

INTERNATIONAL EXTERNSHIP GOALS, EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Externships are an important element of legal education. They provide the student/extern with meaningful educational experiences through actual legal work and challenges. The externship experience strives to connect in a practical way what a student has learned in the classroom to real life situations.

For foreign internships, the overarching goal is to introduce students to the various aspects of how law, in the broadest sense, is practiced in various firms, NGO's, and other entities outside of the United States.

It is recognized that international externships will vary widely in their purpose and the type of experience one may expect. Some will be with well financed organizations, and others will be with NGO's operating on a tight, or non-existent budget. Functioning in these different settings is part of the externship experience. Thus, the following general statement of goals must be adapted to the particular setting of the externship.

The purpose of the fieldwork is to afford qualified students the opportunity to observe and participate in the functioning of the relevant entity, critically to evaluate the work of the student and the entity, to enhance the student's understanding of the structure and role of the entity, to appreciate the realities of practice in the area, and to build skills which may be used in future work in the area of the entity. There may be meetings during the externship with the program director(s) to monitor the externship, discuss your experiences, and insure that the externship meets the content and experiential goals of the program. In addition, you will be asked to reflect on your externship by discussing questions posted by the Director on-line. Any meetings and on-line reflective pieces are mandatory to earn credit for the externship.

Externs will also keep a daily journal outlining and reflecting on their externship experience. This journal must be submitted to the program Director at the end of the externship and may be reviewed by the director at any time during the externship. The externship supervisor must also evaluate the student's performance in the externship, verify that the requisite number of hours were worked, and submit his or her evaluation to the Director. It is the extern's responsibility to insure that the externship supervisor is given the forms, completes the forms, and returns them to the Center for Global Law and Policy.

It is critical that students at all times comport themselves with decorum and consistently with the custom and expectations of the placement. Business attire may be expected. Likewise with respect to other customs and courtesies. All laws must be obeyed. Students must act on the assumption that they are ambassadors; therefore, they must act with diplomacy. This may mean avoiding conflicts or confrontations which may be welcome or tolerated at home. Moving as seamlessly as possible in the context of the externship is critical. It is a fundamental goal of the externship. Failure to do so will result in removal from the externship and the granting of no credit. Other sanctions may apply where appropriate.

It should be noted that, while 50 hours per unit is the minimum required to earn credit, students committing to an externship must fulfill the entire externship commitment to earn any credit. This will often mean much more than the minimum number of hours per credit. To have a meaningful experience, and to be of value to the entity, applicants for externship in Costa Rica, and in some other countries, should be ready to commit to working in the externship for the remainder of the summer. End dates may vary, but most externships can expect to run through early to mid-August. For further experience, the externship supervisor and the extern may agree as a private matter to a longer period if they so desire.