

Texas A&M University School of Law
Residency Externship Program in Public Policy

2021-2022

Guide for Supervising Attorneys



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Texas A&M University School of Law Residency Externship Program in Public Policy and your willingness to work with one of our students during this exciting opportunity!

Texas A&M University School of Law is committed to its land grant mission to, among other things, provide selfless service and leadership to its community, its country, and the world. The Residency Externship Program in Public Policy provides a unique opportunity for our students to train with experts in policymaking, develop their skills, build their Aggie network, and explore a great city. Like our sister programs at the Bush School, the Mays Business School, and the Public Policy Internship Program at College Station, the Texas A&M School of Law wants to give its students robust opportunities to experience policymaking firsthand in Austin, Texas, or Washington, D.C.

Students participating in the Residency Externship Program in Public Policy are uniquely qualified to work in your organization. Prior to their placements our students will have completed coursework in legislation and regulation, administrative law, substantive policy law, professionalism and leadership, and three semesters of legal writing – including an innovative class in which they are introduced to and draft several types of documents encountered in policymaking such as position papers, hearing testimony, background memoranda, and comments to rule making.

This guide is designed to provide you an overview of our program and assist you in your mentorship and supervision of our student extern.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESIDENCY EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN PUBLIC POLICY

WHAT IS AN EXTERNSHIP IN PUBLIC POLICY?

An externship is an opportunity for a student to experience the role of a public sector attorney in real-time. As a participant in the Texas A&M School of Law Residency Externship Program in Public Policy, students work *with* the program director to find a placement that fits their skill set and interests. Students identify their goals for their experience and set a course to seek opportunities to—

- develop skills
- explore public policy and what a job in that field might look like
- combine a commitment to service and leadership with a desire to learn about a substantive area of law within the public sector
- consider how to find satisfaction in work and balance with personal life.

In addition to working in their placements full time, students in the program engage in a three credit substantive seminar led by an adjunct expert and critically examine substantive policy, ethics, procedure, and leadership through a wide array of readings and assignments. Students also meet weekly with leaders in the field of public policy. The seminar culminates in a substantive paper or other capstone project that envelops all of the skills and experiences gained throughout the program.

MISSION STATEMENT & EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Mission Statement

To provide Texas A&M School of Law students interested in working in the fields of federal or state public service, public policy, and regulatory creation and enforcement meaningful opportunities to explore the unique role of the public sector lawyer in policymaking through an intensive externship and seminar capstone experience in Washington, D.C. or Austin, Texas during the spring semester.

Educational Objectives

Through participation in the Residency Externship Program in Public Policy, students will gain valuable experience and understanding of the significant ethical, legal, moral, and political issues those in the public sector face every day, and learn about the

regulatory and administrative processes of the public sector. They also will strengthen their Aggie Core Values and the Aggie network through the experience.

TIME COMMITMENT BY OUR EXTERNS

Students are to work "full time" during their externship placement or the equivalent of a minimum of 405 hours; 45 hours for every credit (9) earned for the placement.

COURSE CREDIT

Students receive 9 pass/fail credit hours for their placement. Students are directed that the 405 hours required are a *minimum* for course credit to be awarded. Students are expected to meet all obligations associated with a placement and to complete an entire semester at the placement. Students are required to log their hours according to the time sheets provided (a copy of the template is included in this Guide), have those hours reviewed and approved by their supervisor, and submit them regularly to the Program director.

In addition, students receive 4 graded credit hours for the seminar components of the Program (1 credit for Winter Term seminar; 3 credits for the Spring seminar). The Spring seminar component is taught by an adjunct professor in the host city and administered by the Program director.

GOAL SETTING & ORIENTATION

Students in the Residency Externship Program in Public Policy must take a Winter Term immersion course in preparation for their placements. Among the many topics covered during this course, students discuss and prepare a Goals Memorandum and Learning Agenda (a template of the Learning Agenda is included in this Guide) to help guide their placement experience. The two documents are reviewed by the Program Director and comments are provided to the student. Students are expected to discuss their individual Learning Agenda with their supervisors during the first week of their placement.

When students arrive at their placements supervisors should provide a general orientation for them - similar to that provided to a new employee. This includes workspace accommodations, electronics and email set up and protocols, office dress,

and so forth. A suggested checklist is provided for guidance but is by no means exhaustive.

ASSIGNMENT AND PERIODIC OVERALL FEEDBACK

Assignment Feedback

Students in the Residency Externship Program in Public Policy are receiving credit for their placements so feedback on their performance and progress in meeting their goals and learning objectives is critical. Although time is often of the essence, supervisors should try to provide clear explanations of assignments and tasks, be available for a student to ask reasonable questions about the assignment, provide clear expectations of the work product, and set deadlines for completion of work. Supervisors should also provide students with constructive feedback on specific assignments including noting the work performed well and areas of improvement.

Periodic Feedback

It is also important that students placed with you receive periodic feedback on their overall performance. As mentioned above, students will meet with you during the first week of their placement to discuss their goals for the placement. Supervisors should meet with the students to discuss progress on those goals and their overall performance at the placement. The Program director will conduct a mid-semester review of student performance and goals progress but the supervisors should feel comfortable doing so as well. A final (exit) review should also be conducted with the students placed with you. A copy of the exit review is attached and should be completed and returned to the Program director at the end of the students' placement.

CONFIDENTIALITY & OTHER CONCERNS

Students in the Residency Externship Program in Public Policy spend a significant amount of time discussing ethics and confidentiality prior to their placements as well as throughout their Spring seminar course. Students are instructed to maintain strict confidentiality during their seminar discussions with the adjunct professor and fellow Program participants. Student journal reflections are viewed only by the student and Program director but also are written with confidentiality in mind. Supervisors should

cover confidentiality and ethics issues specific to the office during the orientation with students.

In the rare event that an issue arises, supervisors should contact the Law School Dean of Experiential Learning, Luz Herrera. Supervisors should also contact the Program director if they have any questions or concerns regarding confidentiality or ethics at any time during the placement.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Texas A&M University provides equal opportunity to all employees, students, applicants for employment or admission, and the public regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Texas A&M University will promptly investigate all complaints of illegal discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. A full copy of the Non-discrimination policy may be accessed at <http://law.tamu.edu/docs/default-source/current-students/notice-of-nondiscrimination.pdf>.

SUPERVISING ATTORNEY REQUIREMENTS

A supervising attorney should have at least 3 years of experience and be a member in good standing with a bar of appropriate jurisdiction. Additionally, the attorney should not have been subject to sanctions either by a court or state (jurisdictional) bar. If the proposed supervising attorney has been sanctioned, please contact the Program director to discuss the date and nature of the sanction.

Students in the Program may work with more than one attorney or other office staff throughout their placement, but there should be one attorney who will be the student's main supervisor and whose responsibility will be to oversee and evaluate the student's experience and performance, and be available to communicate with the school as necessary.

SUPERVISING ATTORNEY BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervising Attorneys serve as mentors to the students and are asked to train students on the skills that will help them become practice-ready in the public sector. Supervising Attorneys should allow students to work on matters that will help the students develop skills and gain real life experience and insight into aspects of regulatory development and policymaking. In furtherance of the Residency Externship Program's mission and goals, here are some basic responsibilities of Supervising Attorneys.

- Assign substantive and meaningful legal work for the extern student to accomplish. Whenever meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events are held – especially in connection with a task assigned to the student – offer the student the chance to attend and discuss the event afterward with his/her Supervising Attorney.
- Discuss and set learning goals with the student at the beginning of the externship, including a discussion of the student's Learning Agenda.
- Approve the accuracy of the student's time sheets and sign the sheets as required. Complete an evaluation (provided by the school) at the end of semester, and discuss it with the student. (Information on how to do this will be provided and regular contact with the director of the Program will occur.)
- Meet regularly with the student to review and critique the work he/she has completed, and provide guidance on future assignments. Feedback is an important element to the student's learning. It is expected that a mentoring relationship will be established and the Supervising Attorney will discuss many

aspects of public policy, administration, and rule making – including issues of professional responsibility – throughout the semester.

- Sign weekly time sheets for students. Students in the REP-PP are required to complete 45 hours of work for every credit (9) that they receive during the externship; students are expected to work full-time during their externship.
- Ensure that students are not compensated by any part of the office, agency, group, or person for any work performed during the semester the student is enrolled in the REP-PP.

Supervising Attorneys are subject to the [Texas A&M University Nondiscrimination and Abuse Policy](#).

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Texas A&M University provides equal opportunity to all employees, students, applicants for employment or admission, and the public regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Texas A&M University will promptly investigate all complaints of illegal discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Employers who use campus facilities, post jobs on the law school job bank, participate in on-campus interviews or resume collections, must comply with this notice of nondiscrimination in regard to hiring, promotion, retention and conditions of employment. Students may file complaints against an employer who asks discriminatory questions in any program or activity sponsored or conducted at the law school.

TEXAS A&M SCHOOL OF LAW
RESIDENCY EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN PUBLIC POLICY

EXTERNSHIP PLACEMENT LEARNING AGENDA

Student Name: _____

Student Placement: _____

Date of Student Draft (Columns One & Two): _____

Date of Document Discussion with Supervisor: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Students will complete Columns One & Two during the January Winter Term course with the REP-PP Director in conjunction with the completed "Goals Memorandum." Students will meet with their supervisors during the first week of their placements to discuss the Learning Agenda and receive comments and feedback on it from their supervisor.

Goals for Your Externship	Experiences that You Believe Would Help Achieve that Goal	Supervisor Comments on Goals & Experiences

Supervisor's Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

TEXAS A&M SCHOOL OF LAW
RESIDENCY EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN PUBLIC POLICY

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIP ACTIVITY

Externs will perform a variety of tasks during their placements. To assist with timesheet maintenance, the following general descriptions of activities may be useful. These are broad categories and your timesheet should be thoughtfully inclusive of the work you actually undertake. For ease you may use the abbreviations included in the parentheses.

Clerical (C): These types of activities include those that do not require legal knowledge or judgment such as photocopying, assembling binders, answering telephones generically, or simply dropping off or picking up materials.

Conversations/conferences with Supervisor or Co-workers (CONV): These activities include any time you spend speaking with your supervisor or co-workers. You may differentiate between types of conversations for example those in which you receive an initial assignment, those in which you seek clarification, those in which you present your work product, and general conversations.

Legal Research (LR): This includes computerized or book research on cases, statutes, regulations, etc

Non-legal Research (NLR): This includes activities such as searching for information on the Internet not related to legal research; collecting public records or other information; making telephone calls to gather information; and similar activities. Legal and non-legal research often “blur” during public policy work but try to make clear delineations between the type of work you know to be “traditional legal research”(think LARW-I & II) with information that supports that research.

Note taking (NT): This encompasses events you attend for which you have been asked to engage in active note-taking to be shared with your supervisor in some way. For example, you are asked to attend a hearing and take notes on the proceedings.

Observation (OB): This encompasses time for which you are primarily observing, rather than performing a certain activity such as sitting in a meeting or attending a conference.

Organization in Support of Legal Work (ORG): This includes activities such as reviewing and organizing files, organizing materials in support of a hearing or other legal

proceeding, or any other type of organization that requires some legal knowledge and judgment, as opposed merely a clerical task like photocopying.

Writing (W): This should include *any* kind of writing including legal memoranda, legislation, position papers, hearing testimony, regulations, and the like. This includes all phases of the drafting process from first draft to final proofread. Be sure to note the specific writing project in each entry such as "worked on first draft of position paper," "proofread final copy of hearing testimony," etc

**TEXAS A&M SCHOOL OF LAW
RESIDENCY EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN PUBLIC POLICY**

FINAL EVALUATION OF STUDENT EXTERN

PLACEMENT: _____

SUPERVISOR: _____

STUDENT: _____

*Unless otherwise indicated, this evaluation may be shared with the Student Extern.
Please use additional pages if necessary.*

LAWYERING SKILLS	N/A	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Legal Knowledge					
Research					
Writing					
Analysis & Reasoning					
Critical Thinking					
Oral Communication					
Interviewing					
Investigation					
Client Counseling/Advising					
Negotiation					
Recognition of Ethical Issues					
Problem Solving					

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PROFESSIONALISM/WORK HABITS	N/A	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Office & Staff Relations					
Timeliness in Attendance					
Productivity					
Timeliness in Work Completion					
Initiative					
Judgment					
Thoroughness & Attention to Detail					
Judgment					
Dependability					
Attitude toward Supervision/Criticism					

STRENGTHS: Please describe the extern's contributions to your office, such as the types of projects completed or areas in which the extern demonstrated particular skill strength:

WEAKNESSES/NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: For each category in which you rated the extern "poor" or "fair," please provide examples or otherwise explain the rating:

EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM: Do you have any suggestions for improving our Residency Externship Program in Public Policy in general, or ways in which we may better serve you in the future?

I ___did ___did not share this evaluation with the Student Extern.

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE:_____ **DATE:**_____

Thank you for participating in the Texas A&M School of Law Residency Externship Program in Public Policy!

**TEXAS A&M SCHOOL OF LAW
RESIDENCY EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN PUBLIC POLICY**

STUDENT EVALUATION OF EXTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

PLACEMENT: _____

SUPERVISOR: _____

STUDENT: _____

1. RATE YOUR EXTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE
check (√) the most appropriate box

	N/A	POOR	GOOD	FAIR	EXCELLENT
AMOUNT OF LEGAL RESEARCH/WRITING/ANALYSIS					
EXPOSURE TO PUBLIC POLICY MAKING					
DRAFTING OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS					
ORAL ADVOCACY, OBSERVATION OR PARTICIPATION (INCLUDING HEARINGS AND PRESS CONFERENCES)					
OBSERVATION OF HEARINGS, MEETINGS, MARKUPS, OR OTHER PUBLIC POLICY EVENTS					
OBSERVATION OF ATTORNEYS AT WORK					
EXPOSURE TO PROFESIONAL RESPONSIBILITY ISSUES					

RECEIVED SPECIFIC, WELL-DEFINED ASSIGNMENTS					
RECEIVED A VARIETY OF ASSIGNMENTS					
SUPERVISOR ACCESSIBILITY					
SUPERVISOR FEEDBACK ON PERFORMANCE					
SUPERVISOR PROVIDED USEFUL GUIDANCE TO COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS					
OVERALL WORK ENVIRONMENT					
OVERALL TRAINING RECEIVED					

2. What types of activities did you perform most during your externship? Are there types of activities that you had hoped to undertake but were not asked to perform?

4. How would you describe the work you undertook during your placement to a student unfamiliar with the placement?

4. If you rated your supervisor as inaccessible for guidance (poor/fair) or assistance (poor/fair), what are your thoughts on why that was (were they too busy, unorganized, uninterested)?

5. Describe your supervisor's attitude towards you. Were they welcoming, receptive, understanding, interested in your educational experience during the placement, etc. . . ?

6. How was your overall workload? Did the externship placement take more or less time than you were expecting?

7. Did you learn what you thought you would learn during the externship placement?

8. Would you recommend that other students participate in this externship placement? Be supervised by the same person? Why or why not?

9. Other comments or suggestions