UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
COLLEGE OF LAW
EXTERN HANDBOOK
WELCOME to the OU College of Law Extern Program. We are glad that you have chosen to participate in an extern placement. We are confident that you will find this experience to be one of the most gratifying and challenging aspects of your legal education.

The requirements of this extern placement have been carefully developed to help you to achieve the maximum benefit from your experience. The identified goals for the extern program are:

1) Provide an optimal learning experience for the extern and

2) Provide a foundation for learning, problem solving, and responsible lawyering that will serve you in your future careers.

This handbook is an important tool towards achieving the goals of the extern programs. In addition to this manual, you should obtain a copy of Learning from Practice, A Professional Development Text for Legal Externs by J.P. Ogilvy and others. Weekly reading assignments will be required. The book sets forth exercises and questions throughout the chapters. As you read these materials, also be certain to consider those exercises. Those questions and exercises are designed to cause you to reflect on your own experience.

Remember, by being an extern in this program, you have undertaken an obligation to use your best talents, expend the necessary time, and be open to learning new skills. You are a representative of the law school and your performance will impact future students.

Again, welcome to the extern program and one of the greatest experiences of your law school career!
I: Introduction

The Externship program at the University of Oklahoma College of Law is extremely grateful for your willingness to serve as a Field Supervisor for our externs. These placements afford our students an invaluable opportunity to have direct observations of and participation in various legal arenas. However, to maximize this educational opportunity, it is important that Field Supervisors be aware of the University’s expectations for the student’s placement.

It is our objective for our students to be involved in legal settings where they will witness the application of substantive law to actual factual situations; develop an appreciation for the interrelationship between advocacy and effective lawyering; the burdens and responsibilities of attorneys; the proper resolution of ethical issues; and the role of courts in society. Placement with your agency will give our students these opportunities.

II: Educational Objectives

The educational objectives of this externship are:

1) to further an understanding of the legal process;

2) to continue development of effective and efficient research skills;

3) to enhance a student’s proficiency in written and oral communication through such activities as case assessment and preparation, memorandums, and drafting of pleadings;

4) to continue development of skills in legal analysis;

5) to continue development of an ability to identify and resolve actual ethical issues;

6) to continue development of an appreciation for the role of confidentiality;

7) to promote an appreciation for the different components of effective representation of clients;

8) to allow students to explore and understand workplace issues such as time management, workplace culture, teamwork, giving and receiving feedback, and achieving balance in one’s life.
III. Confidentiality

Being a participant in government agency exposes law students to many of the decision making processes and sensitive discussions about issues and matters. It is imperative that each extern become familiar with the requirements of their particular agency with respect to confidentiality and disclosure.

You should always be circumspect about discussing the activities of your agency and the matters that you have observed.

IV. Decorum

It is important that each extern conduct himself/herself in a manner worthy of the law school. Professional conduct and attire is expected at all times.

The extern should never approach the participants to a proceeding unless there has been prior approval by your supervisor. You should never identify yourself as an employee of the agency. You are an extern from the University of Oklahoma College of Law. You should identify yourself as such in writing and in person.

V. Conflicts of Interest

In order to avoid even the possibility of a conflict of interest, an extern during the period of their externship is not allowed to have any law related employment (paid or unpaid) and may not participate in any other clinical program without prior approval.

If you have either worked for, or receive an offer from, firms or agencies that represent a party in a case in which your agency is involved, you must inform your supervisor, even if you are not directly working on that case.

Similarly, if a family member or close personal or professional friend is a party, witness, or an attorney in a case in which your agency is involved, you must promptly inform your supervisor. If you have knowledge about a case which you have learned through some means other than your work with your agency, you should promptly notify your supervisor.

VI. Requirements

Office Hours: As Externs you are required to expend a minimum of ten hours (twenty hours a week during a summer semester) a week at your court’s chambers. Should your supervisor request that you spend more hours a week, it is expected that you will make every effort to accommodate that request. Your co-operation and performance are critical to the continuation of a positive relationship between the College of Law and your agency.
It is critical that you be timely and consistent in maintaining your office hours. Establishing reliability and dependability begins with being on time.

**Weekly Journal Writings:** The journal is a weekly record of your thoughts, reactions, and commends about the experiences you are having in your placements as well as the material that you are reading. As we progress through the semester, you will encounter any number of new experiences; interactions with people; conflict between “text book” and “reality”. A journal is a valuable tool for looking back upon such experiences and learning from them. Such “reflection” is an essential part of learning from experience. In order to learn from experience, you must take time to contemplate what it is that you have learned and identify the source of that lesson. Such reflection allows you to repeat the positive experiences and improve on them while avoiding the less successful experiences.

Your journal entries should be at least two pages in length. If you have difficulty developing topics or subject for your journal entry, the syllabus includes questions that can be used for the weekly journal entry. Those questions draw from the assigned reading material. Be mindful of confidentiality restrictions in the writing of your journals.

**Weekly Time Reports:** You are required to submit weekly time reports. The form for the reports is attached. Be careful about confidentiality restrictions in the description of your activities. The weekly time reports and journal entries can be submitted via e-mail, no later than 5:00 p.m. on the following Monday.

**Weekly Reading Assignments:** In order to maximize the learning that can occur though an extern placement, weekly reading assignments have been made. *Learning from Practice, A Professional Development Text for Legal Externs* by J.P. Ogilvy and others is the book for extern placements. The book sets forth exercises and questions throughout the chapters. As you read these materials, also be certain to consider those exercises.

**Bi-Weekly Rounds:** There will be bi-weekly rounds. At those rounds, there will be discussion of your experiences as externs as well as the weekly reading assignments. The schedule for those rounds will be announced during the first week of the semester.

**Participation in Community Service Project:** An Extern community service project will be conducted during the semester. Participation in one of the community projects sessions is required.

**VII. Grading**

The law school faculty has approved the extern placements for a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading scale. Am Jur selection will be made at the discretion of the clinical director. In order to obtain a “satisfactory” grade, a student must: 1) complete a minimum of 140 hours in their placement, documented by the regular submission of weekly time sheets; 2) submit weekly reflective journals; 3) complete weekly reading assignments; and
4) participate in “rounds” as scheduled by the director. Additionally, all externs are required to enroll in “Issues in Professionalism”.

VIII. Making the Most of This Experience

This tremendous opportunity can only become a tremendous learning experience if you actively embrace it. In order to maximize this experience, you need to be an active participant in conduct of the externship. You must use your own initiative in seeking out assignments; observation opportunities; and interaction with your supervisor.

It is important that you use your best efforts and produce your best work product. Written communication is critical in the legal process and your writings must be of a quality that aids that process. You should never turn in a first draft of a written work product. Be critical of your writing. Does it convey the information you intended? Is it organized in a logical manner? Editing your own work will help you to further develop your writing skills.

Do not be afraid to seek feedback from your supervisor. Their comments will provide you insight.

If you are encountering problems with your placement and/or supervisor, do not hesitate to contact your faculty supervisor. Discussing the situation with your faculty supervisor will give you the opportunity to define the problem and develop strategies to address the situation.

Most importantly, this placement will help you to develop skills that you will draw upon for the rest of your legal career. Use this opportunity to its fullest!!!