships and discuss them with their site supervisors during the first week of the semester (see Appendix A). **While you should discuss this assignment with your site supervisor, you only need to submit this assignment to your faculty supervisor.**

Ethics Assignment (weeks 1-2 of semester)

Also during the first two weeks of the semester, students are required to discuss with their site supervisors any policies on confidentiality and conflicts of interests at their workplaces and to write a 1-3 page memorandum about their understanding of these ethical requirements (see Appendix B). **While**

you should discuss this assignment with your site supervisor, you only need to submit this assignment to your faculty supervisor.

Mid-Semester Evaluation

PLEASE NOTE: The mid-semester evaluation process requires you to schedule a meeting with your site supervisor and faculty supervisor, either separately or jointly.

Students are required to complete mid-semester evaluations of your own work prior to scheduling mid-semester meetings with their site supervisors and faculty supervisors. These meetings, for which the you must prepare, are designed to allow for a review of the original externship goals and a general “check-in” for students, site supervisors, and faculty supervisors relative to any constructive changes that should occur in the second half of the externship. (See Appendix C). **Submit this evaluation to your faculty supervisor and site supervisor.**

Final Evaluation

Students are required to submit a final placement evaluation form reflecting on their experience and assessing the learning goals they were able to complete (See Appendix C). **Submit this evaluation to your faculty supervisor only.**

Site supervisors also complete a final evaluation of the students’ work to enable the externship professors to assess students’ performance overall in the externship. Additionally, specific feedback provided by mentors and shared with students by way of this form will be helpful in the future if mentors are asked to provide job recommendations for their student externs (see Appendix D).

Additional academic work

During the course of the semester, you may be required to complete other short written reflective writing assignments at the discretion of your faculty supervisor, such as weekly journal entries. In addition to the reflective writing, you will work with your faculty supervisors to explore larger issues in the law and public policy that arise from the work at their site. This additional academic work might come in the form of a research paper, a paper exploring comparative approaches to issues of public policy, or a series of readings and discussion.

Tracking Hours in 12twenty

To track your externship hours, you must submit a proposal in 12twenty. Please log in to [12twenty](#), then select **Experiential Learning** to complete the form. Once your proposal is submitted, approved, and in **progress mode** you may track hours from the **hour tab**. Please be sure to add a description of work performed.

Faculty and Staff Contact Information for MHSL Independent Residency Program

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Learning Goals Exercise

APPENDIX B – Ethics Memorandum

APPENDIX C – Student Mid-Semester and Final Evaluation

APPENDIX D – Site Supervisor Mid-Semester and Final Evaluation (FYI only)

APPENDIX E – The Fair Labor Standards Act and Law Student Externs