

Pro Bono at UCL Laws: Student Handbook

UCL Centre for Access to Justice
2021-2022

1. About the Centre

Located within the UCL Faculty of Laws, the Centre for Access to Justice combines innovative teaching methods and research-based learning with the provision of pro bono legal advice to local communities, predominantly in the areas of social welfare, community care, education, and housing law.

UCL Laws has been a leader in access to justice and the incorporation of casework and social justice awareness into the law degree programmes we offer. Working with charity organisations and legal professionals, the Centre provides legal assistance to members of the local community while giving students an opportunity to gain hands on experience in meeting legal needs and critically reflecting on the role of law in society.

At the core of our activities is the Faculty's own access to justice research, underpinning both our approach to teaching as well as how we provide services and engage with the community. Understanding the broader implications that a lack of access to justice can have, we take a holistic approach to resolving the legal problems our clients face while also placing an emphasis on community engagement and outreach.

For the last 20 years, the Faculty's ground-breaking research has had a significant impact on access to justice policies and the delivery of legal services both in the UK and abroad. Building on this history, the Centre continues to produce research which aims to stimulate debate and inform policy around access to justice issues.

To encourage students to make the most of their degree while at UCL, the Centre runs a wide-ranging pro bono programme to allow students to develop both personally and professionally and to place their degree in the context of the real world.

2. The Pro Bono Programme at UCL Laws

Aims and Objectives

Oversight and management of the pro bono programme at UCL Laws is one of the key activities of the UCL Centre for Access to Justice. To this end, the CAJ has a number of aims:

- To provide Faculty level oversight and support of pro bono activities;
- To run pro bono projects and clinics for the benefit of UCL students and the wider community;
- To bring together legal volunteering at UCL Laws under one umbrella, thus making it easier for UCL law students to find out about new opportunities;
- To facilitate the development of new pro bono projects by students and/or in partnership with external organisations.

Structure of Pro Bono

Each year, multiple pro bono projects run under the CAJ umbrella. These projects are divided into four broad streams:

1. Access to Justice
2. Widening Participation
3. Public Legal Education
4. Human Rights

Types of projects:

- **Student-led projects:** for student-led projects, the CAJ's role is to provide oversight over the project and support students (for example, by assisting with recruitment, booking rooms, providing guidance, reviewing project materials or contacting potential partners, depending on project needs). Students are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the project.
- **Partnership projects:** for partnership projects, the partner organisation carries out the main administration and delivery of the project. The CAJ's role for these types of projects is to make and maintain the relationship with partnership organisations, liaise with them on various matters (including bookings rooms where necessary) and to assist with the recruitment of volunteers.
- **CAJ-led projects:** CAJ-led projects are projects that are wholly managed and run by the CAJ. While these projects may include partner organisations, the CAJ takes the lead on the administration and delivery of the project.

3. Developing New Pro Bono Projects

When should I approach the CAJ with a new pro bono project?

If you have an idea for a pro bono project and you want this project to be affiliated with UCL in any way, the project will either have to fall under the oversight of the CAJ Pro Bono Programme at UCL Laws or become a club or society at UCLU (UCL Union). The CAJ and UCLU have different rules that pro bono/volunteering projects will have to adhere to. You can establish projects that are independent of the CAJ or UCLU if it is not at all affiliated with UCL.

Affiliation with UCL includes:

- Using 'UCL' in the name of the project;
- Portraying the project internally and/or externally as a UCL-based project;
- Acting in your capacity as a student at UCL when managing the project and approaching external organisations.

If you are uncertain whether your project is affiliated with UCL, it is always best to check with a member of staff at the CAJ.

**Please note, running a project affiliated with UCL or UCL Laws without the supervision or authorisation of the CAJ and/or VSU will lead to a referral to the Director of Undergraduate or Graduate Taught Programmes and may result in disciplinary action if appropriate.*

What benefits do I gain from running a project under the CAJ?

As a CAJ student-led project, you will retain the leadership and management of your project. A large proportion of the CAJ's pro bono projects were established by students and remain student-led.

For student-led pro bono projects, the CAJ acts as a facilitator to ensure projects are as successful as possible, providing support and guidance where needed.¹ The purpose of the CAJ in this context is also to provide a level of oversight to ensure that projects carrying the UCL name reflect the values of UCL as an institution and maintain high standards of quality.

There are also a number of benefits of running your pro bono project with the CAJ:

- Exposure, both within and outside UCL;
- Assistance with advertising and recruitment for projects;
- Advice and support;
- Faculty backing of your project;
- Access to the CAJ's networks and connections;
- Room bookings for events and meetings etc.;
- Financial support through the CAJ grant (see page 5); and
- Greater likelihood of continuity of your project after you leave UCL.

¹ This does not exclude the CAJ from taking a bigger role in the management of projects if asked for by students, subject to the capacity of the CAJ at the time.

How do I approach the CAJ with my idea for a new project?

Students with ideas for new pro bono projects can submit their ideas to the CAJ by:

- Filling out a **pro bono project proposal form** (annexed to this handbook), available on the CAJ website, and emailing it to accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk
- When submitting the form, please ensure the subject line of the email is “New Project Proposal”
- A CAJ staff member will review the form, respond with questions and, where appropriate, organise a meeting to discuss the project idea further.

When assessing pro bono project proposals, the CAJ will consider the following **selection criteria**:

- Does the project address a need either in the local community or within the student experience?
- To what extent will this project have a positive impact both on the public and UCL students?
- How does the project fit in with the rest of the work undertaken at the CAJ?
- Is the project viable (in terms of budget/funding and supervision etc.)?
 - How much supervision does the project require? Is this level of supervision practical/possible/available?
 - How much funding does the project require? What are the prospects that the project will be able to acquire the necessary funding?

Students can also arrange for an informal chat with the Student Pro Bono Committee or with staff at the CAJ if they wish to discuss ideas in advance of submitting a proposal.

When will my proposal be reviewed?

Proposals will be reviewed at periodic CAJ Student Pro Bono Committee meetings.

4. The CAJ Grant

What is the CAJ Grant?

Subject to capacity and availability, the CAJ is able to offer small grants to fund student-led pro bono projects that fall within the CAJ pro bono programme. Applications can be made throughout the year, for up to £300.

Examples of previous activities that have been funded by the CAJ grant include: buying promotional materials (e.g. banners, t-shirts, flyers); financial support for events (e.g. paying for a drinks reception); and travel expenses.

How do I apply for the CAJ Grant?

In order to apply for a grant, students must fill out the **CAJ Grant Application Form**, available on the UCL CAJ website and annexed to this handbook and email the completed form to accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk.

All applications will be assessed on the following **selection criteria**:

- Has a breakdown of costs been provided?
- Is it not possible to secure funding elsewhere?
- Is it an appropriate use of funds?
- Would the grant advance the project's objectives?

**Please note, CAJ Grants are only available for CAJ student-led projects.*

5. The CAJ Student Pro Bono Committee

What is the CAJ Student Pro Bono Committee?

The CAJ Pro Bono Student Committee is made up of a group of UCL Laws students recruited by the CAJ.

Working closely with the staff of the CAJ, members of the Student Pro Bono Committee:

- Fundraise for social welfare and related causes to access to justice;
- Plan events around social welfare and careers for students;
- Publish blogs and social media to raise awareness of pro bono at UCL laws and social justice news and opportunities
- Review new project proposals from students;
- Gather feedback and evaluate current pro bono projects.

Who sits on the CAJ Student Pro Bono Committee?

The CAJ Student Pro Bono Committee consists of the following:

Executive Chair(s), responsible for supervision of committee activities.

The Events Team – made up of two Events Officers, responsible for assisting the delivery of Committee events; and One Fundraising Officer. This year an additional role is being recruited to support with events.

The Engagement Team – made up of two Engagement Officers (1 LLB Officer & 1 LLM Officer), responsible for engaging with the student body at UCL to raise awareness of the SPBC and ensure committee activities are responding to student needs; and one **Careers Officer** responsible raising awareness of social justice jobs and external volunteer opportunities as well as coordinating the Social Justice jobs mentoring scheme.

The Communications Team – made up of two Social Media & Campaigns Officers, responsible for promoting the SPBC's events and activities, as well as leading the internal and external SPBC campaigns work.

One Publications Officer, responsible for commissioning and editing articles for the new SPBC online blog.

How regularly will the CAJ Student Pro Bono Committee meet?

The CAJ Student Pro Bono Committee meet fortnightly with the CAJ to monitor the implementation of ongoing SPBC projects.

I am not on the Committee; how do I ensure that my voice is heard?

The role of the Engagement Officers are to voice the wider student cohort's thoughts and concerns in relation to pro bono at UCL Laws.

For issues relating to pro bono more broadly, approach the LLB or LLM Engagement Officer or a CAJ staff member.

A list of the members of the Committee can be found on the **UCL CAJ website**.

6. Volunteering for CAJ Pro Bono Projects

When volunteering for CAJ projects, you are agreeing to abide by the following:

- You will act with professionalism;
- You will respect confidentiality where required;
- You will always act with respect towards others;
- If you make a commitment, you will meet that commitment;
- You will attend all sessions / activities you have committed to;
- You will always be on time for volunteering activity;
- You will meet any deadlines set;
- You will dress appropriately for volunteering activity (for example, if working in a student law clinic, you will dress in smart attire). If you are unsure what is appropriate dress, ask your project leader/supervisor;
- You will approach volunteering with a positive, proactive attitude and enthusiasm;
- If, for some reason, you are no longer able to meet your commitments, you must inform the project leader with at least 24 hours' notice and an explanation of why you are no longer able to volunteer (please note that this may vary for different projects; some projects may require more notice).

Your project leader/supervisor will send you the **CAJ Student Volunteer Agreement** where necessary. You should sign this and send it to them before commencing your volunteering placement.

Please note that we do not routinely reimburse travel expenses for student volunteers. However, if you are struggling to attend your placement due to travel costs, please come and speak to us and we may be able to assist you.

7. Mandatory Training for Volunteers

Students placed on a pro bono project as volunteers will be required to undertake mandatory training modules, depending on the project, this will either be provided by the partner organisation, the CAJ, or both.

The CAJ offers the following online training modules, designed to complement the training provided by our partners:

- Working in a Third Sector Environment (compulsory for all volunteers)
- Data Protection and Confidentiality
- Working with (Vulnerable) Clients
- Professional Conduct and Regulation
- Self-Care and Resilience

All the above training videos are available and can be found on the '**Training and Volunteer Resources Channel**' within the '**CAJ Pro Bono Project Volunteers 21/22**' Teams group you will be added to once your placement is confirmed.

Once you are added to the 'CAJ Pro Bono Project Volunteers 21/22' Teams group, you will be assigned to a private Teams channel, relevant to the specific project you are volunteering for. Within this channel you will receive further details about which specific CAJ training videos you are expected to complete prior to beginning your placement.

In addition to the videos, we ask all volunteers to undertake the **UCL GDPR Training for Undergraduates and Masters Students**. The link to this can also be found on the Training and Volunteer Resources Channel as one of the tabs. To ensure that everyone is completing their assigned training, please ensure once you have watched the videos and completed the GDPR training, you **complete the short MS Form on the Training and Volunteer Resources Channel** (again available as one of the tabs at the top).

In addition to the UCL Resources, we have also provided a link to the LawWorks Induction Training videos which cover a broad range of topics including interviewing and notetaking skills, legal writing and legal research skills, and many more. These are not mandatory to watch but you may find them helpful and I would encourage you to review them in your own time if you wish.

Should you have any questions about the training please either message Anjumon directly on MS Teams or send Anjumon an email at Anjumon.ali@ucl.ac.uk

8. Keeping in touch with us

In order to stay updated and keep up regular communications with us, please ensure that you regularly monitor the following:

- **Teams:** The CAJ Pro Bono Project Volunteers 21/22 Teams Group will be a place where you will find links to compulsory training, important updates on your project and other general information and resources. Ensure that you also check the private channel associated with your project for project specific information.
- **Your UCL Email Address:** Please ensure you regularly monitor your UCL email address, we may directly email you regarding individual circumstances, monitor your progress in your placement, request information/feedback, etc.

We value your feedback, please do feel free to email us at accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk to provide us with any feedback on your placements. We will also regularly get in touch with you via your UCL email to collect feedback and monitor your progress.

9. UCL CAJ Social Media Policy

Social media clearly plays a huge role in our lives, and it's important to understand how to use it responsibly. As you will be participating in pro bono activities, you must remember that you are representing UCL, and have a responsibility to conduct yourself appropriately and respect the sensitivity of cases and events you may experience.

Much of the work that you undertake at your pro bono placement will be case or client related. It will often be sensitive and/or subject to legal professional privilege. It may contain sensitive information and be distressing for those involved. Confidentiality is one of our highest priorities and is a principle all future lawyers should adopt as early as possible. A breach of client confidentiality could have long lasting consequences for your legal career.

To avoid any misunderstandings and to err on the side of caution, we therefore ask that you do not discuss your pro bono activities (especially casework) online or on any public platforms, including social media platforms such as: Instagram, Twitter, TikTok or facebook. This includes scenarios where you may be merely observing things in the public domain (in court, for example).

Please read our full Social Media Policy included in Appendix C before you start volunteering.

10. SQE Guidance

In September 2021, the SRA introduced a new way of qualifying as a solicitor: the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE). You can read more about the SQE in detail here; <https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/>.

Part of the qualification process for the SQE includes the completion of 2 years [Qualifying Work Experience](#) (QWE). QWE must be:

- i. Full-time equivalent for two years
- ii. 'Qualifying': grounded in legal work and which allows you to develop the SRA prescribed competencies for solicitors
- iii. Completed in a maximum of 4 institutions
- iv. Signed off by a qualified solicitor in the institution where you completed the work, or a qualified solicitor outside the organisation with direct experience of your work

More information about QWE is available on the SRA website and in the [SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations](#).

Please read our complete guide for students on the SQE included in Appendix 4 at the end of this booklet.

11. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

I have an idea and a partner organisation that I would like to approach. Is there anything I need to do beforehand?

If you would like to approach an external organisation to form a partnership, **please let us know first** as we may already have an existing relationship with the organisation or contacts at the organisation we may be able to put you in touch with.

Before your approach/meeting, it is in your interest to create a clear proposal outlining what you would be looking for from them in a partnership and what you would be able to provide. Don't overpromise and be realistic in what you can expect. Many charities and NGOs are already hugely overstretched and are not in a position to offer huge amounts of supervision or resource.

I have an idea but I can't find a partner organisation or someone to supervise. What should I do?

You should get in touch with the SPBC or the CAJ team to arrange an informal chat to discuss your idea. If we are able to help you further we will direct you to detail your idea using the pro bono project proposal form, filling it out as best you can. The CAJ can provide you with support in finding partner organisations/supervisors.

Are there areas of law or types of projects that we cannot propose a project for?

As a part of the UCL Faculty of Laws, the CAJ must remain independent and impartial. As a result, projects that focus on campaigning are better suited to fall under UCLU or operate independently from UCL Laws. This does not include projects which involve drafting policy recommendation papers or responding to government consultations.

Other types of projects that would not be able to fall under the CAJ umbrella would be projects that involve charging a fee for any services offered or that generate a profit which is not reinvested into the community.

While the CAJ does not limit the areas of law a project may cover, projects will need to meet regulatory and insurance requirements as well as fit with the Centre's wider aim and objective of promoting access to justice.

If you are uncertain whether or not your project would constitute campaigning or something else which cannot fall under the CAJ, you should still submit your project idea to accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk and we can advise you on this.

I have an idea but I'm not sure which stream it would fall under. What should I do?

You should still submit your idea using the pro bono project proposal form, filling it out as best you can.

What happens if my project proposal is rejected?

Your pro bono project may be rejected for a number of reasons, related to the viability of the project, the capacity of the CAJ and/or the Law Faculty to provide support, or the way in which your project proposal fits alongside our other projects. It may be that your project would work better independent from the CAJ and the Law Faculty (for example, this may be the case with some campaign-related projects), and is more suited to UCLU or operating independent from UCL Laws.

We will always provide feedback when responding to project proposals, giving advice and/or amendments that could make your project more effective and/or workable. Sometimes, where useful, we may arrange a meeting to discuss this with you.

Where do I find out which pro bono opportunities are currently available?

For information on current opportunities at the CAJ, please see our website:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/laws/accesstojustice/pro-bono-opportunities/current-opportunities>.

You can also stay up to date by following our social media pages:

- UCL Laws Pro Bono 2021/22 Facebook Group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/uclprobono21.22>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/uclcaj>
- SPBC Instagram: @uclprobono

Information about new pro bono opportunities will also be released in the fortnightly UCL Laws newsletter, sent out to all students' UCL email addresses.

Who do I contact if...?

I can't make my placement for one day

Please notify your supervisor at the partner organisation as soon as possible, ideally a week in advance of the day you are expected to attend placement.

I am struggling to manage all my commitments

Sometimes we can take on too much work and it can be overwhelming, if you are struggling with your workload, please do get in touch with Anjumon at Anjumon.ali@ucl.ac.uk in the first instance so that we can consider how best to help.

I have a question about the SPBC

Please get in touch with our Student Pro Bono Committee directly at caj.spbc@ucl.ac.uk, they're very happy to answer your questions!

I want to talk about a new project

If you have an idea or suggestion for a new project, please do get in touch with the UCL CAJ Team at accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk to discuss your idea(s).

I want to ask about the SQE

Please do read our SQE guidance in Appendix D in the first instance, if you would like further information and advice on the SQE please contact accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk

I want to find out about current pro bono opportunities available

All current opportunities can be found on our website at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/access-to-justice/get-involved-2122-pro-bono-opportunities>. If you have questions about a specific opportunity, please do get in touch with the CAJ Team at accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk or Anjumon, CAJ Projects Coordinator, at Anjumon.ali@ucl.ac.uk

I want to run an event or fundraise

If you are interested in running an event or fundraising for a legal charity, please complete the [CAJ Event Proposal Form](#) and send this to the CAJ Team, at accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk

I am struggling to manage the emotional impact of the issues I am experiencing with casework

We understand that taking on real life casework and dealing with certain situations can have an impact on your wellbeing, if you are struggling to cope and/or would like to speak to someone about how this may have impacted you, please do directly get in touch with Anjumon, the CAJ Projects Coordinator at Anjumon.ali@ucl.ac.uk.

You can also visit us in Room 413, Bentham House between Tuesday – Thursdays, 10.00 – 16.00 on a weekly basis if you would like to chat in-person. Please do feel free to come and talk to us whenever you may be facing an issue (no matter how big or small), we're more than happy to help!

Appendix A

1. New Pro Bono Project Proposal Form

You	
*Name(s)	
*Course	
*Year	
*UCL Email	

The Project	
*Project title:	
*Project partner(s) (if any)	
Project partner(s) contact name:	
*Description of project <i>(short description of project including background information, structure, activities)</i>	
*Project objectives <i>(what are the goals of the project? Which stream would it fall under?)</i>	
*Volunteer information <i>(estimated number of volunteers needed, who would you be recruiting [e.g. 2nd year law students], estimated time commitment required)</i>	
*Supervision <i>(what level of supervision is needed, how do you expect that supervision to be provided and from who)</i>	
*Funding <i>(do you need funding for this project? If so, how much and/or what is your budget? Will there be sponsorship?)²</i>	
Proposed timeline (if known) <i>(when would you want the project to start, when would recruitment take place, how long would it run for, what needs to be achieved by when)</i>	
Any other relevant information	

² If funding is being sought from the CAJ, please use CAJ Grant Application Form (in addition to this form).

Appendix B

2. CAJ Grant Application Form

You	
*Name(s)	
*Course	
*Year	
*UCL Email	

Grant Application	
*Project title:	
*Project partner(s) (if any)	
*Description of project <i>(short description of project including background information, structure, activities)</i>	
*Project objectives <i>(what are the goals of the project?)</i>	
*Amount of funding required <i>(in GBP £)</i>	
*What activity / item(s) do you require funding for? <i>(what would the grant fund? Please provide a <u>budget</u> showing a breakdown of what the funding would be used for and how much you need.)</i>	
*How would this grant advance your project's objectives? <i>(how will this activity / item(s) contribute to the fulfilment of your overall objectives?)</i>	



APPENDIX C

3. UCL CAJ Social Media Policy

1. Social media clearly plays a huge role in our lives, and it's important to understand how to use it responsibly. As you will be participating in pro bono activities, you must remember that you are representing UCL, and have a responsibility to conduct yourself appropriately and respect the sensitivity of cases and events you may experience.
2. Please familiarise yourself with UCL's social media guide <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/cam/social-media-ucl> which includes specific guidelines for staff. Although not specifically drafted for students, this guidance is still relevant and will help you understand UCL's social media ethos.
3. Much of the work that you undertake at your pro bono placement will be case or client related. It will often be sensitive and/or subject to legal professional privilege. It may contain sensitive information and be distressing for those involved. Confidentiality is one of our highest priorities and is a principle all future lawyers should adopt as early as possible. A breach of client confidentiality could have long lasting consequences for your legal career.
4. To avoid any misunderstandings and to err on the side of caution, we therefore ask that you **do not discuss your pro bono activities (especially casework) online or on any public platforms, including social media platforms such as: Instagram, Twitter, TikTok or facebook.** This includes scenarios where you may be merely observing things in the public domain (in court, for example).
5. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy includes not posting selfies or other images at your placement or outside/near it. You never know who might be watching you do this, who might see the image or how they might be feeling. An exciting day for you may be the worst day of someone else's life. You may also inadvertently capture something or someone on camera that could breach confidentiality or put someone at risk.
6. If you are working with children, please also be aware that you sharing the names or images of children without their parent's consent would be a significant safeguarding concern (and a breach of most organisations' safeguarding policies).
7. Our project partners are also placing a significant degree of trust and responsibility in you as students, and in UCL as an institution when they accept UCL student volunteers. This includes trusting that the activities you participate in with them will not be shared on social media – most organisations carefully curate their social media presence to align with their vision and goals.

8. The clear exceptions to this policy are:
 - a. Events and fundraising activities where partner or parent organisations are specifically asking you as students to use your social media channels to raise awareness of an issue or cause.
 - b. Blog posts written for the CAJ Blog, which will have been signed off by CAJ staff

9. If you are in doubt about whether something should be shared on social media, the answer is most likely that it should not be. But please check with the CAJ staff if you are unsure.

10. Please be mindful that prospective employers may also check your social media. You should therefore consider the professional image that you present on your social media. The legal profession is by nature quite conservative and traditional .

11. That being said, we understand that throughout the course of your pro bono activities, you may experience events or interactions that could cause distress or frustration, or indeed great joy and satisfaction. We would ask that rather than sharing your thoughts online, you instead please contact the CAJ team at laws.uclcaj@ucl.ac.uk. We are always happy to listen, support and offer guidance. If you are volunteering with a partner organisation, you can also talk to your supervisor there.

12. Please note that failure to comply with this policy may result in your pro bono activity placement being terminated and being prevented from participating in further pro bono activities at UCL.

13. We are genuinely interested in ensuring your pro bono experience is a positive one. If you have any feedback for us, we are always happy to hear it. Please feel free to contact us with queries, feedback or comments: laws.uclcaj@ucl.ac.uk, or you can pop by our office in Bentham House (Room 413) between Tuesdays – Thursdays, 10.00 – 16.00.

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APPENDIX D

4. SOLICITORS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION AND QUALIFYING WORK EXPERIENCE

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR STUDENT UNDERTAKING PRO BONO WORK

2. This document has been drafted as guidance for students to explain UCL CAJ's approach to qualifying work experience and pro bono work.
3. In September 2021, the SRA introduced a new way of qualifying as a solicitor: the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE). You can read more about the SQE in detail here; <https://www.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/>.
4. Part of the qualification process for the SQE includes the completion of 2 years [Qualifying Work Experience](#) (QWE). QWE must be:
 - i. Full-time equivalent for two years
 - ii. 'Qualifying': grounded in legal work and which allows you to develop the SRA prescribed competencies for solicitors
 - iii. Completed in a maximum of 4 institutions
 - iv. Signed off by a qualified solicitor in the institution where you completed the work, or a qualified solicitor outside the organisation with direct experience of your work

More information about QWE is available on the SRA website and in the [SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations](#).

5. It is possible that during the course of your pro bono activities (in particular those which involve supporting the provision of legal advice), you may undertake work that could form part of your QWE. However, before you seek to get it signed off, we would urge you to think seriously about whether you wish for it to form part of your QWE for qualification purposes. It is unlikely that in the course of an academic year of volunteering, you will complete more than one month of FTE QWE, and in many cases it will be less than this. See the example below for more details.

Example of QWE: Imagine you are volunteering at a legal advice clinic for one full working day per week. Perhaps you do this from Mid-october until the end of March, which is the end of term 2 (most students stop placements at this point for exams and revision). You would potentially be volunteering for 1 day per week for approximately 25 weeks (this is being generous and including Christmas break). This would be approximately 25 days of FTE work experience. This is assuming that the work you complete would also constitute 'qualifying' work at all times. Even in the best case

6. Whilst we understand the desire to get your pro bono experience signed off as QWE, we would ask you to think seriously about doing this before asking for additional time investment from your supervisors, given that you are only ultimately able to submit 4 different placements for your QWE and so a placement of less than one month FTE may not be a useful one to submit.
7. Where you decide that, nevertheless, you do want your QWE to be signed off, we would ask that you follow the following processes and time limits.

8. **For students undertaking pro bono work directly supervised by UCL CAJ staff** (for example placements at UCL iLAC or the Rare Dementia Advice Service):
- i. You will need to record your QWE in the [SRA template document](#) – we would suggest doing this throughout the year
 - ii. You will need to submit your completed training template document to your supervisor by the end of the academic year in which you complete your placement. This is so that your experience is fresh in the memory of your supervisor and also protects against situations where there may be staff turnover.
 - iii. If you think you are likely to want to get your experience signed off, please speak to your supervisor at the earliest possible opportunity.
9. **For those students undertaking placements with our project partners** (for example Somerstown Legal Advice Corner or Pro Bono Community):
- i. Speak to your supervisor at your placement about whether there is a qualified solicitor at your placement who is able to sign off on your QWE. This is something we are seeking to establish as a matter of routine with our project partners, but due to the SQE being new this year, many places are still thinking this through.
 - ii. If your project supervisor is able to sign off your QWE, please follow their rules around submission for sign-off, and make sure you submit at the earliest possible opportunity.
 - iii. If there is no qualified solicitor at the project partner who is able to sign off your QWE, one of the solicitors at the CAJ may be able to sign off, however we would require additional information in line with the regulations. In order to sign off the work, we would need to:
 - Undertake a review of the work you have done during your placement, which would need to include a portfolio of work (redacted and shared with your partner organisation's consent) or a detailed training diary.
 - Obtain feedback from the people who supervised your work
 - iv. If you wish for a CAJ solicitor to sign off on your QWE, you should contact the CAJ with the following information before the end of the academic year in which you complete your placement:
 - A detailed training diary or portfolio of work
 - The named supervisor at the partner organisation we can contact to obtain feedback regarding your work
 - Your QWE recorded in the [SRA template document](#) (we suggest updating this throughout your placement)
10. Please understand that if you do not contact us before the end of the academic year in which you complete your placement, we may not be able to sign off on your experience. Your supervisor may no longer be able to accurately recall the work you completed, or the person who supervised you may no longer work at the organisation where you were placed.
11. The CAJ solicitors will only be able to sign off on those applications where they are confident that QWE has been undertaken that meets the relevant requirements. They can only do this where the information requested above is provided.
12. If you have any queries or concerns about this guidance, please feel free to contact us at accesstojustice@ucl.ac.uk.