

**TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
BEASLEY SCHOOL OF LAW**

**PRACTICUM COURSE
FIELD PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR**

**HANDBOOK, TRAINING MANUAL & GUIDELINES
2023-2024**



1. Introduction

Welcome to Temple Law School's Experiential Programs. We are delighted you will take part in educating our students to be competent and ethical practitioners. We know supervising a law student requires time and planning and we hope this manual will assist you as you work with our students.

Temple Law has offered experiential placements since 1953 when it opened the Temple Legal Aid Office. Today, the experiential curriculum includes our in-house clinical programs, external clinical courses and externship courses, and practicums (field placements). All experiential courses offer at least 2 academic credits and include a practice component *and* either a classroom instructional component or regularly scheduled tutorials with a faculty member. Students may participate in field placements and external clinics at government agencies, non-profit organizations, judicial chambers, and approved for-profit placements.

The experiential programs reflect the school's overall pedagogical approach which emphasizes the careful, sequential transformation of students into highly skilled professionals. Students enter the program after successful completion of their first-year curriculum, which includes introduction to transactional skills, legal research and writing, criminal law, and civil procedure. Many have also taken criminal procedure, evidence, trial advocacy, and transactional practice. Many students also complete substantive courses in the specific areas in which the experiential practice occurs (e.g.: tax, business law, criminal law, and family law).

We are grateful that you have agreed to be the Practicum Field Placement Supervisor for a Temple Law student. We look forward to partnering with you to educate and guide our students.

2. Experiential Programs

Associate Dean Jaya Ramji-Nogales and Associate Director of Academic and Professional Success Noeleen Urmson are responsible for the academic and administrative supervision and oversight of experiential programs. Please feel welcome to contact us at any point.

Contact information is as follows:

Associate Dean Jaya Ramji-Nogales	jaya.ramji-nogales@temple.edu	215-204-6430
Associate Director Noeleen Urmson	nurmson@temple.edu	215-204-1177

Temple Law School engages in ongoing evaluation to ensure the academic integrity of each experiential course, consistent with the educational objectives of the Law School and in accordance with the Standards set forth by the American Bar Association for Accreditation of Law Schools. Oversight is provided by working with experiential faculty and our partners, reviewing student journal entries, and by faculty meetings with students. Law school faculty members may contact you to learn about your program, offer their assistance as an additional resource and link to the Law School, or inquire about supervision and the student's work. Faculty are also encouraged to visit your placement so they can meet with you and learn more about what you do and how you do it. We encourage you and any attorneys in your office supervising students to contact us for information about training opportunities.

3. General Administrative Matters

The following is a list of general administrative matters:

- a. *Scheduling, cancellations, and make-ups.* Occasionally, unforeseen events force the cancellation and rescheduling of a student's hours. Please call the Student Affairs Office and we will assist you in contacting your students and arranging for alternative meeting times. Snow and ice occasionally interrupt our normal class schedules. The Law School's inclement weather policy can be found on our website here: <https://law.temple.edu/resources/policies-and-procedures/temple-university-policies/>. It is the Law School policy not to cancel classes unless classes have been cancelled for the entire university. Please contact Associate Director Noeleen Urmson at nurmson@temple.edu when uncertain of a cancellation. **Also, please develop a plan in the event the Law School cancels classes but your office or the courthouse is open. We want to avoid a situation where a student has case files or other material in his or her possession, or court or client responsibilities, and is unsure of how to proceed.**
- b. *Communication.* We also encourage students and field placementsupervisors to discuss the preferred method of communication, including the use of secure serversto send confidential information. If an emergency arises, and assistance is needed to contact a student, please do not hesitate to contact Student Affairs at 215-204-8574.
- c. *Evaluations and Oversight.* The Law School oversees each experiential program to make certain that students are properly supervised and that they participate fully. We periodically review each program with consideration paid to the following factors: the opportunity for students to have actual experience with cases, litigate, or meet with clients; the amount and quality of time spent in conference and review with the assigned supervisor regarding the student's performance; the coordination and correlation of the practice experience with the classroom component of the course; and case or assignment selection to ensure that students have a broad experience. We require that written evaluations be completed by every student at the end of each semester.

4. Statement of Educational Objectives, Goals, and Methods

Temple Law School recognizes that students require opportunities to participate in hypothetical or real legal contexts for them to transform into effective, ethical, and professional legal problem-solvers. Temple Law's external experiential programs are designed with the following goals (listed with methods of teaching to reach those goals).

- a. *Students should learn applicable procedural and substantive law.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should provide students with an opportunity to learn the law in a particular practice area. Students should have the opportunity to improve research techniques and learn howto access non-legal information that may be necessary to solve a legal problem.
- b. *Students should analyze and solve real legal problems.* To fulfill this goal, an experientialcourse should provide an opportunity for students, under the close supervision of an attorney, to perform tasks such as: factual investigation, legal analysis, risk analysis, dispute resolution options, solution mapping, client communication and counseling, negotiation, advocacy, and litigation. Students should gain experience and learn how to identify a problem, generate alternative solutions and strategies, develop and implement a plan of action, and keep the entire process open to new information and ideas.

- c. *Students should identify and address issues of professional responsibility.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should extend the students' awareness of the rules of professional responsibility by providing opportunities to identify and/or confront actual ethical issues facing practicing attorneys. The classroom component, reflection, self-evaluation, or tutorial should include a discussion about ethics and professionalism.
- d. *Students should develop a problem-solving framework that will transfer to other legal matters.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should provide students with an opportunity to develop transferrable skills and develop students' ability to learn from experience. To that end, the experiential course should focus, not only on the quality of the students' work product, but on the underlying process through which the work was produced.
- e. *Students should improve upon their professionalism.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should provide an opportunity for students to organize and manage time pressures and deadlines, manage the flow of multiple assignments simultaneously, develop relationships with the court and colleagues, and learn to receive and implement meaningful feedback and critique.
- f. *Students should gain insight into the realities of the legal system, its institutions, and its limitations.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should provide a chance for students to examine the power and limitations of legal institutions and to consider the realities of practice. By evaluating the impact of the law on individual lives, students may more deeply appreciate the roles and responsibilities of lawyers in our society.
- g. *Students should develop their professional identity.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should inspire students to consider the values of ethics, civility, professionalism, pro bono work, public service work, cultural competency, and anti-racism as integral components to their professional identity. In so doing, students will continue to strive for legal ideals such as equal justice and fairness.
- h. *Students should develop cultural competency and anti-racism skills.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should identify opportunities for students to practice and reflect on cultural competency skills. An experiential course should include discussions of bias, discrimination, and racism in the law and legal profession.
- i. *Students should gain an appreciation for the fluidity and complexity of the practice of law.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should provide students with an opportunity to gain experience with the complexity of working with real clients who face real outcomes and the fluidity and speed with which real issues develop in the legal profession.
- j. *Students should extend their ability to learn from experience.* To fulfill this goal, an experiential course should be structured to promote reflective learning as well as performance proficiency. Students must be given the opportunity to be self-reflective and self-directing in each's own development and understand how to be reflective, embrace mistakes, and learn from experience.

5. Structuring Experiential Programs and the Role of the Practicum Site Supervisor

An experiential course is neither a traditional class nor a typical work experience, although it shares elements with both. The following is a list of ideas that should be helpful to include as you plan and structure the experience.

- a. *Acknowledgment of Temple Law School's Program Requirements:* All supervisors should become familiar with the expectations and requirements (as applicable) that are set out in this Manual and the Practicum Agreement.

- b. *Syllabus or Case Assignment Plan:* Both students and supervisors benefit if a tentative list of increasingly challenging assignments is thoughtfully developed, discussed, and distributed at the beginning of the semester.
- c. *Introduction/Orientation Meeting:* An orientation meeting with students sets the tone for the semester. The quality of work which students will demand of themselves can be influenced by what occurs at the first meeting. The meeting should include a discussion about (1) your expectations regarding work standards and effort; (2) the students' expectations and individual educational goals; (3) the role of your office, agency, court, or organization in the legal system; (4) the students' role and title as well as duties and limitations; (5) office policies, including confidentiality, use of office equipment, time records, and dress code; (6) assignment guidelines that include whether memos are to be written according to a specific format, or if certain legal authority is to be relied upon more than others, and what work must be checked by a supervisor before it is finalized; (7) supervisory chain of command so that students know from whom they should take assignments; (8) a review of any written office manuals or policies that students must know and follow; and (9) a tour of the office/chambers.
- d. *Written Materials:* Readings of cases, theory, and practice manuals inform the students' participation and enhance their education. You are encouraged to offer students readings including cases, relevant law review articles, and/or appropriate texts. If you need assistance, please call the Law School Office of Student Affairs (215-204-8574) so that we can help you find an appropriate resource.
- e. *Student Certification:* Under Rules 321 and 322 of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, qualified law students may be certified as legal interns for the purpose of formal participation in authorized legal matters, under the supervision of an attorney admitted to the bar. Students should be instructed to download the application from the website and drop the form off to the law school's Office Student Affairs. The form can be found at the following website: (http://www.pabarexam.org/non_bar_exam_admission/321_322_app.htm).
- f. *Assignments:* Assignments should provide students the opportunity to function, under supervision, in the role of an attorney performing the task. Assignments should be selected with a view toward the students' current level of competence and the extent to which the student can be successfully challenged. Students should be assigned work of increasing complexity as the semester progresses. Work assigned early in the semester should be structured to lay a foundation for more complex and challenging assignments later in the semester. Students should have a clear understanding of what is expected, when an assignment is due, and with whom they can discuss issues and problems.
- g. *Supervision:* Supervision is a key element of experiential education. It transforms the ordinary work situation, where learning is haphazard, into a meaningful and ordered educational experience. Supervision is both a process and a relationship. Students learn best when there is trust and rapport between students and a supervisor. It is also a process that begins with an assessment of the students' ability, and continues with assignment of work, preparation, performance, feedback, and evaluation. Supervision requires that the supervisor be available, within reason, to assist students, answer questions, and provide guidance. Supervising attorneys should explain how a task should be performed so that students can prepare for that task. Students learn best when provided the opportunity to observe how a task is completed, simulate the task, and finally perform it. At all three stages, supervisors should provide guidance and feedback to develop the students' awareness of how to properly prepare for and perform that task.

- h. Feedback:* Constructive and critical feedback consists of very specific information about the students' performance. The supervisor must carefully observe the students' performance or work product and tactfully communicate what was successful and what requires improvement. Effective feedback assures that students will understand their strengths and weaknesses and be able to build upon them in the future. Specificity is essential. General comments such as "good job" are less effective than focusing on specific behaviors that the students can improve upon or replicate when presented with a similar situation. Self-assessment is key. Students should be given the opportunity to identify with specificity the aspects of their performance that were effective as well as the aspects of their performance that were less effective, and to articulate how they might approach a given task or situation differently in the future to improve their performance. Students should receive an individual written evaluation twice each semester. The mid-semester evaluation is designed to provide a benchmark as to how students are doing, and the final performance evaluation should assess students' progress throughout the semester.
- i. Schedule:* Supervisors should work with students to establish a set schedule. Consideration of practice opportunities, the students' class calendar, and efficient use of space and other resources should govern the work schedules. Please give students notice of the mandatory attendance policy which can be found on the Law School website. If a student fails to report for scheduled hours, please contact the Law School Office of Student Affairs (215-204-8574) immediately. Students should make up any hours lost to illness, other personal reasons, or snow days.
- j. 2023-2024 Academic Calendar:* We ask that you follow [Temple Law School's academic calendar](#) for beginning and end dates (as well as holidays). Please note that the fall semester begins on Monday, August 28, 2023. Students are not required to report to their experiential placements during Thanksgiving recess, which is November 23-24, 2023. The last day of the fall semester is December 7, 2023. Students should make up any hours lost to illness, other personal reasons, or snow days. The spring semester begins on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. Students are not required to report to their experiential placements during spring recess which is March 4-8, 2024. The last day of the spring semester is April 29, 2024.
- k. Evaluation of Student Performance:* The student you are supervising will ask you to complete two evaluations of their performance – one at mid-semester and one at the end of the semester – and is responsible for ensuring that the form is sent from you to the student's faculty supervisor. The student will provide you with the evaluation form, which is also available on our website [here](#). For the Fall 2023 semester, we ask that you complete the mid-semester evaluation by Friday, October 13, 2023, and the final evaluation by Friday, December 8, 2023. For the Spring 2024 semester, we ask that you complete the mid-semester evaluation by Friday, March 1, 2024, and the final evaluation by Friday, April 26, 2024. It is important that students receive prompt feedback on their work to enable them to improve any deficiencies in performance at mid-semester and to have their credits promptly processed at the end of the semester. We are grateful for your time and effort in completing these forms by the relevant deadlines.