

Giving an Assignment - What an Extern Needs to Know

What are you asking the extern to do?

- How much time should the extern spend?
- What jurisdiction (s) should she check?
- Who, if anyone, should the extern talk to if she has questions?
- Is this a concrete assignment in which you know what you need or do you need the extern to explore for you?
- Do you want the extern to check in with you? At what stage?

How should the extern go about the task?

- How should the extern go about the research?
 - Do you have advice about where to start the research?
 - Is there a file or documents the extern will need?
 - Are there particular resources you recommend?
 - How long should the extern spend on it?
- How do you want it presented?
 - Do you want a memo? A pile of cases? Highlighted cases? A printout of the research trail? An email?
 - Is there a sample you can give the extern?

Why do you need this?

- Context is very helpful: how does this fit into the big picture?

Who is the audience?

- Is it for your eyes only?
- Will your use be oral or written?
- Will it be used internally or externally?
- Is it for a communication with a client, a negotiation with an adversary, or an argument to a court?

When do you need it?

- Is there a specific deadline?
- What priority does this assignment have relative to others?

Beginning of externship: Supervisor may need to affirmatively convey this information. Later in the externship: Student should be asking. Supervisor might prompt by asking "Is there anything else you want to know?"