



Windsor Law
University of Windsor

Social Justice Fellowship



Student Manual

The Windsor Law Social Justice Fellowship Program

Student Manual

Overview

The Windsor Law Social Justice Fellowship (SJF) Program is intended to support students who are interested in obtaining exposure to social justice advocacy in either a domestic or an international context and to enhance the capacity of future social justice lawyers to work towards the protection of human rights and the pursuit of social justice goals. We look forward to supporting you as you experience enriching professional and intellectual opportunities through the SJF program.

Given the breadth of possible SJF placements, there are a variety of challenges that may arise in your time as a fellow. From finding a placement for the open fellowship, to finding your role within the placement, to navigating your responsibilities as an SJF, there are a myriad of issues that you may encounter. This student manual is intended to provide you with some information and resources as you navigate your time as an SJF. In addition to this manual, we encourage you to speak with former fellows to assist you in navigating the exciting experience that lies ahead.

Details

Each fellow is expected to work in their placement for no less than 10 weeks between May 1 and August 31. The fellowship will provide you with a total of \$10,000 CDN. In May, you will receive \$8,000 of the stipend upon receipt of the name of the host organization, the location of the organization, confirmed dates of the internship, travel itinerary (if applicable), completed Release Form, and your summer mailing address. The remaining \$2,000 is released to you upon completion of all the Fellowship requirements including a letter from the host organization confirming your actual internship dates, travel itinerary, original copies of your paid travel receipts, all boarding passes, a critical reflection paper, and your experience report (details about the report and paper are below). While there is no academic credit for Social Justice Fellowships, we encourage students to consider undertaking a supervised research course in the term following their social justice fellowship placement to further explore and expand on their knowledge gained during their time as an SJF.

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Faculty Supervision

Each student who accepts the SJF will be matched with a faculty advisor. The Professor you are matched up with can assist you in the following ways:

- Identifying possible placement opportunities and host organizations,
- Securing a placement,
- Mentorship and support throughout your placement,
- Ethical and professional responsibility guidance, and
- Assisting with any referrals needed throughout your placement.

The faculty advisor will also be responsible for assessing your experience report and critical reflection. SJF's are encouraged to pursue a supervised research paper that furthers the work of their fellowship. The faculty advisor can assist in identifying potential supervisors.

Finding a Placement

You should begin the process of finding a host organization (if you haven't already), that includes a direct supervisor, immediately upon being selected as a fellow. Most of you will have already taken steps to confirm a placement as your application required a list of two potential placements. Before confirming your placement with the host organization, you must consult with your faculty supervisor and the SJF sub-committee. If you require additional assistance in locating an appropriate placement, we encourage you to reach out to the Social Justice Career Coordinator.

There is no precise roadmap for finding a placement. In the past, SJF's have worked in a wide variety of social justice contexts (both domestic and international) including but not limited to:

- Legal clinics,
- Non-governmental organizations (NGO's),
- Non-profit organizations, and
- Activist and community organizations.

Generally, SJF's do legal work and are supervised on site by a licensed lawyer. However, there may be placements where direct lawyer supervision is not necessary. For example, an important part of social justice legal advocacy is community organizing and advocacy. Where an SJF is not conducting legal research or engaging in legal work, lawyer supervision is not necessarily required. In these circumstances, the SJF will still need to ensure they have a direct supervisor that is willing to provide close supervision to the SJF.

All SJF's need to have their placement approved prior to committing to an organization. The SJF Committee will approve all placements and determine what kind of supervision is appropriate and required.

Speaking to former SJF's and your faculty supervisor can be a great starting point in terms of learning how best to find and secure an appropriate placement. One of the major challenges that former SJF's have encountered is a lack of response from the potential placement or host organization. It may be

helpful to utilize multiple forms of contacting the potential placement including emails, letters, and phone calls. Identifying a contact within the organization and addressing communication to that person may also be helpful. If you are also able to identify a person who is in contact with the organization, it may be helpful to have that person connect you via email or otherwise.

The key to finding a placement is to start your search as early as possible. Because many social justice organizations work with limited resources, it is normal to expect that responses to your inquiries may not be timely. Starting your search early can mitigate this reality.

Roles and Responsibilities of SJF Fellows

As an SJF, you are representing Windsor law and are expected to abide by the highest standards of professionalism. Whether you are conducting legal work under the supervision of a lawyer, or whether you are doing other social justice work, we expect you to act in accordance with the [*Rules of Professional Conduct*](#) and you are bound by the [*University of Windsor, Student Code of Conduct*](#). Under no circumstances are you able to provide legal advice unless you are acting under the direct authorization and supervision of a supervising lawyer. For the duration of your placement, SJF students are expected to:

- Demonstrate the highest level of professionalism, which includes arriving on time for designated work, notifying your placement supervisor of any changes to the established schedule, and dressing to the standards of the organization of the work being performed,
- Respect the organization's reporting structure and follow the policies and procedures and follow the policies and procedures of the organization,
- Communicate effectively with the placement supervisor and other staff within the organization. Accept and apply feedback and suggestions to the work,
- Communicate with the site supervisor and/or faculty supervisor any issues that may affect the performance of assigned responsibilities or the overall success of the experience, and
- Uphold the *University of Windsor Student Code of Conduct*, the Policy Statement on Student Discipline and the *Rules of Professional Conduct* and act in an ethical manner when at your placement and while representing the placement organization.

Fellows may be asked to write letters to Windsor Law alumni, whose gifts to the Law School helped to make the Windsor Law Social Justice Fellowship Program possible and may be invited to participate in an information session for future Social Justice Fellows during the following academic year.

Additional Responsibilities

- (a) attend a fellowship training session in the Faculty of Law on a date to be determined. This training session will include additional information you will need to ensure a successful fellowship experience,
- (b) attend a pre-departure workshop organized by the University's International Student Centre if you are travelling internationally. This program is mandatory for University of Windsor students travelling internationally on university-supported initiatives. Please contact Michelle Fitzgerald for dates and times of the workshops (e-mail: michelle@uwindsor.ca; ext. 3934),
- (c) complete the Red Cross Red Crescent "Stay Safe" online learning module for safety in the field (<http://www.ifrcmedia.org/blog/what-is-stay-safe-an-online-learning-module-on-humanitarian-security/>) and provide the Clinical and Experiential Learning Coordinator with proof of completion prior to your departure, if you are travelling internationally,
- (d) monitor travel advisories or security warnings issued by Global Affairs Canada through their website (www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp). We do not recommend?? This site will also provide you with other useful information, including any safety issues within the country. You should be thoroughly familiar with the conditions that exist before traveling to any foreign country,
- (e) check with your Health Insurance provider to ensure that your plan offers you coverage during foreign travel. If your plan does not cover foreign travel, you must obtain supplemental travel insurance,
- (f) participate in the promotion and marketing of the Social Justice Fellowship program including an information session for future Social Justice Fellows during the following academic year, a photo session for all Social Justice Fellows and other activities as requested, and
- (g) hand in both an experience report, as well as a critical reflection, upon returning from the placement in the fall of 2024.



International Travel

This section applies to those students who have secured a placement outside of Canada. There are a lot of details to consider particularly when you are planning to complete your SJF placement abroad including but not limited to;

- Housing – securing housing for the duration of your placement;
- Visas, passport – ensuring you have a current valid passport and ensuring you have the necessary travel visas for the country you are visiting;
- Medical needs – (noted above as well) you must check with your health care provider regarding travel insurance and if it is not provided, you must obtain supplemental insurance before travelling abroad. You should also consult with your health care provider to inquire about any recommended vaccinations that you might need to receive and also about medications that you may want to bring with you when travelling abroad;
- Travel arrangements – you will need to plan out your trip including planes, trains and automobiles! Ensure that you understand what travel arrangements need to be made in order to get you to your placement and to get home;
- Travel insurance – you may want to obtain travel insurance; and
- Country conditions - (noted above as well) – you will need to acquaint yourself with the conditions of the country you will be visiting including reading about cultural and social practices.

Although your faculty supervisor may be able to assist you by providing support as you navigate your travel plans, it is the responsibility of the SJF to ensure all of the necessary arrangements have been made.

Below are a list of contacts and support services that may be useful as you plan your travel:

- [Government of Canada – Travel Advice and Advisories](#)
- [DepartSmart](#) (UWindsor site for students travelling abroad)
- [Canada Offices Abroad](#)
- [Government of Canada – Global Affairs Canada](#)
- [Hostelling International](#)
- [International Student Identity Card](#)

Experience Report, Critical Reflection, and Reflective Writing (Reading List)

Experience Report

You will be required to submit an Experience Report to your faculty advisor with an electronic copy to the Clinical and Experiential Learning Coordinator. In general, this report will be a reflection on your summer experience, including your evaluation of the host organization, a description of the work completed, details of any problems encountered, and suggestions for improving the experience in the future. These reports may be made available as a resource to future Social Justice Fellows. Reports are expected to be 3-5 pages in length (double-spaced).

Critical Reflection

Each student is also required to submit a 5-7 page (double spaced) critical reflection paper with an electronic copy to the Clinical and Experiential Learning Coordinator. The paper should also be emailed to your faculty supervisor.

A critical reflection is more than an account or description of your activities (or a time sheet). Instead, it should record what your reflections (thoughts and feelings) about your experiences including what you have learned over the course of your SJF placement. Critical reflective writing is a method used to help you develop the ability to debrief your own work, and to provide information to understand and assess your progress. It is also a systematic way to reflect and analyze your experiences by challenging you to critically examine your own assumptions, biases, and performance. Merely describing, listing, or summarizing your experience is not an indication of reflective writing. Rather, it is a mode of learning that challenges you to think through what assumptions you initially brought to your work, and a mechanism for detailing your learning process.

Keeping a journal for the duration of your time in your placement is a useful method of practicing reflective writing. For your critical reflection paper, students should consider using the below questions to guide your reflections:

- 1) What biases or assumptions did you bring to your placement and how did your experience challenge or disrupt these?
- 2) What challenges did you face with respect to the work you engaged in and the supervision you received throughout your placement and what did you learn from these experiences?
- 3) How did the work you engaged in throughout the placement further social justice advocacy?
- 4) What limitations did you experience in terms of the ability of your work to further social justice advocacy? Where do you locate these limitations (ie political, structural, personal)?
- 5) How did the placement influence your professional identity and perception of social justice advocacy?

Reflective Writing Guides

The following resources are practical guides to reflective writing. Students should also speak with their faculty advisor if there are any questions or concerns about the reflective paper.

Adrian A. Smith, "Seeing Like a Clinic" (2022) Osgoode Hall Law School of York University
<https://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/ohlj/vol59/iss1/3/>

Dr. Kathy Absolon, "Academic Writing Manual for Aboriginal Students" (2009) Wilfred Laurier University, [online](#) at p.9.

University of New South Wales (Sydney), "[Reflective Writing](#)".

University of Portsmouth, Department for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement, "[Reflective Writing – A Basic Introduction](#)."

Commentary on Reflective Writing and Practice and Lawyering in Context¹

Makau Mutua, "Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights" (2001) 42 Harvard Int'l L. J. 201-245.

Lorna Fadden, "[Communicating Effectively With Indigenous Clients](#)", [An Aboriginal Legal Services Publication](#)" (An Aboriginal Legal Services Publication)

Shin Imai, "A Counter-Pedagogy for Social Justice: Core Skills for Community-Based Lawyering" (2002) 9 Clinical L. Rev. 195.

Paul Longmore, "Why I Burned My Book" in *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003) 230-259, online:
<http://courses.washington.edu/intro2ds/Readings/Longmore_Why_I_Burned_My_Book.pdf>

Michelle Leering, "Enhancing the Legal Profession's Capacity for Innovation: The Promise of Reflective Practice and Action Research for Increasing Access to Justice" (2017) 34 Windsor Y.B. Access Just. 189.

Michelle Leering, "Conceptualizing Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals" (2014) 23 JLSP 83-106.

Elizabeth Anne Kinsella, "Reflections on Reflective Practice" (2001) 68 Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy 195, see in particular at 198, "Ten actions of a reflective practitioner".

Michelle S. Jacobs, "People from the Footnotes: The Missing Element in Client-Centred Counseling" (1997) Vol. 27 Golden Gate U.L. Rev.

¹ This is a list of resources that we hope you will contribute to expanding; it is not at all exhaustive. Students should try to familiarize themselves with any particular issues that can be anticipated to arise with respect to the work that the host organization conducts. Special thanks to Professor Xavier for drawing our attention to the Makua Matua article and to Professor Smyth for her contributions as well.

Supports

There are supports available to students even during the summer months and for the duration of your SJF. If you are having difficulty during your placement, you can contact your faculty advisor and the Office of Student Services for referrals and advice. The following are also resources that may be available to SJF students even during the summer months:

For help addressing mental or physical health concerns, contact 519 253-3000:

Student Health Services	x 7002	http://www1.uwindsor.ca/health/
Student Counselling Centre	x 4616	http://www.uwindsor.ca/studentcounselling/
Student Accessibility Services	x 6172	http://www.uwindsor.ca/studentaccessibility/297/student-information
Windsor Law Elder In Residence ²	X 2983	http://www.uwindsor.ca/law/1143/elder-residence
Sexual Misconduct Response & Prevention Office	X 4550	http://www.uwindsor.ca/sexual-assault/
Peer Support Centre	x 4551	http://www.uwsa.ca/uwsa-services/psc/

Helpful Off-Campus Resources:

JustBalance.ca – Support for Law Students	Referral to local community resources	https://www.justbalance.ca/school/university-windsor/
Member Assistance Program	1.855.403.8922	http://www.myassistplan.com/
Good2Talk	1.866.925.5454	https://good2talk.ca/

² Note that the Elder-in-Residence Program may not be available during the summer months.