

# Supervised Externship – Fall, Spring & Summer Guidelines for Supervising Attorneys

## Fall / Spring Externships

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## Summer Externships

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## Overview

This document outlines the basic responsibilities of a Supervising Attorney for the George Mason University School of Law Supervised Externship – Fall, Spring & Summer program. Your role in this program is critical, for it is your supervision and mentoring that allows the student extern to develop practical skills by exposure to real problems designed to engage students fully with the intellectual, pragmatic, ethical and personal challenges that arise for JDs working in the legal and policy arenas. The program is designed to meet the objectives of the American Bar Association’s Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar for professional training, live-client or other real life experiences, and study outside of the classroom and award school credit for such work. To participate in this program students must have completed their first year of law school.

## Role & Responsibility of Supervising Attorney

The student’s fieldwork must be completed under the direction of a licensed attorney (Supervising Attorney) who is the student’s primary supervisor. The Supervising Attorney must sign the “Supervised Externship Volunteer Agreement” (see pp. 4-5) by the start of the externship so the student may submit it to the program’s professor.

The Supervising Attorney commits to provide the student with supervision, logistical support, and mentorship. The Supervising Attorney must provide the student with vocational and skills instruction in a reasonable number of appropriate activities.

(see recommended list on p. 3) If the student will receive work from several people during the externship, the Supervising Attorney should be aware of the assignments given and assist the student in resolving any conflicting priorities that arise. The Supervising Attorney should strive to provide timely feedback to the student throughout the externship and also discuss any problems that exist as they arise so problems can be addressed. At the end of the externship, the Supervising Attorney must complete a written evaluation of the student’s performance (see p. 6).

## **Scope of Work and Hour Requirements of Externship**

Student externs have the option of receiving either two credits or three credits for their externship. The two credit program requires students to complete 120 hours of non-paid fieldwork, the three credit program requires 180 hours. The hours the student will work each week should be mutually agreed upon by the extern and the Supervising Attorney prior to the start of the semester. The student must be engaged in work or perform projects that attorneys and law clerks would be assigned in your office. Students should have the opportunity to take part in and/or observe proceedings, meetings, and interactions in which attorneys at your place of employment are involved. While students may perform clerical work normally carried out by attorneys and law clerks in your office, the majority of the assigned work must be substantive in nature.

## **Evaluation of Student**

Students are graded on a pass/fail basis for the Supervised Externship – Fall, Spring & Summer. The professor overseeing the program shall determine the grade based upon work performed at the placement, the Supervising Attorney's written evaluation, student time logs, student attendance at law school tutorials that accompany the externship program, the student's participation in a mid-semester meeting with the professor, submission of a writing sample (when permitted by the Supervising Attorney), and submission of an end-of semester paper discussing the externship experience by the student.

If at any time the Supervising Attorney experiences difficulties working with the student, the supervisor is encouraged to have a candid discussion with the student. If the situation is not promptly rectified, the supervisor should contact the externship professor. Supervisors should not wait until the end of the program to inform the student or school of problems.

George Mason University School of Law has an Honor Code and Academic Regulations articulating minimum standards for student conduct and procedures for handling allegations of Honor Code violations. Supervisors with concerns about unethical student behavior are encouraged to contact the Assistant Dean for Management and Planning, Richard Kelsey, at 703-993-8973 or rkelsey@gmu.edu.

## Examples of Appropriate Assignments for Students

Students should undertake a reasonable number of substantive legal or law related work activities. The attorney supervisor must be willing and able to ensure compliance with this requirement. Appropriate activities include but are not limited to:

### I. Research, Writing and Drafting

- Briefs
- Citation checking
- Testimony
- Declarations
- Pleadings
- Property transfer papers
- Searching & tabulating public records
- Correspondence
- Discovery documents
- Opinions
- Contracts
- Memoranda of points and authorities on substantive and procedural issues

### II. Investigation

- Interviewing clients and witnesses, and taking statements
- Collecting documents and physical evidence
- Photographing potential evidence

### III. Adjudicatory Proceedings

- Arranging witness attendance
- Filing papers in court
- Preparing witnesses to testify
- Investigating jury records
- Arranging & supervising service of process
- Drafting jury instructions
- Preparing exhibits and audio visual displays
- Tasks permitted by a Third-Year Practice Certificate

### IV. Observation and Note Taking

- Meetings with clients
- Settlement Negotiations
- Testimony
- Hearings
- Depositions

### V. Conferences with Colleagues

- Evaluating strategy and tactics in prospective cases
- Discussing facts, law, settlement offers, courtroom or legislative strategies

### VI. Office Management

- Assembling and indexing case files and correspondence
- Abstracting case files
- Managing computerized data bases

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW**  
**SUPERVISED EXTERNSHIP VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

This agreement is among \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name),  
\_\_\_\_\_(supervisor's name) at \_\_\_\_\_  
(Agency, firm name, etc.) , and \_\_\_\_\_ (George Mason University School of Law). The purpose of this agreement is to place \_\_\_\_\_ in a volunteer, work assignment with the \_\_\_\_\_ (Agency/firm name, etc.) as part of the Supervised Externship Program offered by the School of Law for academic credit to be earned by the student.

It is understood by all parties to this agreement that:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (student) is enrolled in a course of study at the School of Law,
- (2) The School of Law has given permission for the student to volunteer his/her services for credit,
- (3) The service rendered is to be unpaid,
- (4) The \_\_\_\_\_ (Agency/Office) will provide supervised, skill-enhancing substantive legal or law related work and opportunities for the student,
- (5) The School of Law will award appropriate academic credit upon satisfactory completion of the program described, and
- (6) As required by some U.S. Government agencies, the participating student is not to be considered a federal employee for any purpose other than:
  - (a) Of the Federal Tort Claims provisions published in 28 U.S.C. 2671 through 2680. Claims arising as a result of student participation should be referred to the Department of Justice.
  - (b) Of Title 5 U.S.C. chapter 81, relative to compensation for injuries sustained during the performance of work assignments. Claims related to injuries should be referred to the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, U.S. Department of Labor for adjudication.

The period of volunteer service involved in this agreement commences on or about \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ and will end on or about \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ .

The \_\_\_\_\_ (Agency, Office) will ensure compliance with the supervisor responsibilities as set forth in the Supervised Externship Program Information Packet. It is recognized that

**SUPERVISED EXTERNSHIP VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT – page 2**

workflow may vary, but semester totals must be a minimum of 120 hours (2 credits) or 180 hours (3 credits). Terminations will be reported immediately to the School of Law. At the end of the term, the site supervisor will certify an attendance record showing the dates and hours of the student’s attendance on the job and will provide the law school with a written appraisal of the student’s performance, including a statement of the skills emphasized and the student’s progress in using those skills.

Student’s site supervisor is: \_\_\_\_\_ (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Phone)

Length of time supervisor has held this position: \_\_\_\_\_ (years) \_\_\_\_\_ (months) If less than two years in this position, please note previous position and/or employer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

**FOR THE AGENCY, FIRM, OR OTHER EMPLOYER:**

**FOR THE SCHOOL OF LAW:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name printed or typed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name printed or typed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number & Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

**I AGREE:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number & Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number & Email Address

**WAIVER OF COMPENSATION - (Optional for U.S. Government use)**

In connection with my service as a student volunteer in the \_\_\_\_\_ (office), I understand that I will be working during the period \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ without compensation, and I hereby agree to waive any and all claims against the federal government for salary or wages on account of services performed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature Date

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW**  
**SUPERVISED EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM – SUPERVISOR EVALUATION FORM**

(Use of this form is optional; evaluation may be written on official letterhead or emailed to professor.)

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Firm/Agency/Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a written evaluation of the student's performance, including the student's application of legal skills and how the student progressed in the utilization of those skills:

Attorney signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_