

Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice Guidelines for Supervising Attorneys

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Overview

This document outlines the basic responsibilities of a Supervising Attorney in the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice program. Your role in this program is critical, for it is your supervision and mentoring that allows the student extern to develop legal skills by exposure to real cases and real problems designed to engage students fully with the intellectual, pragmatic, ethical and personal challenges that arise in the practice of law. 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 & Responsibilities 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 commits to provide the student with supervision, logistical support, and mentorship while working for the Supervising Attorney. The Supervising Attorney must provide the student with vocational opportunities 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 resolve 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. Supervising attorneys must make themselves available for periodic emails and/or phone calls and, in some cases, site visits by the program’s supervising professor. At the end of the externship, the Supervising Attorney must approve the student’s timesheet. (See p. 4) and submit a written evaluation of the student’s performance, which may be shared with the student at the discretion of the supervising professor. (See p. 5)

Scope of Work and Hour Requirements of Externship

Student externs must complete 180 hours of non-paid fieldwork to receive academic credit. 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 practicing attorneys would be assigned in your agency, firm, or organization. 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 practicing attorneys in your office, the majority of the work assigned must be legal and substantive in nature.

Evaluation of Student

Students are graded on a pass/fail basis for the Supervised Externship – Virginia Practice Program. The professor overseeing the program shall determine the grade based upon work performed at the placement, the Supervising Attorney's written evaluation, student's timesheets, student attendance at law school tutorials that accompany the externship program, the student's participation in a mid-semester meeting(s) with the supervising professor, submission of a writing sample (with the supervising attorney's permission; redactions are acceptable to preserve confidentiality), and 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 Supervising Attorney is encouraged to have a candid discussion with the student. If the situation is not promptly rectified, the Supervising Attorney should contact the externship program's supervising professor. Supervising Attorneys should not wait until the end of the program to inform the student or school of problems.

Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University 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 Associate Dean for Administration and Student Affairs, Annamaria Nields, at 703-993-8174 or anields@gmu.edu.

Examples of Appropriate Assignments for Students

Students should undertake a reasonable number of substantive legal or law related work activities. The supervising attorney 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, trial or appeal strategies

VI. Office Management

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

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
SUPERVISED EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM – VIRGINIA PRACTICE**

RECORD OF HOURS WORKED

Students can use this form or substitute their own timesheet. The supervising attorney must approve the timesheet.

Fall / Spring / Summer (circle one) Year _____

Student: _____ Supervising Attorney: _____ (please print)

Signature: _____

<u>Date</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Description of Work</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____

Total Hours: _____

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SUPERVISOR APPRAISAL FORM**

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

Please email the evaluation to Ilissa Belanger, Associate Director, Career Services, at ibelange@gmu.edu

Student's Name: _____

Supervising Attorney's Name: _____ Firm/Office: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

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:

Supervising Attorney signature: _____ Date: _____