I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Field Placement Program (FPP) of the University of Massachusetts School of Law-Dartmouth enables students to receive academic credit for legal work performed in various types of law offices and organizations, including the judiciary. Students receive three or four credits for the semester's work, performing at least 130 or 170 hours of legal work, respectively, during the semester at the placement in addition to participating in a regularly scheduled seminar and satisfying various classroom requirements.

Students are supervised on-site by lawyers who are committed to the Program's objectives and guidelines, assign students substantial law-related work, and neither pay the students nor bill for the students' time.

The Program maintains a list of placements that include private, governmental, and nonprofit law offices as well as the judiciary. Within the guidelines of the Program, students may establish their own placements. Please contact Crystal Desirey, Clinic Coordinator, to receive a list of possible placements.

Upon applying for the Program, students are evaluated and counseled by their classroom professor concerning their goals and interests for the placement. The professor will contact potential supervisors and arrange meetings with them to finalize the internship, where necessary.

Should you be interested in the Field Placement Program course and do not have a prospective placement, please contact the Director of Clinics and Experiential Learning or your professor as soon as possible so that we may assist you in finding a placement. We will be pleased to work with you in this endeavor.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The Field Placement Program (FPP) aims to achieve the following goals:

A. To promote students' development of a wide range of lawyering skills.

B. To provide an opportunity for students to reflect upon the professional role of the attorney in the workplace and in the profession at large.

C. To enable students to learn doctrine through its practical application.

D. To expose students to the role of attorney as problem-solver.

E. To expose students to the realities of life as a lawyer and the varieties of professional roles and styles of legal practice so that he or she may make more informed decisions about professional life.

F. To expose students to ethical dilemmas faced by lawyers and provide them with opportunities to reflect on appropriate responses to those dilemmas.
A. DEVELOPMENT OF LAWYERING SKILLS

Supervising Attorneys are expected to challenge students with structured legal assignments of all types that foster the development of a variety of lawyering skills. Some of the skills that might be developed during the field placement experience are the following:

1. Research, Analysis, and Writing

   Students' engagement in legal research can help them develop an increased proficiency in the use of research tools and an increased ability to focus on and develop critical legal issues. Through experience, student writing will become clearer, more succinct, and attuned to its intended audience: students may be exposed to one or more of the following assignments: a) drafting legal correspondence; b) drafting legal research memoranda; c) drafting pleadings; d) drafting trial appeals and briefs; and e) drafting administrative or judicial decisions.

2. Fact-finding Skills

   Some of these skills include conducting discovery (including depositions); delegating to and managing investigators; conducting non-legal telephone, data-base and library research; and developing interviewing skills.

3. Litigation Skills

   Student participation in strategy meetings can help provide the context for them to draft trial memoranda, motions, and direct and cross-examination. Opportunities to attend depositions, court hearings, discussions in chambers, and client meetings are also encouraged.

4. Developing Professional Skills and Sensitivities

   In most placements, where students will be working on several assignments simultaneously, they must learn to: set priorities and time limits for accomplishing tasks; work efficiently under pressure; keep files updated; and organize file contents to make data easily accessible.

   Relating to diverse clients and the public can enable students to learn to establish rapport, respond skillfully to presented concerns, assess credibility, acquire relevant facts, and provide helpful information. Students can also learn to deal professionally with support staff, colleagues, adversaries, and judges.
B. THE PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE ATTORNEY

Law office placements are ideal vehicles for promoting a discussion about the role of the attorney in daily life and as a professional in society generally. Discussions between students and their supervisors foster students' awareness of a variety of professional issues.

C. EXPOSURE TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM and LEGAL PRACTICE

This experience will enhance the student learning about the legal system as a whole and the extent to which it promotes justice. Observing how lawyers interact with the legal system and discussing that with their Supervisors will enable students to witness how the legal system works. Supervisors’ insights into the culture, language, professional associations, and the path they took to develop their own lives as lawyers can inspire a student's own professional development. Because this exposure is a critical part of the experience, no more than 30% of the student’s field placement work may be done remotely from the placement office. The 30% does not include time away from the office to tend to the business of a case, such as observing hearings, attending negotiation sessions and other off-site meetings or events.

D. THE LAWYER AS PROBLEM SOLVER

While all lawyers are problem-solvers, this aspect of lawyering is difficult to impart in an academic setting, but can be taught by example in a law office setting. It is critical for students to understand that one has options short of litigation to meet clients' objectives in a cost-effective way. Exposure to formal, informal, and alternative methods of dispute resolution will offer a perspective on the appropriate role of litigation.

III. PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

Supervisors will: (A) provide an orientation to their law practice and office; (B) develop a learning contract with the student and provide substantive guidance on legal assignments; (C) assign one supervisor to oversee a student's work, ensure a reasonable workload, and hold weekly supervision meetings; and (D) conduct a mid-semester review.

A. ORIENTATION will expose students to the structure, layout, and people in the office; it will inform them of the policies and lines of authority in the office, and about important issues such as confidentiality and use of clerical support. It will establish both a work space for the student and a work schedule.

B. LEARNING CONTRACT negotiated between the supervisor and student will enable the student to maintain and achieve learning goals during the course of the semester; ongoing supervision of the student's work will help the student accomplish the goals set out in the Learning Contract.

C. WEEKLY SUPERVISION MEETINGS will enable students to establish deadlines that will foster completion of important tasks in the cases. It will also provide students with ongoing, constructive feedback of their work, and will permit supervisors to determine whether they have given students appropriate and reasonable workloads.
D. REVIEWS permit supervisors to re-visit the goals established at the beginning of the semester and discuss how they are being met. They also enable students and supervisors to make adjustments to the Learning Contract if warranted. The exit interview, if held, will provide students with an assessment of their performance during the semester.

IV. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

1. Grades

Grades are awarded on a High Pass/Pass/Low Pass/Fail basis. A passing grade requires complying with all placement and academic requirements. A high pass is given when a student’s achievement substantially exceeds all course requirements. The professor teaching the seminar determines the grade. The professor may consider the field placement supervisor’s evaluation, but will consider the student’s performance in class, journal and/or paper writing and other criterion the professor may determine as relevant. The weight given to each criterion will be determined by the professor. You must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 to participate in the FPP. If your placement is to be with a judicial officer, then your grade point average must be a minimum of 3.3.

2. Credits and Placement Time

Students must complete 130 hours in the placement for three credits and 170 hours for four credits. To receive credit, students must successfully fulfill the hours required for their placements; they must also successfully complete the classroom component described below, maintain accurate records of their work time, and satisfy the writing requirement.

Students are encouraged to work in large blocks of time and must be present at the field placement site at least two different days each week. Travel and meal time do not count towards hours. Students are responsible for keeping a record of the hours spent in the field throughout the semester.

Since this is an academic experience, the school discourages placements where you have previously worked as part of a field placement, clinic or other capacity. We want you to have a variety of learning experiences as part of your experiential learning. As with other provisions, waiver may only be given by the Director of Clinics and Experiential Learning, who will consult with the professor who will be teaching the course. Absent extraordinary circumstances, you will not be permitted to do a field placement at a workplace where you have had a prior field placement experience and worked in another capacity.

3. Writing Requirement

Students are required to complete a substantive legal writing assignment. This means that students must use their own legal analysis and knowledge to complete written materials; this does not include the completion of legal forms using boilerplate language or factual accounts that do not require legal analysis. This project will be 15, double spaced pages at 12 point font.
4. Reflective Journals

Students will maintain a journal reflecting on the various experiences at their placement. Journal writing forces reflection of individual progress and accomplishments, as well as the legal system and their place within it. These journals are handed in weekly and, for purposes of confidentiality, are seen only by the professor teaching the course.

5. Classroom Component

For both Field Placement and Advanced Field Placement, students are required to attend regular seminars at the Law School. The requirements of separate classes may differ. For FPP the seminars provide both a forum for student concerns and observations and some training in various lawyering skills they are observing and performing in their placements or will need in the profession. In addition, informed by required reading, students will explore ethical and professional issues posed in their varying placements. Classroom component time does not count toward the field placement hour requirement.

6. Individual Meetings

Students may have one or more individual conferences with the supervising faculty member during the semester.

B. PREREQUISITES

1. Students may enroll in the FPP for a maximum of two semesters. Students who enroll in a second field placement (Advanced Field Placement) will be assigned to a separate class. The structure and syllabus of any Advanced Field Placement class will be determined by the Professor. No student may enroll in the FPP until s/he has successfully completed at least 30 credits of law school classes. Ethics is a co or pre-requisite. In addition, each student must have a grade point average of at least 3.0 at the start of the internship, and 3.3 for all judicial placements.

2. While participating in the FPP during the summer semester, no full-time or part-time student may register for more than 6 credits, including those assigned to the FPP course.

V. PROGRAM POLICIES

A. No student shall be assigned to a placement site at which a parent, parent-in-law, spouse, domestic partner, offspring, sibling, or sibling-in-law is an employee or partner.

B. No student shall be assigned to a site at which the student is now, or in the past has been, employed for compensation (except for a summer stipend that was received from the University).

C. No student shall be assigned to a site if the Director of Clinical Programs and
Experiential Learning determines that the placement would cause the appearance of impropriety. Further, there is a strong presumption that a placement will not be approved if: 1) the supervising attorney has been in practice three or fewer years, and/or 2) the firm or agency has existed for three or fewer years.

D. Student may not receive any form of compensation for the work performed. Neither the office in which the student completes the placement nor a member thereof may pay for or contribute to the tuition charged for FPP credits. The office may pay for or contribute toward the cost of parking and mileage, but such contribution is entirely voluntary and may not exceed the parking and mileage incurred for the internship.

E. A student may not simultaneously enroll in a clinic and field placement. Any student employed in a law-related position during a FPP semester during the same semester must disclose such information to the clinic professor, the Director of Clinics and Experiential Learning, the FPP supervisor and the employer so that actual or potential conflicts of interest may be addressed.

F. Under certain circumstances you may be able to represent clients or an entity during your FPP experience if you meet the qualifications of Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Rule 3:03. Otherwise, no student may represent any client or entity before any court or agency, unless the rules of that court or agency permit representation by someone other than a licensed attorney or a party to the case. If you have 3:03 certification through a prior experience, you may be able to represent a client or entity in your field placement if other requirements of Rule 3:03 are met. Please discuss the possibility of using 3:03 certification during your placement with the FPP professor or with the Director of Clinics and Experiential Learning.

**How to Apply**

1. Review the school website information on the field placement program. This information includes the course description, this policy manual and the learning contract. Determine if you meet the criteria for a field placement. Contact your prospective field supervisor and discuss your possible placement and the terms of the contract. Then complete a Clinic/Field Placement application form.

2. Contact the course professor within 48 hours of filing the Application Form with the LEC and arrange to meet with the professor to determine your preferred placement and appropriate requirements for admission.

3. Contact the preferred placement supervisor, arrange for a meeting and finalize the placement. If you need assistance, contact the course professor.

4. Check your email for registration confirmation; upon approval you will be enrolled.
For more information please contact:

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