

# **Pro Bono at UCL Laws: Student Handbook**

**UCL Centre for Access to Justice  
2019-2020**

## **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, predominately 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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](mailto: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. For details and dates of the meetings, please check the CAJ website

(<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/laws/accesstojustice/pro-bono-opportunities/new-project>).

#### 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](mailto: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:

One Executive Chair, 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.

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.

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 is 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 Pro Bono 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.



## 7. 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 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](mailto: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:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UCLCAJ/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/uclcaj>

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

## Appendix A

### 1. New Pro Bono Project Proposal Form

You	
<b>*Name(s)</b>	
<b>*Course</b>	
<b>*Year</b>	
<b>*UCL Email</b>	

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

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

<b>Any other relevant information</b>	
---------------------------------------	--

**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>	

