



# The University of Manchester Justice Hub

Recognising and Listening to the Student Voice in Service-Learning



# The Justice Hub

## Central Platform

In collaboration with both the School of Social Sciences and external lawyers and organisations.

## Student-Led

Provides students the opportunity to get hands-on experience and allows those unable to afford legal services to access advice.

## Multiple Initiatives

Includes Legal Advice Centre, Manchester Free Legal Help and Manchester Innocence Project.



# Legal Advice Centre

Student-led project where student volunteers advise members of the public who cannot access legal assistance.

Cases range from small claims (consumer, contract, personal injuries), mental capacity, wills and probate, family law, housing and employment.

Under the supervision of a volunteer lawyer, students lead on:

- Meeting with clients;
- Researching the law;
- Writing a letter of advice; and
- Engaging in reflective practice.



# Service Learning

- Service learning is when students develop their skills and knowledge by working and engaging with the local community and organisations – focussing on the humanistic aspect.
- This is not taught on our course; it only focuses on the principled nature of the law.
- Developing our skills through service learning is especially important, helping us adopt a humanistic approach to the law and legal practice.



# Aóife

## **Biggest learning experience:**

- Seeing how the law works in practice and the impact it has on real people.
- Exposure to new areas of law that are not taught as part of our degree.

## **Professional development:**

- Developing non-academic skills that are needed for professional practice.
- How to interact with clients appropriately.
- Drafting a letter with the client in mind.



# Abhishu

## **Biggest learning experience:**

- Through the internship, I understood the need and rising demand for pro-bono work in the UK .
- My biggest learning experience was drafting the letter for clients professionally and accurately.

## **Professional development:**

- This internship has developed several crucial skills that I would be requiring as a future solicitor.
- This internship helped developed my legal knowledge on several practice areas.

# Milena

## **Biggest learning experience:**

- Interacting with clients both in person and online.
- Developing my communication skills and confidence.
- Prioritising empathy within client interviews.

## **Professional development:**

- Client communication is central to a solicitor's role.
- People-oriented sectors (e.g. family or employment).

# Eve

## **Biggest learning experience:**

- Learning both the law and the skills at the same time.
  - Experiential learning that I might otherwise not have access to.
  - Allows me to explore my interest in social justice beyond academic papers.
- Insight into how the law works, sometimes as a hinderance, to low-income and vulnerable people across Manchester.

## **Professional development:**

- Helped me to understand how solicitors conduct themselves in meetings and in an office in a professional manner.
- Building a network.



# Jackson

## **Biggest learning experience:**

- **What is it:** - How to effectively research.
- **How I improved:** - Making my research more structured by using practical application guides, avoiding academic commentary like on our degree.
- **Why:** - Service learning is client-facing, so being able to directly recognise what issues are important to the client and focus my research on that is essential.

## **Professional development:**

- My understanding and ability to find the client's relevant legal problems;
- How to frame advice;
- Note-taking and presentation of my research (i.e. research records).

# Melissa

## **Biggest learning experiences:**

- Putting the law into practice.
- Seeing how the law affects real clients.
- Learning to adapt my communication style to suit the needs of the client.
- Using CLIO case management system to maintain security of documents.

## **Professional development:**

- As an aspiring barrister learning to communicate and advocate is essential.
- This internship has given me the opportunity to interact with different groups of people and strengthen my communication skills.

# Summary

Why service learning should be integrated into the undergraduate curriculum?

- It's more representative of what we will experience in our careers.
- It's the best way to develop the skills needed for professional practice.
- It facilitates mutually beneficial relationships between students members of the public.
- It teaches students about the importance of reflective practice.





**Any  
Questions?**