

**FIELD EXTERNSHIPS  
STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
SCHOOL OF LAW**

**1. OVERVIEW**

Externships are field placements in which a law student receives academic credit while working under the supervision of a judge or under the supervision of a lawyer as a law clerk in a law firm, government agency, or non-profit organization. The experience is intended to supplement the student's classroom experience by providing carefully monitored and directed exposure to the work of the judiciary or the practice of law. Students in all externships will be exposed to issues of professional responsibility and professionalism.

There are two forms of externships. In placement clinics, students may assist in the representation of clients under the supervision of a lawyer with whom the student is placed. Students participating in placement clinics must qualify under the South Carolina Student Practice Rule.

In other externships, students do not engage in the practice of law. They engage in practical skills such as research, drafting, and interviewing and observe other professional skills, such as counseling, negotiation, and advocacy.

Only law students who have completed at least one-third of the academic credit hours required for graduation and are in academic good standing are eligible to participate in an externship. Students participating in placement clinics generally must be in their third-year of law school.

Each externship program must be approved by the School of Law faculty in the same manner as other courses. Externships may be approved as part-time or full-time externships. They may be offered during the regular academic year or during the summer. Depending upon the externship, it may provide field placement during all or only part of a semester.

**2. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

- To provide a means for the practical application of student research, writing, and drafting skills through work on legal documents, such as trial or pretrial documents or transactional documents;
- To expose students to effective lawyering skills through their observation of or participation in activities such as investigation, interviewing, counseling, negotiation, and advocacy;

- To instill in students fundamental values of the profession and to provide an understanding of issues of professional responsibility as they arise in an actual practice setting;
- To enhance students' understanding of the application of principles learned in law school to actual legal problems;
- When appropriate to the practice setting, to expose the student to the realities of law practice management, including management of a lawyer's time and schedule;
- To encourage students to explore and consider the different roles of lawyers and the range of career opportunities available to lawyers.

### **3. EDUCATIONAL METHODS**

Each externship shall consist of two components – the field placement and a regular classroom component in the form of a seminar, group or individual tutorial sessions, or other suitable means of providing for guided reflection on the part of each participant. In the field placement, the student will be given a variety of well-defined tasks to expose the student to a range of lawyering skills through participation, observation, and discussion. Whenever possible, students should be allowed to participate directly in the professional experience to the extent permitted by the Rules of Professional Conduct and applicable law. Students performing legal research as a part of their externship should be instructed as to the scope of the project in which they are participating and made aware of how their work will be applied in completing the project. Students should be made aware of any professional responsibility and professionalism issues they encounter and should be critically evaluated as to their own success or failure in meeting professional expectations. Students should receive regular critical feedback from their field supervisor as to their performance of tasks in the field placement.

### **4. FACULTY SUPERVISION AND CLASSROOM COMPONENT**

Each externship has a faculty member responsible for selecting appropriate field supervisors; visiting field placement sites as necessary; supervising a seminar, tutorial, or other means of guided reflection for the students participating in the externship; and evaluating the students' academic performance. The faculty member may be a full-time or part-time faculty member.

### **5. EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Externships may be graded on a letter-grade or pass/fail basis, as approved by the faculty of the School of Law. Most externships will be graded on a pass/fail basis only. Typically, students will be required to maintain on a contemporaneous basis, a journal of the experiences. The journal should focus on what the student is learning more than being simply a record of what the student has done. The field supervisor completes one or more evaluations of each student being supervised. Those written evaluations are given to the faculty member. The faculty member shall award a grade based upon the field supervisor's evaluation and the faculty

member's determination as to whether all other requirements of the externship, including attendance at class sessions and, if required, the completion of a journal, have been completed. In addition to the journal, another written product may be required. That writing generally will be either a writing prepared in the course of the externship or one designed with agreement of the faculty member to meet this requirement.