



MEMORANDUM

TO: Co-op Supervisors

FROM: Jeffrey Smith, Director for External Relations
Jerry Slater, Director for Administration

RE: Student Performance Evaluations

Please complete and return the student evaluation form to the Co-op Office.

The Requirement

As you know, our students must successfully complete four "co-ops," each under the supervision of an attorney or judge, in order to graduate. Students do not receive credit for their internships until the school receives performance evaluations from their employers. These evaluations are included in students' official transcripts, which also contain their academic evaluations, and are used by future employers in assessing the qualifications of students for co-op and post-graduate jobs.

Evaluation Process

Co-op internships offer students a unique opportunity to develop and refine their lawyering skills in a "safe" setting where the learning process can occur. As an employer, your assessment of a student should take into consideration not only the level of overall performance s/he achieved, but also any improvement or progress that was made. In this respect, ***the ongoing supervision and feedback, which you provide to a student, are critical to the fairness of your evaluation.*** Students must know often and early whenever any aspect of their performance is unsatisfactory, so that they can address the problem and have an opportunity to improve. An evaluation should never be a "surprise" to a student.

We expect employers to provide candid feedback on our students' work products and performance. However, sometimes employers are faced with giving feedback on negative aspects of students' *conduct or persona as distinguished from* their substantive work products and performance. While these instances are infrequent, we know that this can be a sensitive area for both employers and students. We ask employers to exercise their professional judgment and discretion in such cases. Some employers may feel that it is more appropriate to have a frank discussion with the student, rather than memorializing the information on the written evaluation. Others may elect to use a "side letter," which would not appear in the student's transcript as part of the performance evaluation. No

two situations are the same and there is no easy answer. As always, we encourage our employers to call us if a problem develops.

Timely Submission of Evaluations

The evaluation form should be completed at the conclusion of an internship period and submitted to the school at that time. Please note that it also can now be downloaded from our website <http://www.slaw.neu.edu/coop/infoemp.html> - it is under "Forms." Late evaluations pose problems for both students and the school, since an internship will not count towards fulfillment of the school's graduation requirement until the evaluation has been received. This is especially important for students scheduled to graduate because they cannot be "Cleared" without a complete record.

Mechanics of Submitting Evaluations

When submitting evaluations, please take note of the following:

- (1) **Length** - Please use the single page form which is provided by our office. A second page may be attached if necessary.
- (2) **One evaluation per student** - Only one composite evaluation should be submitted for a student, absent special circumstances that dictate otherwise.
- (3) **Typewritten evaluation** - The University Registrar will not accept handwritten evaluations because of the processing required to incorporate them into the official academic transcripts of students. Please type the form or use a facsimile of it made on your computer.
- (4) **Signature** - The school requires students on co-op to be supervised by attorneys or judges; thus, only an attorney or judge can sign the evaluation.
- (5) **Return to Office of Cooperative Legal Education** – Please mail the form to the Co-op Office at the address below:
Northeastern University School of Law
400 Huntington Avenue, Suite 125
Boston, MA 02115
- (6) **FAX Submissions** - If an evaluation is faxed to us (617/373-4996), it is deemed a copy; you **must still mail the original signed form** to us so that we can submit it to the University Registrar.

Questions?

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns; our main and direct lines are listed below. Once again, thank you for your continued support and participation.

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Caitlin Palm, Assistant Director 617/373-4936
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