

2002

Guidelines Clinical Semester Program Brochure [2002]

Nova Southeastern University

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SHEPARD BROAD LAW CENTER

Guidelines

Clinical Semester
Program



NSU Law Guidelines

Clinical Semester



Congratulations on your decision to mentor a law student intern from the Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law Center Clinical Semester Program. We at the NSU Law Center commend your dedication to the legal profession and believe that you will find the mentoring process a fulfilling experience. The following information will serve as a quick reference to help guide you through your duties as supervisor of a clinic student intern.

Please take a few moments to read through the guidelines and familiarize yourself with them. Even if you have previously hosted a student intern, it is a good idea to periodically review the information. Should you have questions concerning these or other procedures, please contact Meg Chandelle, Esq., the director of clinical programs, at (954) 262-6063 or by email at chandellem@nsu.law.nova.edu.

MISSION STATEMENT

The NSU Law Center Clinical Semester Program provides the student with a dynamic learning experience and serves as a bridge from the classroom to the “real world.” The program’s primary goal is to prepare each law student intern to become an ethical, well-informed, and competent attorney by focusing in a practical way on the following key objectives:

- to educate the student in fundamental lawyering skills
- to instill in the student a sense of professional responsibility
- to promote an understanding of the legal system
- to enhance the student’s ability to learn

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are my responsibilities and those of others in my office if we take on the supervision of a clinic student intern?

American Bar Association Accreditation Standards require that one attorney assume primary responsibility for a clinic student intern. Although others in the office may assign and oversee the intern's work, one lawyer is designated as the supervisor or mentor. The supervisor reviews the intern's professional work product and provides feedback and guidance to the student. In addition to monitoring substantive and skills development, he or she should introduce the student to the concept of professionalism and focus on important ethical issues such as client confidentiality. At the end of the semester, the supervisor will supply the director of clinical programs with an evaluation of the intern's performance.

Will I have the opportunity to interview an intern before he or she is assigned to my office?

Yes. The NSU Law Center Clinical Semester Program's director will select a student who has identified your office as a desired placement. You will be contacted by the school and provided with the student's name. We will then instruct the student to contact you directly so that you may follow your office's internal procedures, perhaps by first requesting a resume or immediately arranging for an interview. When you have completed the interview, please call Meg Chandelle, the director of clinical programs, as soon as possible to confirm your acceptance of the student applicant. If you feel that an applicant is not a good match for your office for any reason, we may be able to provide another candidate.

What should be covered during the interview?

It is important to describe to the student in some detail the type of work handled in your office. Your conversation should include a realistic assessment of the types of duties and other activities in which the student will participate during the course of the placement. A candid discussion between you and the student at the time of your initial meeting should help alleviate any misunderstandings or disappointments down the road.

If any special applications are required by your office, such as background checks for placements involving the federal government, the student should be provided with the application materials as early as possible. All processing must be completed in time for the student to begin his or her placement in accordance with the academic calendar.

What is the duration of the placement and how much time will the student spend at work?

During the regular academic year (fall and winter terms), the clinic intern will work at his or her placement with you for a total of twelve weeks. In summer, internships will be completed in nine weeks. The student is expected to work full time and follow the policies established by your office concerning holidays, lunch time, and so on.

Students are also required to attend a clinic seminar that usually meets every other week during the course of the semester. The student must participate in these class sessions, therefore we ask that your intern be excused from work to attend these mandatory scheduled meetings. As a clinic supervisor, you are invited and encouraged to sit in on the class with your intern. Indeed, your participation would contribute much to the classroom discussion.



Are there any special procedures for students who are placed in offices outside of South Florida?

Students placed in offices at a distance from the NSU Law Center campus will attend the clinic seminar via compressed video or other distance learning technology. In this way, a student in a remote location is still able to ask questions, receive instruction, and share experiences with other student interns. Any required communications equipment will be provided by the school and coordinated through your office. Our distance education technicians are available to answer any questions you have regarding the technical arrangements, which typically include installation of an ISDN line.



What types of tasks should be assigned to the clinic student intern?

We would like to emphasize the importance of providing the intern with the opportunity for a meaningful experience in the field. A clinic intern should be assigned to professional tasks normally given to entry-level lawyers in your office. The ABA makes it clear that academic credit cannot be awarded for the performance of nonprofessional tasks such as photocopying or filing. It is understood, of course, that junior lawyers do engage in some routine tasks, such as copying reported opinions and filing legal documents, as part of their broader professional work. Therefore, auxiliary tasks of this nature are expected, but they should be limited.

Does the clinic student intern have any legal training?

Each clinic intern is a third-year law student who has completed the majority of the substantive coursework required for graduation. In addition, the intern receives three weeks of intensive instruction from members of NSU Law Center's full-time and adjunct faculty immediately prior to his or her placement at your office. The classroom component combines an interdisciplinary policy course with intensive skills training and advanced substantive law relevant to the particular clinic in which the student is enrolled. Clinics are offered in seven discrete practice areas.

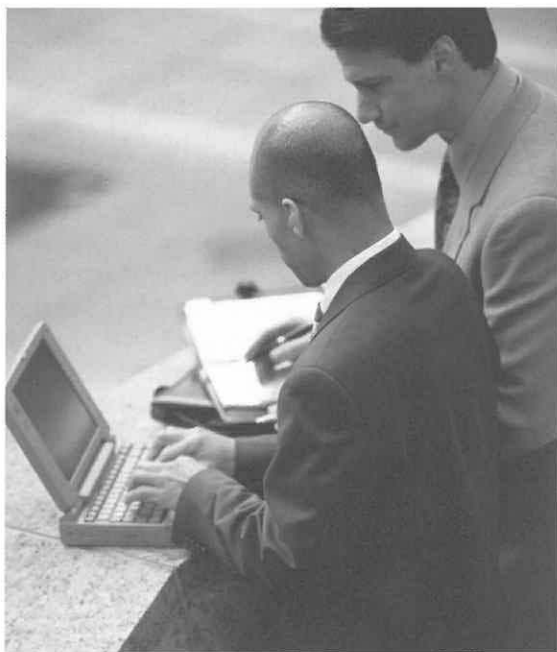
What types of activities may a clinic student intern perform?

The NSU Law Center Clinical Semester Program is composed of seven individual clinics: Alternative Dispute Resolution, Business Practice, Children and Families, Criminal Justice, Environmental and Land Use Law, International Practice, and Personal Injury Litigation. The types of activities performed depend on the clinic in which the student participates.

The student should be fully engaged in the normal professional functions of the host attorney's practice. Some internships take place in a business setting where the student would be assigned to tasks such as document preparation, contract review, dispute resolution, and client management. For another intern, hosted by an office specializing in policy and legislative work, primary tasks would include research, drafting, and attending professional meetings and conferences.

A student might also serve as an intern in a government agency or legal-aid office where the focus is on trial work or hearings. This intern would typically participate in all aspects of a case, including client interviewing and counseling, case planning, discovery, trial or hearing preparation, and trial. Before a student is permitted to appear in court, however, he or she must be certified.

The clinical experience reflects the diversity of the practice of law in modern society and exposes the student to an area of law in which he or she is particularly interested. When possible, an intern should be permitted to observe the experienced attorney performing the functions of his or her job, and the intern should fully participate in the strategic decision-making and advocacy process. Research and drafting assignments should always apply to actual rather than hypothetical issues.





Will my clinic student be permitted to appear in court?

Individual states and the federal government permit some supervised students to appear in court for a limited purpose in connection with a law school practice program. In the state of Florida, for example, a qualified student may be certified to appear in court pursuant to Chapter 11, Rule Governing the Law School Civil and Criminal Practice Program, which grants limited permission to those certified to appear in court. Florida limits representation in court or in administrative proceedings by a duly certified legal intern (CLI) to the categories described below:

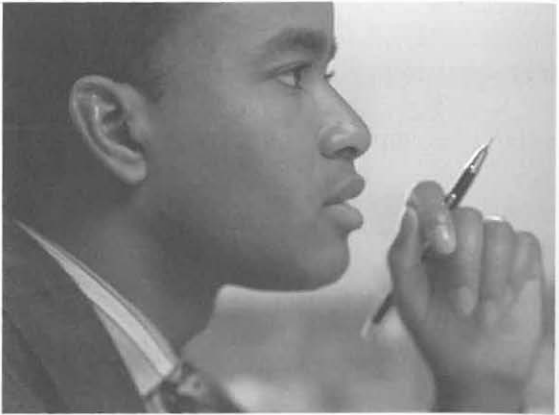
1. appearance for the state in criminal proceedings
2. appearance on behalf of governmental officers or entities
3. appearance on behalf of an indigent person (Legal-aid organizations using law student interns to represent indigent people pursuant to Chapter 11 must be approved by the Florida Supreme Court.)

In-court representation of nongovernmental clients is permitted only in legal-aid and public defender offices. A student from the Business Practice Clinic who is placed with a private law firm, for example, would not be entitled to appear in court on even minor scheduling matters. Specific requirements concerning written consent and attorney supervision apply to all CLI students. For those placements authorized to use certified legal interns, it is the responsibility of the supervising attorney to ensure compliance with the applicable rules.

Are there any evaluation procedures I should follow?

During the course of the clinical semester, you will be providing your student with regular feedback on the quality of his or her work and monitoring the development of professional skills and values. People always respond well to praise; so if your intern is doing a good job, don't hold back a positive comment on a job well done. You should also critique the student's work so that he or she learns how to improve performance.

At the end of the term, you will be sent an evaluation form to complete and return to the school. When evaluating the clinic student intern, you will be asked to consider specific skills, including research, writing, and interviewing, in addition to subjective criteria such as initiative and diligence. Please arrange an **exit interview** with your intern as the internship draws to a close. Although you will have provided informal feedback to the student on a regular basis throughout the term, a formal meeting at the end of the term will benefit both you and the student.



Is the clinic student intern entitled to receive compensation for his or her work?

ABA rules are explicit: clinic interns may not receive financial compensation for professional work for which academic credit is received. We must ask, therefore, that you do not provide the intern with even a minimal salary. ABA standards, however, do permit the award of a stipend to reimburse students for items such as travel, parking, and living expenses. Stipends are not required, but if you are able to offer a stipend, it will surely be appreciated by your student intern. This decision is left to the discretion of the individual placement. Meg Chandelle, director of clinical programs, is available to discuss this issue with you.

Who is the contact for more information about the clinic student intern program or to discuss situations that arise during the course of the placement?

You are encouraged to contact Meg Chandelle, director of clinical programs, to discuss any questions you may have. The telephone number of the NSU Law Center Clinical Programs Office is (954) 262-6063, and the director's email address is chandellem@nsu.law.nova.edu.

Our clinical program generally provides a positive experience for mentor and intern alike, although occasionally surprises may occur. Please contact us at once if any problem arises that you feel should be brought to our attention.

CLINIC: THE FINAL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE



The Law Center is grateful for your active participation in the Clinical Semester Program. An internship provides students with a vital link and is the perfect complement to a law school education. The success of our program depends on the support of dedicated members of the legal community who share our vision and commitment to preparing law students to become competent and ethical professionals. If there is anything we can do to assist your efforts in meeting our goals for the program, please let us know.

The Law Center admits students of any race, sex, sexual orientation, age, color, nondisqualifying handicap, religion, or national or ethnic origin.

Nova Southeastern University's Shepard Broad Law Center is a member of the Association of American Law Schools and is accredited by the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association (750 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611: Telephone number: 312-988-6738).



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

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