

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA COLLEGE OF LAW
FIELD STUDY EXTERNSHIP PROGRAMS
FIELD SUPERVISOR FAQ**

Why externships?

The purpose of the field study externship (FSE) program is to provide students with the opportunity to obtain significant practical experience in judicial chambers, law offices, or other lawyering settings, to develop professional lawyering skills, and to analyze and reflect critically on that experience from various perspectives.

Historically, new attorneys learned by observing their more experienced counterparts, but as you know, the practice of law has changed dramatically in recent years. Time has become an ever more precious commodity. All too often today, new associates are denied the valuable opportunity to shadow experienced partners and learn by example. The externship not only provides students with the opportunity to practice their craft, but to observe highly respected attorneys and judges at work, to receive quality feedback from both field supervisors and faculty supervisors on their work, to network with the legal community, and to reflect on their experiences.

Is every student required to take the externship class?

Yes. The successful completion of the course component is required for academic credit.

May students be paid for their externship?

No. The ABA does not permit a law student to receive pay and course credit for the same work hours. Students may receive stipends or scholarships, however, to cover living expenses.

When may students undertake field study externships?

Students must complete at least one academic year of study before they are eligible. For some placements, students may not engage in FSE until the second semester of their second year of full time law study. We want to send our supervisors students who are prepared to undertake real legal work. We also want to ensure that our students have taken all required courses offered in only certain semesters before they engage in a semester long field study program. Part time students studying under a 5-semester option would likely not be eligible until their fourth or fifth semester of law school. Students studying under a 6-semester option would likely not be approved to participate in FSE until during their fifth or sixth semester.

Externships will be available during the summer session. Students may take the entire 12-week summer semester to complete the externship or may complete the externship by pursuing FSE during either 6-week summer session. The course component, however, may begin before the extern starts her placement or end after the extern completes her placement hours.

How many hours must students complete?

FSE students must work 45 hours per academic credit and may enroll for 4, 8, 10 or 12 credit hours. In addition, they must take 14 hours of a contemporaneous classroom component for the externship.

What am I being asked to do?

Students will be placed with a field supervisor who is a licensed attorney in good standing with a minimum of 5 years of legal experience if in private practice, or a minimum of 1 year of experience as a prosecutor, a public defender or a legal services attorney, or a judge or justice currently sitting on the bench. It is that experience and knowledge you have as such a lawyer, judge or justice that we are asking you to share with our students.

Who will be my primary contact at TU?

Each extern will also have a faculty supervisor. Usually that faculty supervisor will be the Director of Field Study Externship Programs, and she will work with you to evaluate and grade each extern's performance. She is always available to consult with you about an extern.

Some externships might be supervised by a faculty member other than the director. Such a faculty supervisor will be one with a special interest or expertise in the area of law related to that particular placement. Depending on its nature, the externship may or may not have a classroom component. Any classroom component will be taught by the faculty supervisor.

The faculty supervisors will provide training for you by providing written orientation materials, developing training seminars, or through individual consultation. They will also visit your work site (or send a representative to do so) at least every two years.

What would my role be as field supervisor?

You will help your extern design the externship experience, provide him or her with any needed training, monitor assignments, meet with the extern regularly, and evaluate his performance. We have prepared a comprehensive manual for our field supervisors, as well as other material you may find useful in supervising and evaluating your extern.

What does designing the experience involve?

At the beginning of the externship, you will work with the TU faculty supervisor and the extern to develop a Statement of Expectations for the externship. Among other things, the statement will identify the goal of the externship, the types of work to be performed, and the weekly work schedule. It will also list other opportunities the extern may have to participate or observe.

You will discuss the required elements of the statement with the extern. The purpose of the discussion is to develop learning goals and expectations and to clarify the terms of the externship. It is the extern's responsibility to fill in the terms of the statement and submit copies to the faculty supervisor and to you. However, you should work with the extern to develop realistic goals for the semester.

What types of tasks might I assign an extern?

The tasks will be as individual as the student and the placement. For instance, a judicial extern might draft opinions and jury instructions, research evidentiary issues, sit in on hearings and conferences, etc. An extern working in an intellectual property firm might help with factual investigation, research patents, or draft documents, etc.

We require that the extern be given opportunities for the production of significant written work. However, we also ask that you provide the extern with the opportunity to observe you at work in a variety of settings.

What does supervision involve?

Significantly, it involves being a strong presence during the extern's time on the job. Students are expected to engage in their externships primarily at their placement sites and other sites essential to their lawyering work, such as legal proceedings, meetings or investigations in the field. We want students on-site because it will provide them with the invaluable opportunity to observe you.

We ask that you be available on-site to your extern whenever she is engaged in placement activities, in order to observe, critique, review and otherwise closely supervise the extern's legal work. This availability includes supervision at other places essential to the lawyering work of the students, such as the sites of legal proceedings, meetings, and field investigations. You will assume principal responsibility for the extern and will serve as the contact person for the faculty supervisor.

You should meet with your extern regularly to provide him or her with general supervision. This general supervision includes evaluating the extern's recent performance, discussing the activities of your office or chambers, answering the extern's questions about the office, assignments or cases, and, generally, serving as a mentor for the extern.

Supervision also involves monitoring the quality and quantity of work assigned to externs to ensure: 1) assignments are representative of legal work typically done in the office; 2) assignments are as varied as conditions allow; 3) the extern has sufficient legal research and writing, but is also permitted to observe matters in which the extern cannot participate directly; 4) assignments are appropriately challenging and reasonable in terms of the extern's hourly commitment; and 5) clerical tasks (filing, photocopying, etc.) are kept to a minimum.

What about evaluation of the extern?

At mid-term and at the end of the semester, you will evaluate the extern on a form provided by the faculty supervisor. The mid-term review is due six weeks into the semester or 12-week summer term, and three weeks into the 6-week summer term. The final evaluation is due to the faculty supervisor two weeks after the externship has ended.

We also ask that you periodically touch base with the faculty supervisor. Field supervisors should communicate openly with the faculty supervisor about the extern a minimum of three times per semester. These communications will be initiated by the faculty supervisor but depend on the frank assessments and evaluations of the field supervisor to be meaningful.