

**SPECIAL EDITION - POLICY CLINICS ACROSS THE GLOBE: DEVELOPMENT,  
IMPACT AND COLLABORATION**

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Welcome to this special edition on policy clinics. This edition was inspired by our work creating and developing the Policy Clinic at Northumbria University Law School and our conversations with law school academics supervising policy work elsewhere. Policy clinics enable law students to engage in a different type of clinical legal education where, instead of providing legal advice to clients, they carry out research that aims to influence policy and/or law reform. Policy work allows students to develop a range of academic and professional skills through conducting desk-based and empirical research for their clients who may be charities, non-governmental organisations or academics. This type of work encourages students to be curious about the law and to challenge how it operates through their research. As this edition demonstrates, the type of research projects that students can participate in are very wide-ranging. In the Policy Clinic at Northumbria Law School, students' research projects have involved domestic abuse, environmental law, animal law, child-friendly justice in mental health settings and primary school legal education outreach.

Our first article, 'Law Reform Clinical Programmes Should be Promoted in Law Schools: An Explanation' by Kris Gledhill and Robin Palmer, sets out the rationale for undertaking law reform work in clinics, documenting the benefits it brings to students, law schools and society. This article reviews the current extent of law reform clinics in America, Australia and the United Kingdom. The authors offer details of their experiences of running law reform clinics in New Zealand and a guide to the stages of a law reform project. This article contends that undertaking such work should produce more multi-skilled graduates whilst enabling law schools to engage more with communities, bringing broader benefits to society.

Engagement with communities is a theme seen in our second article by Tabea Wilkes, Ben Pontin, Guy Linley-Adams and Julie Price, 'Not a Blueprint: Reflections on the Cardiff Environmental Law and Policy Clinic.' This article documents the evolution of the Environmental Law and Policy Clinic at Cardiff Law School. It highlights the important work that this clinic has conducted, particularly in environmental law. The authors offer valuable reflections on the experience of participating in this type of clinical work and the benefits it can bring.

Liz Hardie's article "'Training is Everything" How to Prepare Students for Policy Clinic Projects' offers insight into running online policy clinics at the Open University. This article explores the skills law students need to do policy work and highlights the new

skills like research design that they need to develop. Liz's research considers the student perspective of the training needed before beginning policy work. Her findings show the importance of providing guidance on research ethics, interviewing, research methods and policy analysis to properly prepare students for the research they are about to undertake.

Further work by the Open University in this area is examined in Emma Curryer and Carol Edwards's article 'The Impact of Policy Work on Employability Skills in the Policy Project Connected to the Criminal Appeals Clinic at the Open University'. The Criminal Justice Clinic at the Open University works with clients wrongly convicted of serious criminal offences. In order to help law students to develop their professional and academic skills before working in this clinic, students were required to complete a policy project. Emma and Carol's research considers the impact of this approach on students' perspectives of their employability skills.

The experience of running a cross-institutional environmental law policy clinic at Lancaster University and the University of Central Lancashire is examined in Lucy Blackburn, Sadie Whittam and Kathryn Saban's practice report, 'Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: The Value of Cross Institutional Policy Law Clinic Collaboration in the Fight Against Climate Change'. This article helps in developing our understanding of the benefits and challenges of setting up and running a policy clinic.

Our final piece is a practice report by Shania Aurelio from Exeter University, 'When Worlds Collide: Reflections on Casework and Policy Work in Law Clinics and Policy Clinics'. Shania considers working in a clinic from multiple perspectives, having been a student legal adviser at Exeter's clinic and then a research intern and support officer in its policy clinic. Like other articles in this edition, Shania highlights the benefits of policy work to students and to local communities.

This edition showcases the important work of the growing community of law school academics who enable law students to conduct policy work. The articles demonstrate the benefits to law students and law schools in engaging with this type of work. In particular, we can observe how policy clinics provide further ways in which clinical legal education can have a tangible and measurable impact on social justice, beyond the traditional 1-1 model of live client advice. As law schools continually seek to develop their law degrees, for example in England and Wales following the introduction of the Solicitors Qualifying Examination and the revised QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Law, it is hoped that this edition will provide inspiration to readers interested in setting up a policy clinic in their law school.

If anyone is interested in joining our Policy Clinic Network (organised through the Clinical Legal Education Organisation) that provides information and resources on policy clinics please do contact us.

Finally, if you would like to participate in our short survey exploring policy clinic provision in law schools, please click on the QR code below or follow this link.

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/northumbria/policy-clinic-survey>



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