

UHLC EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM
(For All Government/Nonprofit and Judicial Externs)
Summer 2023
Bill Powers, Adjunct Professor/Externship Program Director

STUDENT MANUAL & SYLLABUS

I. Program Goal and Educational Objectives

The externship program at the University of Houston Law Center (UHLC) allows students to experience and reflect upon the law in practice through field placements with the judiciary, nonprofit institutions, and government agencies. The goal of the externship program is to expose students to the “real world” practice of law while working under the supervision of an attorney. To achieve this goal, students are engaged in substantive legal activities, which may include courtroom and other observations, various legal research and writing projects, supervised client interviewing, and legal policy development. The type of activities in which students may be involved varies based on the placement and the work available at the time of the externship.

During the externship, field-placement supervisors and their staff attorneys provide students with day-to-day guidance on their projects, offering advice on the mechanics or substance of an assignment and answering questions the student may have about an assignment or observation. Supervisors are encouraged to view their role as one of mentor, exposing the student to various aspects of the supervisor’s job and offering the student constructive feedback on his or her work product. During the course of the externship, students have the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences. These written reflections often include observations on the law and the legal profession itself, lawyering skills, legal ethics and professionalism, interaction between lawyers and clients, opposing counsel, and the court, as well as students’ externship and career goals.

II. Externship Program Requirements

A. Mandatory Orientation

Students enrolled in any externship for Summer 2023 must participate in a mandatory **orientation meeting**. The meeting will take place virtually. If a student is not able to attend the meeting, the student must make other arrangements with Prof. Powers to complete the orientation **no later than Monday, June 5**.

B. Academic Credits

1. Each academic credit requires 60 working hours.
 - a. J.D. students may choose to earn 2-6 credits.
 - b. J.D. students who seek to earn 5 or 6 credits at a single placement are to contact the Externship Program Director prior to applying to the program about their particular placement and its capability to provide enough substantive legal work for that number of hours.

2. Increasing/Decreasing Credits

Once enrolled in an externship course, students may not increase or decrease their number of externship credits without first obtaining approval from their professor. If, after approval, you decide to change your number of credits, you must contact both Prof. Powers and Student Services via email *before* the last day to add a course. The last day to add a course for each session is:

Summer Session 1 (Full Summer): Tuesday, June 6

Summer Session 2 (1st Half): Tuesday, June 6

Summer Session 4 (2nd Half): Tuesday, July 11

C. Tracking Time

Each academic credit is 60 working hours in your placement. So, for example, if you are seeking 3 academic credits, you must complete 180 working hours (as well as any other course requirements) to be eligible for credit. Externs must keep track of their work time in Tick (www.tickspot.com). You should have received an email with login information for Tick; if you have not, contact your professor immediately.

When you log in to Tick, the default page should be your time card. Make sure the project listed is “Summer Externships 2023” and the task is “Externship Placement Work.” You can then enter your time and notes for each project you work on at your placement. Tick allows you to enter time in either decimal or clock format. For example, if you spent two and a half hours on a project, you could enter the time as either 2.50 (i.e., two and a half hours) or as 2:30 (i.e., two hours and thirty minutes).

You need to provide enough information in each note to show that you are working on substantive projects without any identifying information that would jeopardize confidentiality. For example:

Time to enter: 2.25	Notes: Observed oral argument in civil case
Time to enter: 3.50	Notes: Researched criminal law issue #1
Time to enter: 0.75	Notes: Drafted interrogatories #1 in civil case

Please add #1, #2, etc., as listed above so that your professor knows whether you are working on one long project or several shorter projects.

After you type in the time and notes, click “Enter Time” to submit the time for that project. Be sure to enter your time regularly. It is recommended to either enter the time as you complete each project, or to keep track of each project you work on throughout the day and the time spent and enter all of the time at the end of each day. Your professor will check your time log regularly.

Once you have completed all of your required hours, go to “Reporting” and run a report covering all of your dates for the session. View the report in “print view” and print out a final, cumulative time sheet. **This final time sheet must be signed by your supervisor. Email the signed time sheet to your professor by the deadline to complete your externship (see “Completion of Externship” below).**

Hours that Count Toward Required Minimum

- Time actually working* (writing, observing, etc.)
- Time while at the placement but awaiting assignment (*within reason*)*
- Orientations provided by your placement
- Any outside research assigned by supervisor/judge
- Luncheons or other events (including virtual) (*if attended with supervisor and/or a judge or if feedback from supervisor and/or a judge provided*) **This is also within reason. If you have questions, please ask.**

(***Note:** Supervisors must give students **substantive** legal work for the student to receive credit. While there may be times when a student is asked to do administrative or secretarial work or a student is awaiting an assignment, this time should be minimal. If you are spending significant time awaiting an assignment or are asked to do more than a minimal amount of secretarial or administrative work, please contact your professor immediately to work together to find a solution.)

Hours That Do Not Count

- Time spent completing your time log and other course assignments
- Lunch or other breaks
- Drive time/parking time
- Days off due to government shutdowns, weather, holidays (government holidays included), or illness
- Excessive time awaiting an assignment or other significant “down” time. (What is “excessive/significant”? If you spend more than 10 percent of your total time awaiting an assignment or doing something other than substantive legal work/outside research assigned by your supervisor or judge/luncheons or events with your supervisor or judge. Again, if you have questions, please ask.)

(***Note:** Some placements may offer additional experiences which may not count towards your externship hours. For example, participation in a law enforcement raid, or participation in a “wet lab” (where volunteers become intoxicated to train law enforcement officers on DWI cases), cannot count towards your externship hours and is not sanctioned by the Law Center. If you have questions about an activity counting towards your hours, please ask before the activity occurs.)

D. Mandatory Assignments

The mandatory assignments must be completed and emailed to your professor as described below:

(1) Assignment #1: Due Date: June 9 (Summers 1 & 2); July 14 (Summer 4)

- **A signed Learning Agenda**, signed by the student and the placement supervisor. A blank Learning Agenda form is included in this packet.
 - **A signed UHLC Student Externship & Confidentiality Agreement**, signed by the student only. A blank UHLC Student Externship & Confidentiality Agreement is also included.
- (2) **Assignment #2: Due Date: June 16 (Summers 1 & 2); July 21 (Summer 4)**
- **Learning from Supervision Assignment.** Please read the provided excerpt from “Learning from Supervision” from J.P. Ogilvy, et al., *Learning From Practice: A Professional Development Text for Legal Externs* (included in this packet) and reflect on the assignments you have received thus far from your supervisors. How have you addressed questions regarding your work with your supervisor and/or other attorneys at your placement? How do you plan to address concerns that might arise in the future? What concerns, if any, have you had about your assignments thus far? How can you best secure effective feedback from your supervisors? **Responses should be no shorter than one typed page and no longer than two typed pages.**
 - ***For students who previously took the course, please reflect on this reading from your current placement perspective as it will differ, perhaps greatly, from your first experience.
- (3) **Assignment #3: Due Date: June 30 (Summers 1 & 2); August 4 (Summer 4)**
- **Reflective Writing Assignment.** Please re-read your Learning Agenda from the beginning of the semester and reflect on how your externship has met your learning goals. Discuss any notable experiences during your time as an extern and how you think your experience working as an extern will influence your future legal career. Discuss your overall impression of the experience. **Responses should be no shorter than one typed page and no longer than two typed pages.**
- (4) **Assignment #4: Due Date: July 21 (Summer 1 only)**
- **Reflective Writing Assignment.** See Assignment #3. Other suggested topics:
 - “Grit” and Deliberate Practice. (See, e.g., *Cultivating Grit in Law Students: Grit, Deliberate Practice, and the First-Year Law School Curriculum*, 47 Cap. U. L. Rev. 341 (2019).)
 - Work-Life Balance. (See, e.g., *What Makes Lawyers Happy?: A Data-Driven Prescription to Redefine Professional Success*, 83 Geo. Wash. L.Rev. 554 (2015) (available on Westlaw or Lexis).)
 - The “Generation Gap” and the Practice of Law. (See, e.g., *I’ll Start Walking Your Way, You Start Walking Mine: Sociological Perspectives on Professional Identity Development and Influence of Generational Differences*, 61 S.C. L. Rev. 337 (2009) (available on Westlaw or Lexis).)
- (5) **Assignment #5: Due Date: August 4 (Summer 1 only)**
- **Reflective Writing Assignment.** See Assignment #3.

E. Completion of Externship

Students will receive credit for their externships **only** if they **satisfactorily** complete their required number of working hours at the placement, as well as complete all assignments listed above (including any additional assignments which will be required if the “regular” assignments are submitted late). ***All students in the Externship Program are on notice that those who do not submit all of the above assignments will not receive credit for their externship.*** Externs **must** complete **all hours, assignments, and any other course requirements** by:

Summer Session 1 (Full Summer): Friday, August 11

Summer Session 2 (1st Half): Friday, July 7

Summer Session 4 (2nd Half): Friday, August 11

F. Late Assignments

As is the case in the “real world” of law practice, turning in late assignments for the externship course comes at a price. Students who turn in assignments after the due date will be required to complete additional, specially selected writing assignments for each late assignment.

G. Conflicts of Interest & Confidentiality

All students must comply with the *Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Responsibility*. Part-time employment of a student enrolled in an externship may create a *conflict of interest*, as may a student’s prior employment. Notify your supervisor of any potential conflicts ***immediately***.

Students are on notice that if a student’s employment or volunteer work during the semester results in a conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety, the student may be asked to terminate the employment or volunteer work, or leave the externship.

Additionally, conduct with regard to confidentiality should also be guided by the *Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Responsibility*, as well as the *Rules of Judicial Conduct*.

The *Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Responsibility* and other Texas ethics resources can be found at:

https://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Ethics_Resources

III. Evaluations

A. Placement Evaluation of Student. Your professor will email your supervisors at the end of the semester, asking them to complete a brief online evaluation of your work performance. While generally the evaluations are not shared with the students, the judges/supervisors will be encouraged to share the contents of their evaluations with you.

B. Student Evaluation of Placement. Your professor will email you a placement evaluation at the end of the semester. Students are to complete and return the evaluation as instructed on the form. The evaluation will not be shared with the placement

supervisor; rather, it is intended to assist future student externs when deciding where they might wish to apply. (You may choose to remain anonymous on the form.)

IV. Grading

Expect to receive a Satisfactory grade for your externship if: (1) you view orientation, (2) you satisfactorily complete your required number of hours, (3) you submit all your assignments and time sheets (including additional assignments required due to previous late assignments), and (4) you fulfill all the other requirements listed in this syllabus. If you do not complete all of the requirements, you will not pass or receive credit for your externship.

V. Due Dates: Chart

Summer Session 1	Summer Session 2	Summer Session 4
June 9: Assignment #1	June 9: Assignment #1	July 14: Assignment #1
June 16: Assignment #2	June 16: Assignment #2	July 21: Assignment #2
June 30: Assignment #3	June 30: Assignment #3	August 4: Assignment #3
July 21: Assignment #4	July 7: Final Time Sheet	August 11: Final Time Sheet
August 4: Assignment #5		
August 11: Final Time Sheet		

VI. CAPS/TLAP Information

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the “Let's Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html.

The Texas Lawyers’ Assistance Program (TLAP) also supports law students who are dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and other mental health problems. You can reach TLAP at any time at 1-800-343-8527. TLAP’s website includes a page with links to sources about mental health that are of interest to law students: <https://www.tlaphelps.org/law-students>.

VII. Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for disabled students. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact [the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#) (formerly the Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students with DisABILITIES).

VIII. Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Per the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the Title IX website [at https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/](https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/).

VII. Additional Information

- A. **COVID-19 Information:** Students are encouraged to visit the University’s [COVID-19](#) website for important information including on-campus testing, vaccines, diagnosis and symptom protocols, campus cleaning and safety practices, report forms, and positive cases on campus. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates.
- B. **Recording of Class:** Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor’s recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor’s recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.
- C. **Syllabus Changes:** Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email.

VIII. Communication and Contact Information

Communication: Your professor will correspond with you via the email address you have listed in your Symplicity account. Please be sure to check this email address, or update your email address in Symplicity and notify your professor.

Externship Program Director: Bill Powers, wapowers@central.uh.edu, 713-743-0810

Office Hours: M-F: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., or by appointment

Office Location: Career Development Office, Suite 250, John M. O’Quinn Building

If it is an emergency, please call the UHLC Career Development Office at 713-743-2090.

Externship Summer Program Professors:

Prof. Anna Archer: archer.judicial.externs@gmail.com
Prof. Amy Hancock: ahancock@grayreed.com
Prof. Kristina Van Arsdel: kgvanars@central.uh.edu
Prof. Carey Worrell: worrell.judicial.externs@gmail.com

Professors Archer, Hancock, Van Arsdel, and Worrell are adjunct professors and do not have office hours. If you would like to speak with your professor, send an email to arrange a date and time. If you have an emergency and cannot reach your professor, contact Bill Powers.

Learning from Supervision

In Chapter 3 of the book Learning from Practice: A Professional Development Text for Legal Externs (Second Edition),¹ Liz Ryan Cole and Leah Wortham discuss Learning from Supervision. They cover two important topics to the legal extern's daily work—(1) Assignment Clarification and (2) Effective Feedback. Now that you have all received your first assignments, it is important to check in and determine whether you were effective in seeking clarification about your assignment(s) and what strategies you may use in the future to seek clarification. If you have finished an assignment, you may be awaiting feedback or have already received it. If you have received it, consider Cole and Wortham's DESUSA acronym, described below, to assess how your supervisor provided feedback and whether you can do something to solicit effective feedback. As always, if you are not receiving assignments or are not receiving feedback, please let your assigned professor know and you can discuss your specific situation.

Assignment Clarification

Your supervisor asks to meet with you regarding your next assignment. What should you do to prepare?

- Attend the meeting with paper and pen. Even though you may think your memory is good, it is best to memorialize the information as you are receiving it.
- Write down a list of questions to ask the supervisor following his or her description of the assignment and take this list with you to the meeting. These should include:
 - When do you need this?
 - In what form do you need this? (Ex. verbal response; written email; memorandum; draft opinion, client letter, etc.)
 - If your supervisor would like the assignment in formal written form, you should consider asking: Is there a sample of similar work product that I can reference?
 - Would you like highlighted copies of the case law, statutes, etc.?
 - Are you interested in case law from outside of the jurisdiction?
 - Do you have advice on where to begin my search?
 - Can I come to you with questions? (It may be that your supervisor will be out of the office so it is good to know who to go to with follow-up questions.)
 - If the assignment is very specific, you may want to know how it fits into the bigger picture. A question like “Is there any other background information or any documents I may need to complete the assignment?”

Most importantly, ask questions. If your supervisor is in a hurry, the first two questions are the most important. You can follow up with an email and ask your remaining questions if that feels more appropriate for your particular placement and with your particular supervisor. Remember that your supervisors would rather you ask questions at the beginning of an assignment than spin your wheels and return to them with something that is late and/or not what they needed.

¹ J.P. OGILVY ET AL, LEARNING FROM PRACTICE: A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEXT FOR LEGAL EXTERNS, 31-51 (West 2007).

Effective Feedback

Cole and Wortham have developed the acronym DESUSA for effective feedback. This acronym is from the standpoint of the supervisor. Knowing this process will not only help you to receive better feedback, but to provide effective feedback when you are a supervisor in the future. DESUSA stands for:

Describe behavior² in a nonjudgmental manner using

Examples that are

Specific. Ask questions to

Understand what the supervisee was trying to accomplish and listen to why the choices were made. Characterize your reaction to the supervisee's choices in a

Subjective manner. For example, "I think...", "In my opinion..." If you are giving corrective rather than affirming feedback, describe the

Alternatives that you think would have been better with enough specificity to clarify your meaning. Ask the supervisee for suggestions of other alternatives now that discussion may have made the task and your thoughts clearer. Supervisor and supervisee may brainstorm together on alternative courses.

Many times, supervisors get busy and forget to provide feedback. Be patient. You can do your part by asking for feedback when the time seems right. Questions like, "Did my memo give you the information you needed?," "Did you have any questions about my research?," "Should I draft my memo in the same way I drafted the first one?" are all questions to prompt feedback.

If you receive a general response like, "Good job," you may ask if there is anything you can improve upon for the next assignment. If a supervisor's comments are not clear, ask them for examples so you know what they need for the next time. You may also find that, while your work product is acceptable, it is different from the style of the supervisor. Learning to write in the style of the supervisor or voice of the court is a skill and takes time. That is where asking for examples of prior good work can be really beneficial.

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² While the authors use the word "behavior," I would describe this process as providing feedback on the assignment using specific examples of where things went right and where things went wrong in a nonjudgmental way.

Summer 2023

Complete the Learning Agenda below with your Field Supervisor.

LEARNING AGENDA UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER

Student: _____

Field Placement: _____

Field Supervisor: _____

Students: You will use this plan to develop a Learning Agenda for your externship with your Field Supervisor. Please note specific areas in which you would like to improve during your externship, and the activities/assignments you will try to improve in those areas. You will be enrolled in a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory graded course taught by the Externship Faculty. The Externship Faculty will assign you a grade; you must complete all required coursework and required hours at your placement to receive a Satisfactory grade. Your Field Supervisor will supervise your training and work at the placement.

Field Supervisors: While the questions on this form address the Student's learning objectives, in determining what assignments to give to law students, you should, of course, also consider the organization's goals and needs. This Learning Agenda will reflect the substantial lawyering experience and opportunities for performance, feedback and self-evaluation involved with the field placement. You will have primary responsibility for supervising the Student's training and work at the placement. Supervision must be provided by a licensed attorney or an individual otherwise qualified to supervise; supervision should include reviewing with the Student any potential conflicts of interest arising from prior or current legal work (including pro bono) and job and clerkship applications. Field Supervisors agree to meet with the Student on a regular basis and provide meaningful feedback on the Student's performance. During the semester, the Externship Faculty will ensure that none of the course assignments (reflective essays, time sheets, etc.) or discussions involve confidential information. At the end of the semester, the Externship Faculty will provide you with a form for a final evaluation of the Student. You are strongly encouraged to share the final evaluation with the Student.

**(NOTE: Not all questions will be applicable to all field placements;
please respond where applicable.)**

1. What areas of substantive law will you focus on during this externship?

UHLC Student Externship Agreement Summer 2023

Externship Course Requirements: I, _____, affirm that I have thoroughly read the UHLC Externship Syllabus for the Summer 2023 session, as well as all additional forms attached thereto, and understand what is expected of me in order to receive a grade of “Satisfactory,” and thus receive academic credit for my externship.

Confidentiality: I agree to maintain the confidentiality of all information related to employees, clients, firm or court records, and judicial decision-making/discussion in my externship placement with _____. I understand that if I violate this confidentiality agreement, at a minimum, I will be subject to disciplinary proceedings under the Honor Code of the University of Houston Law Center.

Conflict of Interest: I also understand a conflict of interest could arise in my externship placement from my past/present employment in the legal field or from relationships I have with certain individuals. If there is any possibility of conflict of interest with any case I may have the opportunity to work on during the course of this semester, I will notify my placement supervisor immediately. Failure to notify a supervisor in a timely manner can result in my termination from the course and/or placement and can affect my receipt of credit for this course. Further, I understand if there is a conflict of interest or an appearance of one, I may be asked to terminate either the situation creating the conflict, or my enrollment in the class.

COVID-19: I understand that COVID-19 is an ongoing health risk in the community, and that interaction at my placement may expose me to that risk. If I choose to work physically at my placement, I will observe all applicable federal, state, and local rules (e.g., social distancing, face coverings), along with any additional precautions required by my placement. I will discuss any concerns with my Field Placement Supervisor and Externship Faculty as soon as possible. I acknowledge that externship policies are subject to change in response to the ongoing situation.

Student Signature

Date

Student's Printed Name