

# Standards for Internships

Approved by the Faculty of Wayne State University Law School March 27, 1996  
Amended April 15, 1998, November 18, 1998, & February 15, 2006

A. *Purposes of Internships.* Internships are intended to provide law students with the opportunity to learn about the practice of law through the supervised performance of legal work in judicial chambers, prosecutor=s and public defender offices, other government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. In addition to enhancing the practical skills of the interns and exposing them to the world outside academia, internships offer interns the opportunity to increase their knowledge of substantive law, often in a specialized area.

B. *Time Commitment and Academic Credit for Internships.* During the fall and winter terms, students may enroll in an internship for two or three ungraded credits. Internships are available during the spring/summer term for one, two or three ungraded credits. Interns are to work at the placement site at least 52 qualifying hours for one credit, at least 104 qualifying hours for two credits, and at least 156 qualifying hours for three credits. Hours spent on the classroom component of internships do not count toward these limits. Interns shall receive credit only upon the successful completion of an internship, including the classroom component. Interns may not receive credit for participation in a field placement for which the intern receives compensation. Reimbursement for parking at the field placement does not constitute compensation.

Interns are expected to spread their fieldwork over the course of the semester, working approximately the same number of hours each week. However, with the consent of the Director of Clinical Education or the instructor, interns may complete their fieldwork in fewer or more than thirteen weeks during the fall and winter terms, in fewer or more than seven weeks during the spring/summer term. Consent will be granted only in special circumstances. In no event may full-time students work at the placement site during the fall or winter term more than an average of twenty hours per week.

## Policy on Completing Internship Hours Outside the Regular Semester

1. *General Rule.* With prior permission from the Director of Clinical Education or the instructor, students may begin work in a field placement when the law school is not in session provided they keep detailed contemporaneous logs, which are signed contemporaneously by their field supervisor. They then may register for the corresponding internship class in the following semester and complete all of the requirements of the class (e.g. journals, class attendance, evaluations, and logs), except that hours previously completed may count toward up to one-third of the hours requirement of the semester in which they are enrolled.

2. Spring/summer term. Students who begin their internships during the spring/summer term and complete the classroom and journal requirements during that term may have until August 15 to complete their hours at their field placement. Students may not begin an internship in the spring/summer term after the classroom component is completed. Students who begin interning at a placement after the spring/summer term may count their volunteer hours toward a fall internship (up to one-third of the required hours for the semester) as described above in paragraph B(1).

C. *Appropriate Activities for Interns.*

1. Duties of interns may include legal research and the preparation of memoranda of law, pleadings, motions, briefs, orders, and opinions or other legal documents. Internships may also involve interviewing witnesses, assisting lawyers or judges in court, and appearing in court pursuant to the student practice rule.
2. Internships should involve a balance of exposure to the people in and operations of the office, but the mundane -- e.g., the photocopying, retrieving and returning of files, and updating of the library that are only incidental to the professional work of a law clerk -- is to be restricted to a very minor portion (e.g., five percent) of the intern=s work.

D. Reflection on Internship Experiences. Mere observation of conferences, hearings, trials, appeals, or transactions without reflection on what the student has observed is only of limited usefulness and not deserving of academic credit. The intern=s field supervisor, who is the person who assumes overall responsibility for the internship (and other individuals working with the intern in the field) should engage the student in a substantial discussion and analysis of every event of substance that is observed.

E. *Location of Internship Work.* To assure proper supervision by and contact with field supervisors, interns should normally perform their work at the office of the internship entity. If research and writing need to be performed away from the office, there should be substantial supervision by and exchanges with the field supervisor.

F. *Supervision of Interns.*

1. The goals of the internships are not only that interns observe and participate in the operations of a court, prosecutor=s office, government agency, or nonprofit organization, but also that they receive guidance toward the practice of law in the best traditions of the profession. To this end, the field supervisor should not

merely request a work product, but should also provide an explanation of the legal issues, their context, the goals, ethical implications, and the means of addressing and resolving the issues.

2. Substantial guidance of the interns may be required, not only with regard to the substantive law, but also with regard to research and writing. Patience will be called for, and criticisms and suggestions for improvement will often be appropriate. As the skills of the interns improve, their responsibilities should also be increased.
3. Interns are expected to benefit from the examples set in the office with regard to matters that experienced lawyers take for granted, such as proper attire, decorum, civility, punctuality, timely performance of assigned tasks, attention to detail, ethical behavior, and the pursuit of excellence.
4. An internship is to be under the supervision of a lawyer who assumes overall responsibility for its operation. From time to time, that person may delegate the direct supervision of interns to other lawyers. Yet, a lawyer who assumes overall responsibility for an internship but who rarely meets with each intern in a professional capacity is only partially fulfilling that responsibility. Field supervisors are to be responsible for no more interns than they can properly supervise, ordinarily no more than five, including those from law schools other than Wayne State University. The field supervisor is to meet with the intern at the very beginning of the internship and clearly outline the intern=s duties. The field supervisor is then to meet with the intern at least weekly, and review and sign the intern=s detailed log of internship activity monthly. During the course of the summer term, the field supervisor is to review and sign the intern=s detailed log at three intervals.
5. Interns may have to be assertive in ensuring that they are given meaningful assignments, supervision, and exposure to the operations of the office.
6. Field supervisors should view interns not as transient sources of free, albeit inexperienced, labor, but as fledgling lawyers who deserve the type of mentoring that is given in a permanent, full-time placement. This mentoring is an invaluable service to the interns, the Law School, and the profession. Interns should be aware of the effort and expertise being devoted to them, and offer their best efforts in return.
7. Field supervisors are encouraged to confer whenever necessary with the Director of Clinical Education or instructor of the internship about the intern=s progress and the internship program. If possible, the Director of Clinical Education or instructor will meet with each field supervisor at the internship site at least once during the semester in which an intern is placed at the site.

8. Field supervisors shall submit to the Director of Clinical Education or instructor a written evaluation assessing the student=s performance at the end of the semester and shall provide the student with a meaningful assessment of the student=s performance at the end of the semester and at least once at an earlier point during the course of the semester.

G. *Non-Discrimination Policy.* Internships may not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, sexual preference, or disability.

H. *Establishment of Internships.*

1. To establish a new Civil Law Internship (a) the Director of Clinical Education must make a proposal to the Curriculum Committee; (b) the Curriculum Committee must approve and notify all faculty members of the proposal; (c) if the conditions for calling a vote under the five-day rule pertaining to adjuncts are met, the full faculty must approve the proposed internship. If the conditions for calling a vote under the five-day rule are not met, faculty action is not required to establish the proposed internship.
2. Internships may be established only in advance of student enrollment in a particular placement.
3. An internship will be approved only when the Director of Clinical Education and the Curriculum Committee have confidence that the experience, energy, and ethical standards of the field supervisor will lead to a successful experience for the interns.

I. *Agreement to Internship Standards.* The field supervisor and any other direct supervisors of interns in the field are to receive copies of the relevant portions of this statement each year and on its amendment. Their acceptance of interns may be construed as agreement to the terms of this statement. Students are to be given a copy of this statement at the beginning of their internship. Their enrollment in an internship may be construed as agreement to the terms of this statement.

J. *Record-Keeping and Evaluations.*

1. Interns are to maintain a detailed, contemporaneous record of the hours worked and the work done in a log provided by the Law School. Field supervisors are to verify that information and the satisfactory performance of the work and sign the intern=s log in advance of each internship class.
2. Interns are to present a detailed evaluation of their experience in the internship to the Director of Clinical Education or instructor at the end of the term. This

evaluation should include comments on the extent to which the internship meets these standards.

3. The evaluations of internships by the interns, with the names of individuals deleted by the Director of Clinical Education as appropriate, are to be retained for at least three years for consultation by students interested in enrolling in internships.
4. Field supervisors should submit an evaluation of each intern=s work to the Director of Clinical Education or instructor at the end of the term.
5. Each year the Director of Clinical Education or instructor is to review the logs and evaluations prepared by the interns, the evaluations prepared by the field supervisors, and any other information to ascertain the extent to which the internships comply with these standards. The Director of Clinical Education is to report the findings and recommendations to the Curriculum Committee every three years.

K. *Classroom Component, Prerequisites and Co-requisites.* Students enrolled for internship credit shall satisfactorily complete an internship class component. The class component shall be taught by the Director of Clinical Education or instructor of the internship. The internship class will meet at least monthly. In consultation with the field supervisor, the Director of Clinical Education or instructor may establish prerequisites or co-requisites for internships and may waive such requirements if warranted.

L. *Student Eligibility for Internships.* Students enrolled in the J.D. program who have completed the first year of the day or evening program, including the successful completion of legal writing, and who have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better may enroll in an internship after receiving the approval of the Director of Clinical Education or instructor and the field supervisor.

Students enrolled in the LL.M. program may enroll in an internship with the approval of the Director of Clinical Education or instructor and the Director of Graduate Studies. LL.M. students should have completed the equivalent of the first-year of law school, including legal writing, and have at least a 3.0 grade point average. In exceptional cases, approval may be granted if an LL.M. student is able to demonstrate, based on review of his or her transcript or other experience, that he or she possesses adequate academic and language skills to succeed in an internship.

M. *Limitation on Number of Internships.* Students may enroll in one internship each term, and may receive no more than six hours of internship credit toward the J.D. degree and no more than three hours of internship credit toward the LL.M. degree. Students may not take the same type of internship more than once without the approval of the Director of Clinical Education or instructor. Students who are permitted to enroll in the same internship for a

second semester will generally be required by the Director of Clinical Education or instructor to substitute for the classroom component either (a) individual conferences, (b) a substantial written product, or (c) some combination of (a) and (b).

N. Policy on Distant Internships. Students interested in enrolling in a placement that is located outside the state or nearby geographical area may enroll in an internship program at a law school near the placement. If that law school's program meets our faculty's standards, with the approval of the Director of Clinical Education and the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, the internship credits B up to our faculty's 3-credit per semester maximum B can transfer to this law school.

For more information regarding the internship program contact:

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