MEMORANDUM*

TO: Student Extern  
FROM: Your Field Supervisor-to-Be*  
DATE: Now and Always  
RE: What You Should Know Before Your Externship Begins

As your field supervisor for your upcoming externship, I want to share with you a few things you should know, and a few things you should do, to prepare for the externship experience. They are as follows:

**Workplace Etiquette**

☐ Dress for success. Think Brooks Brothers, not Juicy Couture. If I think you should dress more casually, I’ll tell you. And if I do tell you to dress in “business casual,” that does not mean the same thing you would wear to school. No flip flops, tank tops, t-shirts or shorts, please.

☐ Talk to my support staff as you talk to me. Show them the same respect you would want to be shown. The guy in the copy room or the file room really runs the show. If you cop an attitude, believe me, I’ll hear about it, and you’ll feel it.

☐ Even if I start behaving more casually, that doesn’t mean you should. Don’t call me “dude,” or “man,” or tell me about your wild weekend. I may like you, but this is still a 15-week job interview.

**Workplace Attitude**

☐ Demonstrate your maturity. The extern with poise and confidence inspires confidence in me (even if you have to fake it until the self assurance actually kicks in). When I talk with you about your work, or a position you have recommended, don’t back down. Be articulate and firm in your convictions.

☐ Take the initiative and demonstrate self-reliance. Always try to figure something out for yourself before asking me for help. That said, don’t spin your wheels for too long before letting me know you are stuck. Your time (and mine) is valuable, so don’t waste it.

☐ Show up on time and turn in your work on deadline. If I forget to ask for your work when it’s due, you should come to me. And never leave tasks unfinished, especially if you know you will not return the next day.

☐ When you are finished with a project, seek me out and ask for another.

* From Carolyn Young, Externship Director, Chapman University School of Law, and Barbara Blanco, Externship Director, Loyola Law School.
Brush Up Before You Show Up

☐ Review the applicable area of law or procedural rules before you start. For example, if you are working at the Court of Appeal, review the standards of appellate review and get a copy of {…the preferred manual style of your site location, such as the Court of Appeals preferred style sheet} to make sure you are familiar with citation form. If you are working in the bankruptcy courts, read an article on the new changes in the bankruptcy law and be somewhat familiar with the basic provisions of the Bankruptcy Code. {Be sure to read the Rule of Professional Conduct or the Code of Judicial Conduct that is applicable for your site placement jurisdiction.} If you are not sure what would be most useful for an overview of the subject, ask me for my suggestions – I’ll probably be impressed by your initiative.

☐ Read about my chambers/court/office/agency, so that you have a basic idea of what we do and how we work. “Google” me on the web or read a few cases I have handled or decisions I have written.

☐ Has it been a while since your first-year research and writing class? Review your notes or flip through your course book. Research and writing are the most important skills an extern can have, so I expect you to remember how to plan a research strategy and draft a memo. Some keys to good research and writing include the following:

☐ Go over the file or issue thoroughly and PAY ATTENTION TO DETAIL!
☐ Outline a research strategy
☐ Explore the world beyond Lexis and Westlaw. Look to treatises, practice guides, and digests.
☐ Outline before you begin writing
☐ Use Bluebook for your citations...
☐ Remember the hierarchy of authority
☐ Remember the standard to be applied
☐ Keep it clear and concise.
☐ PROOFREAD!
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☐ Speaking of which, it is your writing, not your eyes, that is the window to your soul. I will expect you to produce thoughtful arguments and legal analysis. Never take shortcuts in your analysis.

If you take the time to follow these rules, both before and during your externship, our work together will be more beneficial to both of us.