



**Nottingham
Law School**
Nottingham Trent University

IJCLE & ENCLE Conference – University of Amsterdam 22 – 24 July 2024

Topic: A role for clinics -broadening employability options, skills, and awareness of law students: It's not just about working for a private law firm or being a barrister

Presenter: Dr Liz Curran Associate Professor CLE & Research Impact Lead , NLS

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My Research and Teaching Practice Positionality Statement

- My philosophy and approach to teaching emerges from my academic role, research, practice experience, community service, my personal journey, teaching experience and feedback from students and peers.
- *Key focus of my work is on improving Access to Justice - Evidencing how to improve outcomes to shape and inform improved service delivery, policy, and practice to address laws or poor administration to avert systemic inequality and exclusion.*
- *Evaluation and research also explores impact and effectiveness. It shares good practice to shape services, legal education and service design. It looks at innovation and human centred, responsive design working closely with philanthropy, governments, the legal profession, HEI, and charity partners.*

How:

- *Documents how (by harnessing law) inequality is addressed in the UK and abroad.*
- *Focuses on the poor, disadvantaged/vulnerable.*
- *Provides practical solutions and effective change for practice, legal education (Public, Practitioner and law school) skills and competency and curriculum development and in policy and funding decisions.*

Have other funded research projects in the United Kingdom and abroad and alongside this providing evaluative and strategic advice to a range of charities through NTU consultancy retainers.

SDG relevance -SDG justice and strong institutions (SDG 17).



Aims and what this session will cover

This paper focuses on

- What can/do universities do to broaden student awareness of their employment options beyond 'traditional pathways' (Bar Private Practice)
- the importance and value of developing law students' awareness of a role in improving laws, policies and decision making and advocating for such improvements.
- Around the world, policy clinics are emerging. Clients of such policy clinics can include NGOs, and regulators that are trying to provide input of direct service experience into policy frameworks.
- Many law students end up working in policy and legislative roles without having been trained effectively in the skills they need. Policy Clinics can develop skills for good policy that is joined up with the lived experience of people who need to abide by the laws and policies that they create. Ideal for broadening employability options, awareness, and skills for our students. Competencies for the SQE and desired by regulators such as the LSB and SRA are also covered.
- What are the ways can we as clinics and as university academics broaden options for students and their skill sets.

Question for Participants

1. My students when I first meet them (especially in first year) often think the only legal pathways are private law firms or the Bar. Does this resonate with your experience? What do law schools do to perpetuate this myth?
2. What do we at Universities/ or what can we at universities do to broaden their current perceptions and open our students up to a broader consideration of options for the future employment?
3. What is the role of law clinics and/or other university options e.g. internships/externships or NTU's only self-regulated teaching law firm in the UK?

Case Study: How policy clinics open students' eyes and pathways into law reform, legislator, adviser and policy maker roles

Clinical Legal Education and teaching law firms, such as NLS Legal at Nottingham Law School (the only regulated teaching law firm in the UK), play a significant role in developing competency, ethics, and legal practise skills. This includes the hard skills such as interpersonal relationships, teamwork, professional obligations and responsibility, file management, as well as the value of pro bono and access to justice. These clinics expose law students to the real world and the contexts of clients from different backgrounds. Law clinics can also stimulate their students' awareness beyond traditional law pathways. They can expose them to roles within non-government organisations, the civil service, statutory authorities, regulators. Our future lawyers can play an important role in ensuring the public good at a systems level.

Case Study: How policy clinics open students' eyes and pathways into law reform, legislator, adviser and policy maker roles (cont)

Importance and value of developing law students' awareness of a role in improving laws, policies and decision making and advocating for such improvements. Around the world, policy clinics are emerging.

- Clients of such policy clinics can include NGOs, and regulators that are trying to provide input of direct service experience into policy frameworks.
- Many law students end up working in policy and legislative roles without having been trained effectively in the skills they need.
- Policy Clinics can develop skills for good policy that is joined up with the lived experience of people who need to abide by the laws and policies that they create.
- Career pathways – one NTU Alumni on a panel in early 2024 reported how many young lawyers were in regulator roles in policy and compliance and none had learned any relevant skills at university and lamented this gap and said universities were deficient in their offerings given the legal landscape.

Case Study: How policy clinics open students' eyes and pathways into law reform, legislator, adviser and policy maker roles (cont.)

Policy Clinics can equip our students at law school with:

- critical skills in problem identification,
- policy research,
- submission and recommendation writing and design,
- campaign work,
- written and oral communication skills,
- identifying influencers,
- presenting persuasive and evidence-based arguments and advice to relevant decision makers.

Case Study: How policy clinics open students' eyes and pathways into law reform, legislator, adviser and policy maker roles (cont.)

Policy Clinic/Externship outcomes:

- Jobs in government departments – health and justice
- Roles with regulators
- Roles in Parliamentary Committees
- Political advisers
- Policy & Research Units in NGOs, Statutory Officers, Regulators and Civil Services
- Jobs in Compliance
- Jobs as in advocacy units of international humanitarian and human rights bodies/rappartuers, ILO , WHO and UNESCO

Activity – Brainstorm – in Groups. Nominate a scribe and report back person

Record thoughts on paper

1. What are the ways can we as clinics and as university academics broaden options for students and their skill sets.
 - Prompts: Personal Tutoring; Mentoring; Offerings – types of clinics; Partnerships, Core offerings e.g. criminal law, contract law, Externships, Employability Challenge, Policy clinics, Advocacy engagement with NGOS etc.
2. What are the current deterrents to students in pursuing these non-traditional pathways? E.g. student fees/debt, return on investment – higher wage (see Haas) stereotypes, ambitions, exposure, What can we do about it?
3. How can we make this stick with our students beyond university in their choice of career and counter assumptions about career paths. This is especially important with attrition rates of legal professionals from legal aid work.

Debrief – what did you discuss and any ideas to broadening employability options, skills, and awareness of law students?

Comments and Questions

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Comments and Questions