

**EDUCATION IS NOT A PREPARATION
FOR LIFE BUT LIFE ITSELF
(JOHN DEWEY)**

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
CLINIC AND PRO BONO WORK**

Pro Bono work in the Student Law Office provides students with real life experience in a real working environment and forms invaluable preparation for practice.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF PRO
BONO WORK**

Solicitors also make a crucial contribution to the UK economy. In 2009, solicitors directly contributed nearly 2 per cent of GDP. The indirect contribution of their work is far higher, as a consequence of the advice of solicitors to businesses in commercial and other transactions. The investment that solicitors also make in their pro bono work, in giving free advice and representation, represents a necessary and proud contribution to civil society by the profession. This is estimated in 2008/09 to have had the equivalent monetary value of nearly £400 million. (Law Society)

“Working in the Student Law Office made me consider whether pro bono work should be made compulsory, to some degree in the profession, to help provide access to justice for those who are impeded from services due to financial constraints. Given the current economic climate pro bono assistance is crucial, in the safety net for low income individuals and families, since government resources are becoming increasingly scarce. Therefore it is crucial for pro bono services to become more easily accessible in order to increase a person’s access to justice. Prior to working in the SLO I had not considered the importance of pro bono work, to some extent I had been selfish in my views, that I have worked hard to get where I am, so why should I, when qualified provide pro bono services?” (Student Reflection)

It was found by that people who conduct clinical work in their studies are more likely to carry on with pro bono work.
(Maresh S 1997)



**CAN THE CLINIC BE USED TO TEACH
ETHICS AND PROMOTE ACCESS TO JUSTICE?**

One of the founding characteristics of the codes of professional ethics is the responsibility to promote access to justice and accessibility of legal services. Currently most governments are seeking ways to reduce spending on the public funding of litigation. This raises questions as to how any ensuing gaps in the provision might be filled. Law schools, whether dealing with academic or vocational stages of legal education, which develop real client clinical programmes may provide a valuable social service to those clients. (Nigel Duncan 2005)

Ethics encompass not just relevant professional lawyer codes but a broader and deeper engagement with what it means to be a lawyer and the moral attitudes, decisions and outcomes implicit in legal practice (Kevin Kerrigan). Robertson argues that “high quality learning outcomes in ethics cannot be guaranteed.”

“My experiences in the Student Law Office provided me not only with a greater insight into the professional obligations on solicitors such as the generic legal checks that all practising lawyers are required to do such as conflict checks, costs information and client care letters as required by the Solicitors Code of Conduct. It also allowed me to consider other wider issues such as access to justice and how this is being affected by the current financial situation. It made me appreciate that without pro bono initiatives such as the Student Law Office and many others that for certain individuals their access to justice could be hampered.” (Students Reflection)