

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution:	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Unit of Assessment:	20 - Law
Title of case study: Access to Justice Through Education: Building a Law Clinic Culture in the UK and Beyond	
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The pedagogic research undertaken by the School of Law has produced an ambitious and innovative model of clinical legal education: the in-house live client model, which offers a university-based free legal service offering full representation to private clients and NGOs in the form of the Student Law Office. The Student Law Office integrates supervised legal service in the law curriculum, thereby delivering free access to justice to the wider community whilst benefiting the learning environment. Impact is three-fold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a major contribution to voluntary legal services in a region with high social deprivation: over 1,000 clients secured access to justice and over £840,000 of compensation has been recovered for clients; 2. a national and world leading role influencing the legal profession, regulators and policy makers; and 3. building the capacity of law clinics in other HEIs to provide a free legal service. 	
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The Law School has led pedagogical research into clinical legal education in the UK for the past 20 years. This research has led to new insights into how students engage with legal theory in a practical context, thus underpinning the development and dissemination of a new model of law clinic at the core of the curriculum. The key finding is that supervised real life experience enables students to better understand the legal rules and practical reflection required for legal practice. The research has also contributed to the broader academic field of professional learning, providing cross-disciplinary insights into students' cognitive, metacognitive and affective development and the impact this has on employability.</p> <p>The in-house live client model of clinical legal education emerged in the UK as a direct consequence of pioneering work by Brayne (Professor, 1985-1996), Grimes and Duncan, reflected in the 1998 book <i>Clinical Legal Education, Active Learning in Your Law School</i>. This provided a theoretical justification for clinical learning and examined the various pedagogic models alongside associated issues such as ethics, supervision and assessment methodology. Its conclusion was: <i>"The value of clinic is not simply in its innovation and effectiveness but in the potential it offers as a teaching and learning tool within the law programme as a whole."</i> Further research into the adult learning process, particularly aspects of supervision, feedback, reflection and assessment (e.g. Sylvester, Principal Lecturer 1994 to date; Hall, J Associate Dean 1998 to date and Hall, E 2013 to date, 2005; Plowden, Dean 1993-2011, and Kerrigan Executive Dean, 1990 to date) showed how students benefited from authentic, real life legal service and how it was possible to rigorously grade a non-standard experience. Research by Kerrigan, 2007, 2011, showed how live clinics provide a spontaneous opportunity for legal ethics education. Outputs by Hall, J and Kerrigan 2011; Maharg, Professor 2010-2013, 2011; and Woodley, Associate Dean 1973-2013 and Gray, Principal Lecturer 2000 to date, 2005; addressed the integration of theoretical and practical approaches to learning law. These and other insights from the research enabled the creation of a large, robust and sustainable law clinic model: the Student Law Office, offering a very wide range of free legal services to the community. Dissemination via publication and presentations at national and international conferences has encouraged the development of this model across the UK and internationally, influencing other HEIs and policy-makers.</p> <p>The Clinical Legal Education Group has published a range of national and international peer reviewed outputs in high quality journals and books. These include the only two books ever written</p>	

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in the UK on clinical legal education. Former Attorney General, Baroness Scotland of Asthal Q.C., P.C. commented in relation to one book: “Your work to document a vital area of our practice has provided an immovable stepping stone towards universal access to justice for all.”

3. References to the research

Plowden, P. and Kerrigan, K. (1996) ‘Who Benefits? Case Management and Clinical Education’, *The Law Teacher*, 30 (3), pp315-329.

Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03069400.1996.9992958>

Woodley, M. and Gray, J. (2005) ‘The Relationship Between Academic Legal Education and the Legal Profession: the Review of Legal Education in England and Wales and the Teaching Hospital Model’, *European Journal of Legal Education*, 2(1), pp,1-19. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/16841360508522934>

Kerrigan, K. (2007) ‘How Do You Feel About This Client? A Commentary on the Clinical Model as a Vehicle for Teaching Ethics to Law Students’, *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education*, December, pp7-26. Available on request from Northumbria University.

Hall, J. and Kerrigan, K. (2011) ‘Clinic and the Wider Law Curriculum’, *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education*, 15 (Summer), pp25-37. Available on request from Northumbria University.

Maharg, P. (2011), ‘Sea-change’, *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, 18(1-2), pp139-164. DOI: 10.1080/09695958.2011.619857

Plowden, P. and Gold, N. (2011), ‘Clinical Scholarship and the Development of the Global Clinical Movement’ in Bloch, F. *The Global Clinical Movement, Educating Lawyers for Social Justice*, Oxford, pp311-321.

Available at:

<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195381146.001.0001/acprof-9780195381146-chapter-21>

4. Details of the impactNational and global reach of the research to build Clinic capacity

Wider dissemination of the research has taken place via consultancy and conferences. The Student Law Office (SLO) hosted visits by over 100 law faculty members from around the world during the review period, providing free consultancy and sharing expertise to aid the establishment and development of clinical projects. It also, from 2008, led the Clinical Legal Education Organisation, a network of clinical practitioners in the UK, co-ordinating four conferences and symposia and the redrafting of the national Clinic Model Standards. It helped to drive up the amount of free legal advice work offered by UK universities: the LawWorks Pro Bono Report 2011 shows 61% of all Law Schools in the UK now undertake pro bono work (up from 46% in 2006).

Northumbria’s Law School publishes the *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education* bi-annually. This is the only international peer reviewed law journal devoted to clinical legal education. It has organised an annual international legal education conference for the past 10 years which has been hosted in Scotland (2004), South Africa (2007), Ireland (2008), Australia (2005, 2009, 2013), England (2003, 2006, 2010, 2012) and Spain (2011). Delegates from more than 50 countries have participated in these conferences. Additionally, it has co-hosted clinical legal education conferences for the Bar Council of India (2012) and in Singapore (2012), as part of capacity building in South East Asia. Members of the Clinic research group have contributed to additional clinic development events in Japan (2006), Bangladesh (2008), USA (2010), Italy (2011), Croatia (2011), Poland (2012), Czech Republic (2012) and Ireland (2013). The Unit’s research interest group has worked with colleagues from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland and Spain to recently establish the European Network of Clinical Legal Education.

As part of a Dutch Government sponsored programme in Uganda, our Clinical Legal Education

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research interest group is engaging with the national legal practice course provider in Kampala to develop clinical legal education at the core of their curriculum. The SLO has hosted fact-finding visits from emerging clinical legal educators and regulators from: Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia, Malaysia, Czech Republic (three visits), Croatia, Canada, China, Turkey, Italy, Japan and Kenya (two visits). The close ties with the United States have resulted in visits from academics from City University of New York, New York Law School, State University of Indianapolis, Yale and Wash U, St Louis.

Impact on the community

The underpinning research has led Northumbria's Law School to offer clinic at the heart of the curriculum since 1992. Each year, approximately 170 undergraduate and postgraduate law students have been supervised by 20 members of staff with the support of 2 administrators and 2 trainee solicitors. Clients are represented in more than 11 legal practice areas. As a result, there has been a direct beneficial impact to the community. From 1 January 2008 to date, the office has dealt with 2,761 new enquiries from members of the public and businesses, resulting in 1,127 clients being fully represented recovering over £840,000 for these clients. Each year, students and staff provide over 50,000 hours of free legal advice and representation.

Impact on voluntary community legal services

In the voluntary and community sector, the SLO partners with Shelter, the homelessness charity, to offer a national advice service to homeless and at risk clients. Since 2009, the SLO has provided expert research on complex problems the Shelter advisers are unable to resolve. A project with Newcastle Citizens Advice Bureau developed a new form of training and accreditation for law students, enabling them to become Gateway Advisers, dealing with over 6,000 issues in the two years since the start of the project in 2011. In collaboration with Age UK, the SLO established an outreach office to provide an accessible legal service for elderly and infirm clients. A partnership with Victim Support set up in 2012 provides advocacy services for clients in challenging decisions of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, which the charity could not provide.

Impact on the practice of the legal profession

The Law Clinic Group's research indicated that real world experience is critical in vocational education. The SLO works in collaboration with more than 10 regional law firms on Law School inspired pro bono projects, delivering benefits to the community as well as encouraging a culture of free advice in these firms. Building on this, the SLO with national pro bono charity LawWorks, launched the LawWorks North East Pro Bono Hub in 2011. The SLO is at the centre of the Hub, acting as a catalyst and facilitator for a regional network of law firms to offer free legal advice to the public and community groups in the North East and Cumbria. This successful collaboration has led LawWorks to expand this model to other regions including the North West and Wales (2012-13). The Legal Advice Byker project with leading legal aid firm, Ben Hoare Bell LLP, created a community outreach programme in 2011. This is in a deprived area of Newcastle: students provide immediate legal advice to the public, supervised by Ben Hoare Bell LLP lawyers. Over 90 people were helped in the first year of operation.

Impact on regulators and policy makers

The SLO regularly hosts visits by MPs, Government ministers (including two Attorneys General and the Solicitor General) and professional regulators. This has resulted in membership of the influential Attorney-General's Pro Bono Committee which co-ordinates National Pro Bono Week and advises on government pro bono policy. The integrated clinical model was recommended by the ACLEC First Report on Legal Education. In 2009, the school persuaded the Solicitors Regulation Authority to approve a five-year pilot of a full qualification M Law degree, combining theory, skills and clinic/workplace training. This radical new programme, the first ever full qualification degree in the UK, removes the need for a training contract, making legal qualification more accessible and flexible, as recognised in the Legal Education and Training Report (LETR, 2013).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

The Chief Executive of LawWorks national pro bono charity can be contacted to corroborate

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impact on the practice of the legal profession, particularly with regard to pro bono and regional pro bono law firm networks

The Chief Executive of Newcastle upon Tyne Citizens Advice Bureau can be contacted to corroborate impact on voluntary community legal services.

The Director of the clinic, Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic can be contacted to corroborate impact on the growth of European Clinical Legal Education and has stated: *“The IJCLE conference proved very helpful for development of clinical legal education at the Palacky University in Olomouc. It was one of the reasons we were able to open 4 new clinical subjects.”*

The Director, Bridges Across Borders South East Asia – partner in the South East Asia capacity building project can be contacted to corroborate impact on the growth of Clinical Legal Education in South East Asia.

Fair Access to Professional Careers: A Progress Report, 2012:

“While most undergraduate degree courses are predominantly theoretical in content, Northumbria University is running an innovative, practice-based undergraduate law degree. This course provides its graduates with a proven track record in practice that more traditional law degrees do not provide. It is something we would like to see emulated by many other law schools.” (page 38)

Available

at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61090/IR_FairAccess_acc2.pdf

Professor at the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) can be contacted to corroborate impact arising from the publication of the International Journal of Clinical Legal Education and its conferences.

Selection of Awards – awarding bodies are nationally recognised institutions with rigorous procedures for award. All corroborate community impact unless otherwise stated.

Queen’s Anniversary Prize (2013) corroborates excellence and impact on educators; Halsbury’s Legal Awards Pro Bono Team of the Year (2012); Law Society Excellence Awards Community Investment (2011); LawWorks and Attorney General Pro bono awards Law School of the year (2010); National Training Award UK (2010) “Outstanding, exemplary and truly inspirational” National Training Awards judging panel, corroborates excellence and impact on educators; Attorney General’s Pro Bono Awards Law School of the year (2008).