

SoCalEx Webinar

Externship Supervision Best Practices: Spotlight on Feedback

April 18, 2023

4:30-5:30 p.m.

https://www.swlaw.edu/SoCalExEvents#20311_t-2

THE KEYS TO EXTERNSHIP SUCCESS

*AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF
WHAT FACTORS HELP
EXTERNS BECOME FIRST-YEAR
PRACTICE READY*

Find out more:

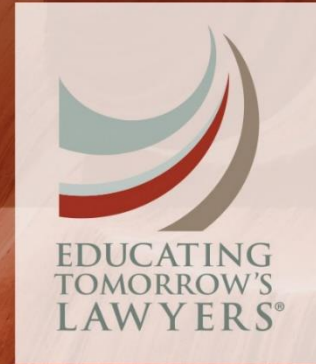
ACHIEVING EXTERNSHIP SUCCESS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF
THE ALL-IMPORTANT LAW SCHOOL EXTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

*Anahid Gharakhanian, Carolyn Young Larmore, and
Chelsea Parlett-Pelleriti*

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3689133



FOUNDATIONS FOR PRACTICE



77

= number of foundations identified as

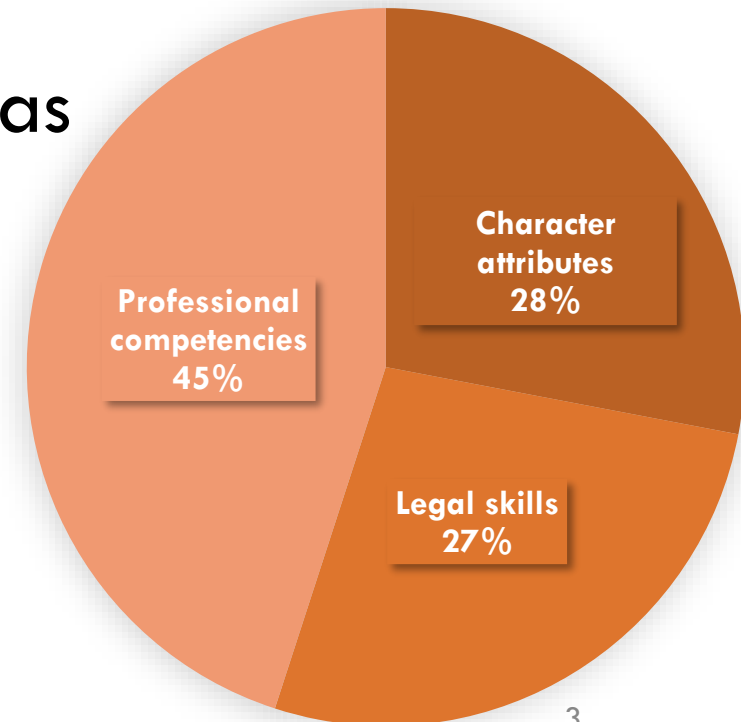
“Necessary in the Short Term”

Over 24,000 respondents!

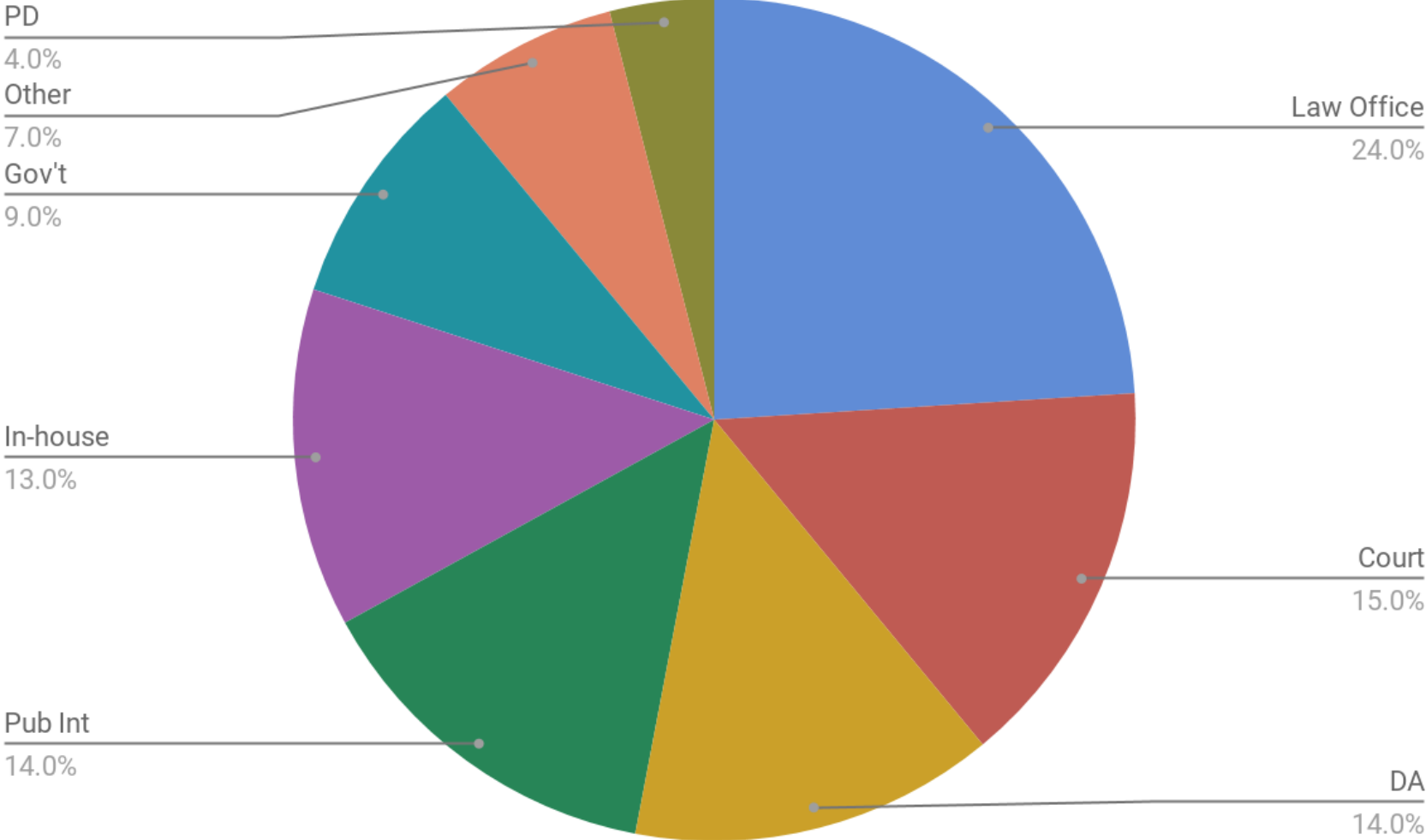
All 50 states!

Multiple practice areas!

Necessary
in 1st year



Variety of Placements Studied



Evaluating Extern
Performance:
29 Foundations
1 to 5 rating scale

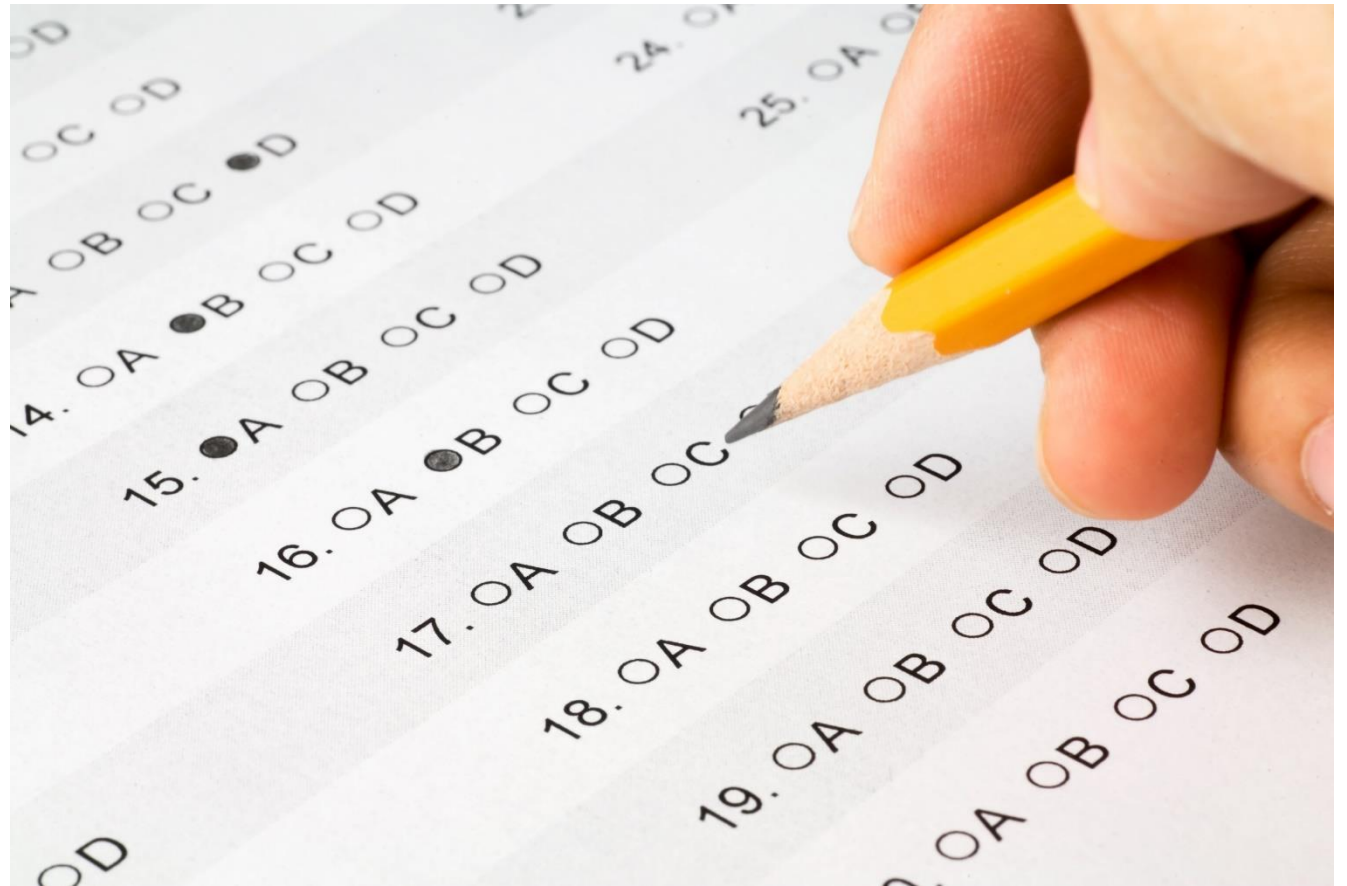


1=Beginning

5=Exemplary

CREDENTIALS DON'T IMPACT SUCCESS

- ❑ Median LSAT of 168, 158 or 153 → *no impact*
- ❑ Law school GPA plays very limited role in success



SUPERVISORS MATTER MOST



SUPERVISORS MATTER MOST



STUDENTS WANT MORE DIRECTION

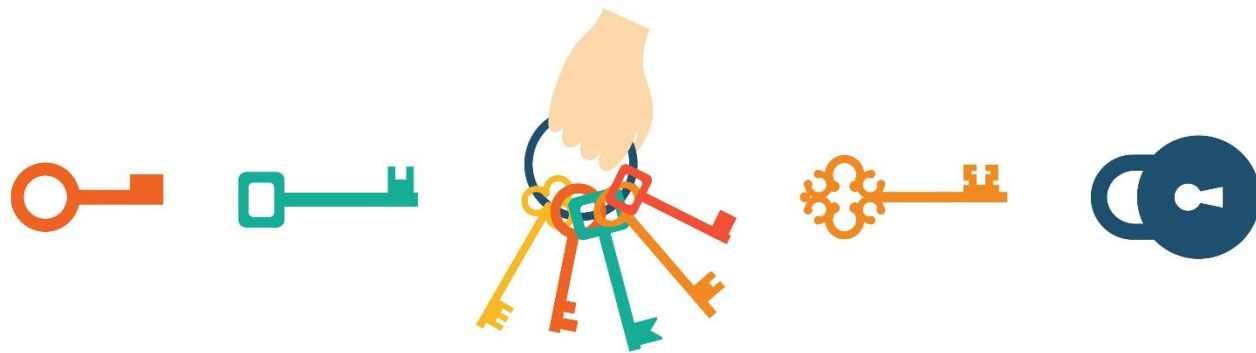


Mismatched ideas

about supervision, etc.

Placement Supervision, etc.	Percent of <i>Students</i> Agree or Strongly Agree	Percent of <i>Supervisors</i> Agree or Strongly Agree
My placement provided an orientation.	74%	79%
I received effective training and clear instructions from my supervisor(s) before most assignments.	77%	91%
My supervisor(s) provided detailed feedback on most of my assignments.	65%	80%
My supervisor(s) has been accessible to give guidance and answer questions.	83%	94%
My supervisor discussed my goals w/ me and planned assignments w/ them in mind	69%	78%
My externship has included opportunities for professional development.	68%	68%

HOW TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR PERCEPTION OF SUPERVISION



Chapman/Southwestern Externship Supervision Checklist

Orientation

✓	Activity
	Provide an orientation at the start of the externship, including
	--tour and introductions
	--office procedures and policies
	--inform student how you like to be contacted for questions or guidance (email, phone, in person)
	--set up weekly min. 30-minute meeting
	--clarify from whom/how extern will receive assignments
	Discuss students' goals for the externship and plan assignments with those goals in mind

Assignments

✓	Activity
	Provide clear instructions before assignments, including
	--describe desired format / share exemplars
	--describe how assignment fits into matter as a whole
	--suggest where the student might begin researching, investigating, etc.
	--set clear due date
	--encourage periodic check-ins during course of assignment
	Provide detailed feedback after written as well as oral assignments
	--use 6-step feedback model
	Have back-up / long-term assignments ready

General

✓	Activity
	Include extern in day-to-day office meetings and activities
	Invite extern to observe proceedings, meetings, etc., and debrief afterward
	Invite extern to professional development activities

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' COMPETENCIES

- Goal focused
- Feedback driven
- Self-assessment driven

<u>My Specific Goals:</u> improve in 3 to 5 specific areas by the end of this externship	<u>Action Plan:</u> specific steps, assignments, and experiences that will help me attain each goal	<u>Self-Assessment:</u> at the start of the externship, I would rate my ability for each of these goals as follows (supported by evidence):	<u>Self-Assessment:</u> at the end of the externship, I would rate my ability for each of these goals as follows (supported by evidence):
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

**Thank you,
SUPERVISORS,
for making
the externship
experience a
success!**



HYPO 1: EMAIL TO SUPERVISOR

- Student just finished their 1L year and is externing for the first time in their Rising 2L Summer
- Student is a first-generation law student (first to pursue post-college education), and this is their first office work experience
- About 3 weeks into the externship, Student sends the following email to their supervisor:

HYPO 1: EMAIL TO SUPERVISOR

To: Supervisor@Externship.com

From: Extern@Externship.com

Subject: Agenda you asked for

Hey there,

I know you asked me to put together an agenda for our weekly meeting yesterday. Sorry I didn't get it to you. I totally forgot but here goes:

- Discovery for case we talked about yesterday
- Mediaton brief for John Doe v. Z Corp
- MSJ? for Jane Doe v. ABC LLC

My signed timesheet is due tomorrow. I'll send it to you after I get home from class tonight at 8pm. Can you send it right back to me? Oh, I am leaving early on Friday, hope that's ok with you.

TTYL. See you on Zoom!

Jordan

HYPO 1: FEEDBACK FROM SUPERVISOR

- What constructive/effective feedback would you provide to Student?
 - What approach would you use to let Student know there are some concerns with the email?
 - What issues would you identify for Student?


HYPO 2: INTERNAL OBJECTIVE MEMO

- Same student as hypo one, but now 6 weeks into 8-week summer externship
- Student has produced short and long piecemeal email memos on discrete issues, and now submits their first formal 10-page internal memorandum with the following features:

HYPO 2: INTERNAL OBJECTIVE MEMO

- Cites wrong law (e.g., federal or other state when only CA law applies)
- Apparently did not read entire case, affecting analysis/conclusion
- Work product well organized, formatted for easy review
- Overreliance on template, did not confirm cases support similar argument
- Email attaching memo offers other potential avenues of research, next steps
- Memo guarantees result, does not use appropriate hedge words
- Assignment submitted one day early and completed with a great attitude
- Memo doesn't clearly consider audience (e.g., argumentative, not objective)

HYPO 2: INTERNAL OBJECTIVE MEMO

- Which of these features do you address?
 - How do you communicate this feedback (both mode and tone)?
 - Does your approach change if Student has two attorney parents, and this is their 3L Spring semester, rather than Rising 2L first-semester?
- 

- Cites wrong law (e.g., federal or other state when only CA law applies)
- Apparently did not read entire case, affecting analysis/conclusion
- Work product well organized, formatted for easy review
- Overreliance on template, did not confirm cases support similar argument
- Email attaching memo offers other potential avenues of research, next steps
- Memo guarantees result, does not use appropriate hedge words
- Assignment submitted one day early and completed with a great attitude
- Memo doesn't clearly consider audience (e.g., argumentative, not objective)

Supervision Tips & Resources

- Provide timely and constructive feedback
- Identify strengths as well as areas for improvement
- Explain how situation could be handled differently next time
- When evaluating weaknesses, consider Student's background:
 - First office work experience
 - Potential imposter syndrome
 - First time working on a particular assignment
- SoCalEx Field Placement Supervision Manual:
 - <https://www.swlaw.edu/sites/default/files/2020-01/SoCalEx%20Manual%202020.pdf>