Detailed Guide to Law Library Internships – May, 2013

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Introduction

A law library internship program is a valuable academic tool and a rewarding professional development program for many reasons, but here are the most important ones:

- It allows library managers to pass along to a pre-degree library school student extensive on-the-job knowledge in the field, furthering the education of the new generation of law librarians by providing a practicum where students are able to apply their learned theory.
- An intern will have the opportunity to test out the different types of law libraries to see what their best fit is. Academic law library? Corporate law? Firm law? The internship provides the student with a short-term "test" period in varied law libraries during which he or she may acquire insight into what working in the industry is actually like on a daily basis and decide if that type of library is for them.
- It provides an opportunity for making contacts and creating professional relationships.
- Solid mentor/mentee affiliations often come out of these arrangements.
- New information about library procedures come to the host from the student.

Relatively, internship handbooks are helpful for both manager and student intern. The handbook can help plan the internship by laying out the framework for a mutually beneficial experience for the host and the intern. As such, a manager should reflect on what particular guidelines will be necessary for his/her institution to implement a successful internship program Factors include: (1) labor laws; (2) administrative policies, such as dress code and other host site requirements, including completion of an internship agreement if needed; (3) activity/task planning with regard to educational expectations on both sides, including completion of any school paperwork before and after the internship period, and (4) practical information such as expectations of host/ability of intern with regard to number of hours and days to be worked. Every venue is different and usually has its own rules. There may be varied academic considerations the firm/company may require for acceptance as an intern, whether compensation is offered, type of compensationcredit or money, number of hours/days to be worked, and what responsibilities the host library and the intern will be expected to fulfill.

A productive program must address three criteria that are vital in bringing an internship program to fruition – *development, implementation*, and *management*. Below, each segment is discussed in further detail. These guidelines are only meant as a starting out point in developing an internship programs for a manager, and should not be regarded as an all inclusive list.

Internship Development

The development phase is when the manager proposes the program to management, shapes the motives and goals of hosting an intern, and researches where and how to advertise for an intern. The following is a list of factors that a manager should examine in the development stages of the internship:

- □ ***Number of Interns Needed:*** It must be decided how many interns the law library will retain**.**
- □ ***Goals****:* The manager must consider the main goals for hosting the intern. By examining these goals, the manager can design adequate tasks for the intern to complete and allows the intern to compare and contrast the manager's goals with their own.
- □ ***Accomplishments****:* The manager should decide what they wish to accomplish by hosting the intern.
- □ ***Internship Posting****:* In order to acquire the intern, some sort of advertisement must be considered. In posting the actual intern position, the following factors should be considered:
  - o Content: The posting's content refers to the actual physical description of internship. An important factor to consider in determining the description is whether or not the intern's work will be project oriented or encompasses all aspects of librarian's tasks. A clear description of any processes necessary for the interviewee should be included (interviews, security clearances, tests, etc.). Any legal disclaimers (such as labor law mandates) should be included.
  - o Location: The manager must then consider the best place to put the posting. For example, some places can include library association's internship listings or by reaching out to a particular school that hosts library internship programs.
  - o Length of Time: The manager must decide on how long the posting will remain up as well as the duration of the interview process period.
  - o Cost: While some allow postings for free, some might charge a fee.
- □ ***Interview process:*** The manager must come up with a process that will screen potential interns.
  - o Number of Interns Needed: It must be decided how many interns the law library will retain**.**
  - o Interview Questions: What will you ask? Some suggestions:

    1. Considering your education and work experience, why do you feel you are qualified for an internship?

    2. Do you have experience training or teaching?

    3. What would you do if you heard a staff member provide a patron with an incorrect answer?

4. What would you do if you were unsure of how to answer a reference question?

5. Give us an example of a former project or experience that contributed to a teamwork environment.

6. The role of the librarian has changed a lot in the past five years and will probably continue to change. How do you see library science changing in the next five years?

7. What contributions could you make to our library?

8. Tell me about a specific occasion in which you adapted to a new environment, situation, or group of people.

9. What do you know about our organization that makes you want to work here?

10. Describe a situation that required you to multi-task. How did you find balance?

You can find additional intern interview questions at this webpage by Webster University Career Planning & Development Center: **https://spark.adobe.com/page/5xqypxcueIxN9/**.

Internship Implementation

Both the manager and intern have to take many aspects into consideration for the internship to be implemented successfully. Most of these concerns include practical issues. Below is a chart that lists both student and management considerations that must be taken in account.

Student Considerations	Management Considerations
Goals.	Goals.
Timeline/Deadline.	Timeline/Deadline.

Paperwork (completed and submitted).
 	
  - Contracts, nondiscrimination clause, internship agreement form, etc.
	Paperwork (completed and submitted).
	
	  - Contracts, nondiscrimination clause, internship agreement form, etc.

Hours (minimum amount and actual working schedule).	Hours (minimum amount and actual working schedule).
Obtaining credit for internship, nonpaid or paid.	Obtaining credit for internship, nonpaid or paid.
Permission from student's school.	Buy in from the top (manager's boss approves with internship program).
Identify internship coordinator and internship requirements.	Manager's employee policies and criteria.
	Security measures.
	Identify chain of command to student.
	Indentify internship liaison at student's school.
	Legal considerations* (see below).

Legal Considerations*

The manager must obey all laws, regulations and policies of employment and labor regarding the intern. The following list is some legal considerations to take into account on the local, state, and/or national level.

- □ *Labor law*
- □ *Nondiscrimination Policy*
- □ *Manager's Host Site policies*
- □ *School's policies*

Internship Management

The managing aspect of the internship includes the manager's duties for conducting, supervising, and evaluation of the student during the internship. The following are issues to take into account during that time:

- □ *****Expectations**:*** Expectations are the most important factor during the management of the student. It is vital to make sure the manager and intern's goals match, so both will receive the benefits from the internship.
- □ ***Orientation:*** The manager is responsible for providing an orientation to the law library where the student is to work. The orientation should include an introduction to the following:
  - ○ Host site policies, whom the intern reports to, dress code, setting up e-mail account, becoming familiar with computer system, etc.
- □ ***Intern's responsibilities***: The manager should inform and review the student's task for the time student will be working under the manager. These tasks should include duties to be performed daily as well as those that are project-specific.
- □ ***Boundaries:*** The intern must not overstep the boundaries that the manger determined to be appropriate. A procedure should be implemented if the intern is unsure whether or not they have authority to do certain tasks.
- □ ***Due dates***: The manager must ensure the intern knows when tasks are due and whom they must submit them to.
- □ ***Evaluation***: There must be some agreed upon method on how the intern is to be evaluated. In addition, it must be determined whether or not the manager is to be evaluated. This evaluation must include the following factors when deciding on evaluations: ○ <u>Frequency</u>: The manager and intern must decide on how often the intern should be evaluated.
  - ○ <u>Method:</u> The manager must decide on the manner in which the evaluation should be delivered (i.e. written, verbal).
  - ○ <u>School Policies</u>***:*** Sometimes the school from where the intern attends will have particular requirements. It is important to fill out any paperwork or other conditions that the school places on the intern and/or the manager. After these three segments are considered, it is helpful for the manager to create a checklist or multiple checklists to make sure each consideration thought about is accomplished and completed by the appropriate time.
  - ○ Checklists are a useful tool to make sure that both the manager and the students keep track of ***all*** relevant paperwork and timelines throughout the internship. The checklist should cover all aspects before, during, and after the internship.