

The University of Tulsa College of Law Extern's Self Critique of Skills Development¹

The following checklist should help you recognize the range and scope of the legal skills you will be expected to demonstrate through the course of your externship. They are the skills upon which you will be evaluated by your supervising judge or lawyer. These skills will develop over the course of your externship. The following checklist should help you identify areas of progress and areas of concern that need further development. Thus, you are expected to play an important and effective role in the acquisition of these skills.

A. Legal Research Skills

1. Do I understand the interrelationship among various reference materials?
2. Do I know the office/chambers protocol and expectation about the use of electronic sources of research?
 - a. Am I able to effectively use free research sources if permitted by office policies?
3. Do I know how to develop an effective research strategy?
4. Do I know when it is appropriate to expand my research and, conversely, when to stop it?
5. Are the results of my research practical and useful?

B. Legal Reasoning Skills

1. Do I take time to clarify my thinking process – to isolate the issues presented in a given problem and think through the results of my research to their logical conclusion?
2. Do I explore alternative theories or avenues of argument when appropriate?
3. Do I attempt to think creatively and imaginatively in developing innovative legal theory?
4. Do I attempt to find a legally and factually viable solution to the problem presented?

C. Writing Skills

1. Do I formulate and express my ideas clearly and precisely:
 - a. Do I effectively use thesis paragraphs and sentences throughout the document?

¹ With very few changes, this skills evaluation checklist was taken from B. Blanco and S. Buhai, 10 Clinical L. Rev. 611, 648-49 (Sp. 2004).

- b. Do I effectively develop paragraphs both as to essential characteristics of all paragraphs (presentation) and function (substance) for the particular paragraph?
 - c. Do I make the analysis plain through the use of effective transitions among paragraphs and parts of the document?
 - d. Do I use sentence structures and select words that make my meaning understood the first time the reader reads the document?
2. Do I organize my writing in a logical and easily understood way for my reader?
 3. Do I correctly formulate and effectively use appropriate citation in my written work?
 3. Do I critically edit and carefully proofread my work?
 4. Does the visual presentation of my written work (format, neatness, etc.) comport with standards expected by the office/chambers?

D. Oral Skills

1. Do I speak in a clear voice and articulate well?
2. Do I use language easily and fluently?
3. Do I express my thoughts clearly?

E. Developmental Skills

1. Do I manage my time effectively so that I work efficiently without sacrificing quality?
2. Am I able to set appropriate priorities in handling my work load?
3. Can I work independently and take initiative?

F. Interpersonal Skills

1. Do I know how and when to ask questions or to seek additional consultation?
2. Do I know how to be diplomatically persistent?
3. Am I able to develop effective, appropriate, and cooperative working relationships with my colleagues as well as clients/litigants?
4. Do I know the protocols appropriate to the hierarchy of authority within the office/chambers?