



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

W A S H I N G T O N , D C

# Sample Contract

## EXTERNSHIP CONTRACT: EMPLOYER

### Responsibilities of Attorney Field Supervisors

This document outlines the basic responsibilities of Attorney Field Supervisors who agree to sponsor a student extern from American University, Washington College of Law ("WCL").

A WCL student may receive academic credit for work in an externship placement that offers an educational experience that supplements those educational experiences available within the walls of the law school. To ensure that students' externship experiences meet this academic requirement, WCL requires that students receiving academic credit for work in an externship placement perform projects or parts of projects that practicing attorneys would perform in the agency or organization in which they are placed, and/or have the opportunity to take part in or observe interactions and proceedings in which attorneys are involved.

**WCL students may not receive academic credit for assignments that consist primarily of clerical activities – such as excessive photocopying, typing or word processing, filing, or answering of phones – that would not be regularly carried out by practicing attorneys in the office.** The position you offer must be unpaid, and your organization must be non-profit, a government agency, OR a law firm that will assign the extern to solely pro bono projects.

WCL expects that agencies or organizations that agree to accept student externs will honor these academic regulations in order that the externs may earn academic credit for their work. WCL students doing externships are closely supervised by WCL faculty, who will be monitoring the student's work experience throughout the semester.

To further ensure that student externs working for academic credit receive a valuable educational experience, WCL requires each student in its externship program to locate an Attorney Field Supervisor within the organization in which the student wishes to work. The agreement to serve as a WCL student extern's Attorney Field Supervisor entails the following responsibilities:

**1) Orientation:** The Attorney Field Supervisor should ensure that basic substantive information is provided to the student at the outset of the externship. Such orientation materials might include a brief overview of the jurisdiction or mission of the agency or organization and the general legal issues presently before it; guidelines and resources for performing whatever lawyering tasks are assigned to the student; office policies and procedures, professional dress code, etc.; introduction to others in the office with whom the student is likely to interact; and a tour of the facilities, library, office equipment, etc.

**2) Adequate Work Space:** The Attorney Field Supervisor should ensure that the student extern is provided with adequate workspace.

**3) Regular Contact and Supervision:** The Attorney Field Supervisor should have regular contact with the student extern throughout the course of the semester, including the following:

**a) Developing Work Plans:** The Attorney Field Supervisor should work with the student in developing goals for the externship experience and a work plan that will allow the student to meet these goals. The work plan ideally should expose the student to the general practice and decision-making processes of the agency or organization and give the student some in-depth exposure to issues pertinent to the agency or organization's activity. The work plan should be reasonable for the number of hours the student has agreed to work at the organization.

**b) Weekly Meetings:** The Attorney Field Supervisor should meet with the student approximately once a week in order to provide the student with general supervision. (The student may work with and be supervised by other individuals within the agency or organization as well, provided that the Attorney Field Supervisor continues to maintain this regular contact). The subject matter of these meetings might include evaluating the student's performance over the course of the prior week, developing work plans for the following weeks, discussing the activities of the agency or organization, and analyzing particular successes and problems that arise in the course of the externship. The Attorney Field Supervisor might also seek to assist the student in developing insights into legal practice, the lawyering process, or the general legal principles involved in the agency's or organization's work, and otherwise provide guidance that will assist the student in launching his or her own legal career. This kind of mentoring can have tremendous educational value to the student, transcending even the value of the practical experience the student gains through the externship.

**c) Evaluation:** The Attorney Field Supervisor should provide the student with constructive, detailed evaluations of his or her performance and must also verify the student's work hours. The Attorney Field Supervisor should communicate (either in writing or orally) with the student's faculty supervisor at the end of the semester to discuss the field supervisor's perceptions of the student extern's work and the externship program generally. Attorney Field Supervisors are invited to call the Director of the WCL Externship Program at 202.274.4072, with any questions or comments. Attorney Field Supervisors may also bring any problems related to the externship program that cannot be worked out directly with the student to the attention of the student's faculty supervisor or the Externship Program Director.

*The American University Washington College of Law*

*requires that employers who wish to participate in the Externship Program not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. We also require that employers maintain a policy against sexual harassment. By participating in the Externship Program, employers are deemed to agree with this policy. Please contact the Externship Office at (202) 274-4200 if you have questions.*