



Windsor Law

University of Windsor

# **Social Justice Fellowship**

## **Student Manual**

# The Windsor Law Social Justice Fellowship Program

## Student Manual

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### Overview

The Windsor Law Social Justice Fellowship (SJF) Program is designed to provide students with valuable exposure to social justice advocacy, both domestically and internationally. This program aims to enhance the skills and knowledge of future social justice lawyers, empowering them to advocate for human rights and pursue meaningful social justice objectives. We are excited to support you as you embark on this enriching professional and intellectual journey through the SJF program.

Given the diverse range of possible SJF placements, you may encounter various challenges during your fellowship. These could include securing a placement, defining your role within the placement, and navigating your responsibilities as an SJF. This student manual is intended to offer helpful information and resources to guide you throughout your fellowship experience. In addition to this manual, we encourage you to connect with former fellows, whose insights can be invaluable as you navigate the exciting opportunities ahead.

## Program Details

- Fellows are expected to work in their placement for a minimum of 10 weeks between May 1 and August 31.
- The fellowship provides a total stipend of \$10,000 CDN.<sup>1</sup>
  - In May, you will receive \$8,000 of the stipend once your placement is confirmed.
  - Your placement supervisor should send a confirmation of your work dates, along with a brief description of your project and duties, to [fellowship@uwindsor.ca](mailto:fellowship@uwindsor.ca). The remaining \$2,000 will be released upon the successful completion of all fellowship requirements.

## Fellowship Requirements

- A confirmation email from your host organization confirming the dates of your internship
- A critical reflection paper
- An experience report
- Weekly Submission of Hours via [Symplixity](#)

Further details about the writing assignments are included in this manual. All required documents should be sent to [fellowship@uwindsor.ca](mailto:fellowship@uwindsor.ca).

## Supervised Research Paper

Another requirement of the SJF program is for Social Justice Fellows to return to Windsor Law in the following academic term to complete a Supervised Research Paper, allowing them to further explore and expand upon the knowledge gained during their fellowship.

## Faculty Supervision

Each student accepted into the SJF will be paired with a faculty advisor who will provide valuable guidance and support throughout the fellowship. Your assigned professor can assist you in the following ways:

- Offering mentorship and ongoing support during your placement
- Providing guidance on ethical and professional responsibilities
- Assisting with any necessary referrals throughout your placement
- Help identify potential faculty research supervisors for your Supervised Research Paper

Additionally, your faculty advisor will assess your experience report and critical reflection.

## Open Fellowships: Finding a Placement

Once you are selected as a fellow, it's important to start securing your host organization and supervisor if you haven't already done so. You may have already taken steps toward confirming a

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<sup>1</sup> The Debwewin student stipend may differ from the standard fellowship stipend.

placement, as your application required you to list potential options. Before finalizing your placement, however, you'll need to check in with your faculty supervisor and the SJF sub-committee. If you need help identifying a suitable placement, the Social Justice Career Coordinator is available for support.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to finding a placement. Previous SJF fellows have worked in a wide variety of social justice contexts, both in Canada and abroad, including:

- Legal clinics
- NGOs
- Non-profits
- Activist and community groups

While most fellows work in legal settings under the supervision of a licensed lawyer, some placements might not require direct lawyer supervision. For example, community organizing and advocacy are also key aspects of social justice work. In these cases, it's still important to have a supervisor who can provide guidance and support, even if the tasks don't directly involve legal work.

Before you commit to a placement, it must be approved by the SJF Committee. They will review each opportunity and determine what level of supervision is needed.

Talking to former SJF fellows and consulting with your faculty supervisor can offer helpful advice as you search for the right placement. One common challenge past fellows have faced is a lack of response from potential hosts. To increase your chances of a timely reply, try reaching out in multiple ways - such as email and phone call - and be sure to contact a specific person within the organization. If possible, it can also help to get a referral or introduction from someone inside the organization.

The key to finding a great placement is to start your search early. Many social justice organizations have limited resources, so delayed responses are common. Getting a jump on this will help you navigate the process more smoothly.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Social Justice Fellows

As an SJF, you represent Windsor Law and are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism. Whether you are performing legal work under the supervision of a lawyer or engaging in other social justice activities, you are required to act in accordance with the [Rules of Professional Conduct](#) and are bound by the [University of Windsor Student Code of Conduct](#). Under no circumstances are you permitted to provide legal advice unless directly authorized and supervised by a licensed lawyer.

Throughout the duration of your placement, SJF students are expected to:

- Demonstrate the highest level of professionalism, including punctuality, notifying your placement supervisor of any changes to the established schedule, and dressing in

accordance with the standards of the organization and the nature of the work being performed.

- Respect the organization's reporting structure and adhere to its policies and procedures.
- Communicate effectively with your placement supervisor and other staff members, accepting and applying feedback and suggestions to your work.
- Notify your site supervisor and/or faculty supervisor of any issues that may affect the performance of your assigned responsibilities or the overall success of your placement experience.
- Uphold the University of Windsor Student Code of Conduct, the Policy Statement on Student Discipline, and the Rules of Professional Conduct, ensuring ethical behavior both at your placement and while representing the organization.

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

As an SJF, you are also expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- a) Attend a fellowship orientation/training session at the Windsor Law on a date to be determined. This session will provide you with important information to ensure a successful fellowship experience.
- b) Participate in the promotion and marketing of the Social Justice Fellowship Program. This may include attending an information session for future fellows, a photo session for all Social Justice Fellows, and other related activities as requested.
- c) Submit both an experience report and a critical reflection upon returning from your placement in the Fall term.
- d) Complete a Supervised Research Paper during the academic year following your Social Justice Fellowship placement.

## International Placement Considerations

This section applies to students who have secured a placement outside of Canada. You will need to attend to the following requirements:

- **Pre-departure Workshop** – Attend a mandatory pre-departure workshop organized by the University's International Student Centre. This program is required for all University of Windsor students traveling internationally on university-supported initiatives.
- **"Stay Safe" Module** – Complete the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent's "[Stay Safe](#)" [online learning module](#) for field safety. Submit proof of completion to [fellowship@uwindsor.ca](mailto:fellowship@uwindsor.ca) prior to your departure if you are traveling internationally.

- **Travel Advisories** – Regularly monitor travel advisories or security warnings issued by [Global Affairs Canada](#). We strongly recommend checking this site frequently, as it provides critical information about safety conditions in your destination country. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any relevant conditions before traveling abroad.
- **Health Insurance** – Confirm with your health insurance provider that your plan covers you during foreign travel. If your plan does not provide coverage, you must obtain supplemental travel insurance.

There are numerous details to consider when planning your SJF placement abroad, including but not limited to the following:

- **Housing** – Secure appropriate housing for the duration of your placement.
- **Visas and Passport** – Ensure that you have a current, valid passport and the necessary travel visas for the country you will be visiting.
- **Medical Needs** – As mentioned previously, check with your healthcare provider regarding travel insurance. If your plan does not cover travel, you must obtain supplemental insurance before traveling abroad. Additionally, consult with your healthcare provider about any recommended vaccinations and medications you may need for your trip.
- **Travel Arrangements** – Plan your journey, including flights, trains, and other modes of transportation. Ensure you are clear on the necessary travel arrangements to get to your placement and back home.
- **Travel Insurance** – Consider obtaining travel insurance to cover unexpected situations during your trip.
- **Country Conditions** – Familiarize yourself with the cultural, social, and safety conditions of the country you will be visiting. This includes researching cultural practices and understanding local customs.

While your Windsor Law may offer support and guidance as you navigate your travel plans, it is your responsibility as an SJF to ensure all necessary arrangements are made.

Below is a list of contacts and support services that may be helpful 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 are required to submit an Experience Report to your faculty advisor, with an electronic copy sent to [fellowship@uwindsor.ca](mailto:fellowship@uwindsor.ca). This report should reflect on your summer experience, including your evaluation of the host organization, a description of the work completed, details of any challenges encountered, and suggestions for improving the experience for future fellows. These reports may be shared as a resource for future Social Justice Fellows. Reports should be 3-5 pages in length (double-spaced).

### Critical Reflection

In addition to the Experience Report, each student must submit a 5-7 page (double-spaced) critical reflection paper, with an electronic copy provided to [fellowship@uwindsor.ca](mailto:fellowship@uwindsor.ca) and emailed to your faculty supervisor.

A critical reflection goes beyond simply recounting your activities or listing your tasks. It requires a deeper analysis of your experiences, offering insight into what you have learned during your SJF placement. Critical reflective writing is a tool to help you evaluate and debrief your own work, assess your progress, and critically examine your assumptions, biases, and performance. Rather than just describing your experience, reflective writing challenges you to consider the assumptions you brought to your work and to explore the learning process in detail.

Keeping a journal throughout your placement can be an effective way to practice reflective writing. As you prepare your critical reflection paper, consider using the following 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 in the work you engaged in and the supervision you received, and what lessons did you learn from these experiences?
3. How did your work throughout the placement contribute to social justice advocacy?
4. What limitations did you encounter in your ability to further social justice advocacy? How would you categorize these limitations (e.g., political, structural, personal)?
5. How did the placement influence your professional identity and your understanding of social justice advocacy?

## Reflective Writing Guides

The following resources are practical guides to assist with reflective writing. If you have any questions or concerns about the critical reflection paper, please consult with your faculty advisor.

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 Context*<sup>2</sup>

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](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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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 Mutua article and to Professor Smyth for her contributions as well.



## Support Resources for Social Justice Fellowship Students

Fellowship placements can sometimes present unexpected challenges. If any concerns arise during your placement, we encourage you to first connect with your Placement Supervisor to talk through the issue. Many situations can be resolved with open communication.

However, if the concern continues or you do not feel comfortable addressing it with your supervisor, please reach out to [Law Student Services](#) for support. They are here to help, especially when life's pressures extend beyond academics.

Student Services offers guidance and support for a wide range of concerns, including:

- Psychological and emotional well-being
- Physical health
- Financial challenges
- Diversity and inclusion matters
- Career development

If you are experiencing unexpected or urgent financial need not related to tuition, you may be eligible for support through the [Emergency Bursary Fund](#). This fund is intended to help cover essentials like:

- Food, meal plans, or basic living expenses due to sudden financial hardship
- Costs related to disability evaluations for academic accommodations
- Emergency travel due to illness or bereavement in the immediate family
- Urgent housing needs due to unsafe or unstable living conditions

Funding is limited and applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. You can apply using the link above. Once submitted, you'll receive a response via your University of Windsor email within two business days. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact [lawstudentservices@uwindsor.ca](mailto:lawstudentservices@uwindsor.ca).

Sometimes, when life feels overwhelming, it's important to know you're not alone. For mental health support, Windsor Law's Clinical Therapists and the professional staff at the Student Counselling Centre are available to help.

To learn more, visit [Mental Health & Wellness at Windsor Law](#).

For health-related concerns, you can also call 519-253-3000 and follow the appropriate extensions for support.

Resource	Ext.	Website
Law Student Services	4320	<a href="https://www.uwindsor.ca/law/2711/student-services">https://www.uwindsor.ca/law/2711/student-services</a>
Student Health Services	7002	<a href="http://www1.uwindsor.ca/health/">http://www1.uwindsor.ca/health/</a>
Student Counselling Centre	4616	<a href="http://www.uwindsor.ca/studentcounselling/">http://www.uwindsor.ca/studentcounselling/</a>
Student Accessibility Services	6172	<a href="http://www.uwindsor.ca/studentaccessibility/297/student-information">http://www.uwindsor.ca/studentaccessibility/297/student-information</a>
Windsor Law Elder In Residence <sup>3</sup>	2983	<a href="http://www.uwindsor.ca/law/1143/elder-residence">http://www.uwindsor.ca/law/1143/elder-residence</a>
Sexual Misconduct Response & Prevention Office	X 4550	<a href="http://www.uwindsor.ca/sexual-assault/">http://www.uwindsor.ca/sexual-assault/</a>
Peer Support Centre	x 4551	<a href="http://www.uwsa.ca/uwsa-services/psc/">http://www.uwsa.ca/uwsa-services/psc/</a>

#### Helpful Off-Campus Resources

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

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the Elder-in-Residence Program may not be available during the summer months.