



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Office of the Court Administrator
Manila

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 75-2016

TO: ALL JUDGES AND CLERKS OF COURT IN THE FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES ON ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AND LEGAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE AND LAW STUDENTS IN THE LOWER COURTS

Pursuant to the Resolution dated 16 June 2015 of the Court *en banc* in A.M. No. 15-04-03-SC,¹ which resolved to “LIFT the prohibition on the accommodation of students to undergo on-the-job training/practicum in the lower courts” and directed the Office of the Court Administrator to “promulgate guidelines governing the application and acceptance of students as interns in the lower courts, as reflected in the resolutions of the Court on the matter, and ensure that the rules on ethics, security and confidentiality of records are complied with,” the following guidelines are hereby issued:

1. *Objectives.* The program aims to acquaint interns with (a) the review and other processes of the court to which they are assigned; (b) the ethical standards in the administration of justice; c) the hands-on-training on legal research and writing; and (d) other matters relevant to their respective curriculum.
2. *Accreditation of Schools.* The program shall be open only to students from schools included in the list approved by the Court Administrator, hereinafter referred to as “accredited schools.” Requests for school accreditation shall be addressed to the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) with proof that the school/university is duly accredited by the Commission on Higher Education or the Legal Education Board.
3. *Applications.* Applications by college/university students for OJT/practicum in the lower courts, in accordance with the program of their college/university, shall be filed in the specific court where they intend to undertake their internship or training. Applicants are required to submit a written application for internship, a copy of their curriculum vitae, a

¹ Re: Letters of Justice Jose C. Vitug [Ret], Founding Dean, Angeles University Foundation [AUF] School of Law, dated 7 February 2015, and of Judge Ave A. Zurbito-Alba, Municipal Trial Court, Daraga, Albay, dated 29 January 2015.

recommendation and/or endorsement from the dean of their program, and proof that their school is an accredited school. The application, together with the favorable endorsement by the presiding judge, shall be sent to the OCA for approval;

4. *Number of interns per court.* A court shall be allowed a maximum of only two (2) interns at any given time, unless, for compelling reasons, a higher number may be required as may be determined by the Court Administrator;
5. *Supervision.* The interns shall be under the direct supervision and control of the presiding judge;
6. *Workplace and working hours.* The interns shall work at the court premises during regular office hours but shall not be allowed access to these premises after office hours, except with the express authority of the supervising judge;
7. *Access to records.* The interns may be granted access to *rollos* and other court records subject to the following rules:
 - a. The interns may be allowed access to specific *rollos* and other court records only under the express written authority of their supervising judge;
 - b. No *rollos* or any other court records shall be brought outside the premises of the supervising judge's court, nor shall they be shown to outside parties;
 - c. No copying or reproduction of files shall be allowed;
 - d. Reports, drafts and research materials shall be submitted directly to the supervising judge, and shall not be shown or transmitted to outside parties before, during and after completion of the program/internship;
8. *Access to Library.* Interns may borrow books and other materials from the court library under conditions that the library shall impose, and shall be required to submit a library clearance before any report of completion of the program can be issued to their respective schools. The interns shall replace or pay for the cost of any book or library material that they fail to return to the library;
9. *Confidentiality.* The interns shall be bound by the rule on confidentiality applicable to court employees;
10. *Code of conduct.* The interns shall observe and be bound by the *Code of Conduct for Court Personnel* which shall be explained by the supervising judge;
11. *Assessment and monitoring.* The supervising judge shall monitor and assess the progress of the interns during the program/internship, and shall give a final rating on and assessment of their performance in accordance with the rating system of their respective schools. The supervising judge shall then furnish the OCA with a copy of the said final rating;
12. *Accountability and turnover of records.* The interns shall be accountable for and shall turn over all office records and materials entrusted to their custody during the program/internship, including electronic files in their possession

involving their work, as a condition for the grant of the supervising judge's final rating report;

13. *Allowances.* Due to budgetary constraints, the internship shall be at no expense to the court;
14. *Sanctions and penalties.* Non-compliance with the security, confidentiality and ethical rules shall be under pain of administrative and penal sanctions as the law may provide and as the Supreme Court may impose. Any Court-imposed sanction shall be without prejudice to the sanctions that the college/university may impose;
15. *Explanation of guidelines.* These guidelines shall be explained to every intern at the start of the program/internship.

For the information and guidance of all concerned.

22 March 2016


JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ
Court Administrator