

**EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM – STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

Student’s Name:

Graduation Year:

Semester: Fall or Spring: # of Credits: (4 or 7)

Placement Site:

Placement Site Supervising Attorney:

Placement Site Supervising Attorney’s email address:

Penn Law Faculty Supervisor:

*(If you enroll in the Externship Seminar Course, your Faculty Supervisor will be the Seminar Instructor)*

The Penn Law Externship Program supplements traditional classroom study and clinical and simulation courses by providing students with external opportunities to engage in lawyering activities at leading government agencies, non-profit organizations, and public interest settings. The externship program integrates theory and practice in real-world settings while preparing students for successful entry into the legal profession.

The Externship program endeavors to help students deepen substantive knowledge, sharpen essential lawyering skills, and appreciate professional values that are the hallmark of the legal profession. The program accomplishes this in many ways. At leading practice settings, students are assigned meaningful lawyering responsibility that often requires that they apply legal doctrine, employ rigorous analytical reasoning skills, and engage in oral and written advocacy skills. They frequently interact with professionals from other disciplines and engage in challenging lawyering opportunities under the supervision of experienced lawyers and mentoring of law faculty. The program fosters contextualized learning, promotes teamwork, enhances communication skills, strengthens practical judgment, and boosts self-confidence. In the process, students develop reflective learning skills that enable self-assessment, continuous professional growth, and critical reflection of the legal profession and legal institutions. They assume professional obligations that require fidelity to clients, loyalty, independence, duty to tribunals and third persons, and obligations to society through pro bono legal service and the pursuit of equal justice under law.

In each externship, students have regular opportunities for performance, feedback, and self- evaluation to order to assist them in achieving individual and programmatic learning goals.

The Student, Placement Site Supervising Attorney, and Faculty Supervisor agree as follows:

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL PARTICIPANTS:

1. All participants agree that they will review the Law School’s Externship Handbook, and agree to comply with the educational goals, duties and responsibilities, and program guidelines as outlined in the Handbook.
2. All participants understand and agree that the Student is the primary beneficiary of the Externship Program and that the main purpose of the Program is to assist students in their educational growth and professional development while providing important and meaningful lawyering assistance to the placement site and its clients under close supervision in prominent practice settings.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLACEMENT SITE SUPERVISING ATTORNEY:

1. The Supervising Attorney accepts primary responsibility for overseeing the student’s externship work during the semester and agrees to monitor regularly the progress of the student’s work, including any work assigned by other attorneys at the placement site.
2. The Supervising Attorney agrees to meet with the Student at the start of the semester to discuss the Student’s individualized educational goals and strategies for achieving those goals. The Supervising Attorney agrees to assign meaningful lawyering tasks and responsibilities to the Student that are representative of the placement site and appropriate to the student’s goals and experience. The Supervising Attorney will integrate the student into the office setting as fully as possible and reasonable, and agrees to assign the student challenging lawyering opportunities appropriate to the placement site’s needs, the student’s individual goals, and the externship program’s overall goals. The student will be provided a designated workspace and access to office equipment (e.g., telephone, computer, library) needed to complete assignments. Where appropriate, the Student will be certified under court student practice rules to appear in court or in administrative tribunals and to represent clients under attorney supervision.
3. The Supervising Attorney agrees that Student will be offered appropriate choices to participate in a range of lawyering opportunities conducted at the placement site, with increasing responsibility and opportunities as the semester progresses. These should include, as appropriate, essential litigation, transactional, mediation, legislative, or administrative law activities, such as client interviewing, document drafting, client counseling, legal research and writing, communication and advocacy, and problem-solving through guided observation and close supervision of these or other lawyering activities.
4. The Supervising Attorney agrees that the Student will generally not be assigned clerical tasks, e.g., filing, photocopying, library updating, indexing, unless such tasks are specifically

related to substantive lawyering activity. The student should interact with other members of the practice setting and should not be spending all, or even most, of their time in the library.

1. The Supervising Attorney (and any other participating attorneys at the placement site) agree to provide the Student with timely feedback on all assignments.
2. The Supervising Attorney agrees to meet with the student midway during the semester to provide the Student with an oral assessment and evaluation of the student’s academic performance, highlighting the student’s strengths and areas for improvement, and reviewing the progress of the student in meeting individual and programmatic educational goals. The student should also discuss with the Supervising Attorney a self-assessment of academic performance. At the end of the semester, the Supervising Attorney agrees to submit a written evaluation of the Student’s work for the semester on a form provided by the Law School. The final evaluation should be submitted to both the Student and the Law School.

*The Supervising Attorney should briefly describe below the student work plan envisioned for this externship, including opportunities for performance, feedback, and self-evaluation:*

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT:

* 1. The Student agrees to spend, on average, 12 hours per week at the placement site if 4 academic credits are being awarded for this externship, or 21 hours per week at the placement site if 7 credits are being awarded. (In the rare case that this is a full-time externship, the Student agrees to spend, on average, 36 hours per week at the placement site).
  2. The Student agrees to begin externship work at the placement site during the first week of classes of the semester and to continue externship work through the end of the examination period.
  3. The Student agrees to arrange a regular work schedule in conjunction with the Supervising Attorney and to obtain the Supervising Attorney’s permission for modifications to the work schedule.
  4. The Student agrees to review and comply with all governing Rules of Professional Conduct and all other rules, guidelines, or policies applicable to the work at the placement site. The Student acknowledges an understanding of client confidentiality and agrees to adhere strictly to that responsibility.
  5. The Student agrees to meet on a bi-weekly basis with the Faculty Supervisor for either the externship seminar course or one-hour tutorials, and to submit written, reflective journals prior to each meeting via the Externship’s Assignments folder on Canvas and via email to the Faculty Supervisor. The Student should discuss with the Faculty Supervisor requirements for journals. At the end of the semester, the Student agrees to submit a final journal that is reflective of the entire externship experience over the course of the semester.
  6. The Student agrees to identify individual educational goals for this externship as well as strategies for achieving those goals. The Student agrees to review and discuss goals and strategies with both the Supervising Attorney and the Faculty Supervisor.

*The Student should describe individual educational goals for this externship and action steps planned to achieve these goals, including opportunities for performance, feedback, and self- evaluation:*

* 1. The Student agrees to meet with the Supervising Attorney at the semester’s mid- point to discuss academic performance, including an evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement. In that meeting, the student should discuss whether the identified educational

goals are being met and whether any modifications to the work plan are needed. At the end of the semester, the Student agrees to complete and submit a written evaluation of the Externship on a form provided by the Law School. The Student agrees to discuss with the Faculty Supervisor at appropriate times during the semester whether the goals of the externship are being met and whether the work plan needs to be modified to achieve these goals.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PENN LAW FACULTY SUPERVISOR:

1. The Faculty Supervisor agrees to establish regular contact with the Placement Supervisor either through in-person visits or other methods of communication that will assure the quality of the student educational experience. The Faculty Supervisor agrees to provide or arrange reasonable assistance or training as requested by the Supervising Attorney regarding supervision of the Student in the externship.
2. The Faculty Supervisor agrees to require the Student to submit bi-weekly journals describing the work performed in the externship and reflecting upon the student experience. The journals should be typewritten and of reasonable length to adequately discuss lawyering activities and reflections on the externship experience. The journals should describe assigned duties and responsibilities, and comment on the level of responsibility extended as well as the quantity and quality of supervision received. The journals should periodically self- assess progress toward achieving stated educational goals. The Student should submit a final journal at the end of the semester that reflects upon the entire externship experience. The Student’s journals should be submitted bi-weekly to the Faculty Supervisor via the Canvas externship site and via email directly.
3. The Faculty Supervisor agrees to meet with the Student on a bi-weekly basis for at least one hour to conduct either the externship seminar course or a tutorial session, and will ensure on-going, contemporaneous, faculty-guided reflection throughout the entire semester. The Faculty Supervisor should periodically discuss the student’s individual educational goals and strategies and progress toward achieving those goals. The Faculty Supervisor should review the student’s journals and require that they be submitted in advance of each tutorial session. Tutorial sessions should, among other things, include a review of the quantity and quality of student assignments, as well as the student’s overall lawyering activities and reflections on the externship experience. The Faculty Supervisor should also explore more deeply important lawyering and professional responsibility themes that emerge from the Student’s work and, at the Faculty Supervisor’s discretion, may assign readings relevant to such themes. The externship work plan should be examined periodically to ensure that the student is progressing toward stated goals and to recommend adjustments, if needed.
4. At the end of the semester, the Faculty Supervisor agrees to review the

Supervising Attorney’s evaluation of the Student’s work performance and the student’s self- evaluation, and to evaluate the Student’s overall academic performance, including journals and

coursework or tutorials, before assessing a Pass/Fail grade and transmitting that grade to the Registrar’s Office.

1. The Faculty Supervisor agrees to be available to assist the Student or Supervising Attorney should any questions or concerns arise during the externship.

THE STUDENT, SUPERVISING ATTORNEY, AND FACULTY SUPERVISOR ALL SIGN BELOW**:**

Student’s signature:

Placement Site Supervisor’s Signature:

If an attorney, are you a currently licensed attorney in good standing, admitted to practice law? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

If so, in what state? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Faculty Supervisor’s Signature\*:

Date:

*\*Students who are enrolling in the Externship Seminar Course need not obtain your Faculty Supervisor’s signature for this form as the Externship Office will obtain his signature for you.*

***Please note: The Student is responsible for obtaining all signatures and emailing this completed form as a PDF document to*** [***externships@law.upenn.edu***](mailto:externships@law.upenn.edu) ***before the deadlines listed here:*** [***https://www.law.upenn.edu/clinic/ad-hoc-externships.php***](https://www.law.upenn.edu/clinic/ad-hoc-externships.php)

***The Student should also provide a copy of the completed and signed Statement of Understanding to both the Supervising Attorney and the Faculty Supervisor.***