

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE JOHN CURTIN LAW CLINIC FOR CURTIN LAW SCHOOL STUDENTS

General information

Q: What is the John Curtin Law Clinic?

A: The John Curtin Law Clinic is a teaching clinic where Curtin Law School undergraduate and postgraduate students can apply and develop their practical legal skills while improving access to justice.

The Law Clinic's objectives are to:

- create opportunities for students to engage in professional activities and develop professional skills in a supervised, clinical legal education environment;
- provide assistance to vulnerable clients who would not otherwise be able to access legal services;
- Engage in non-litigious strategies for change, including law reform and legal education; and
- encourage students to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as future members of the legal profession, including in relation to access to justice.

Curtin Law School students have assisted hundreds of clients through the John Curtin Law Clinic since it opened in February 2017.

Q: What can students gain from participating in the John Curtin Law Clinic?

A: Students will gain practical legal skills and experiences. These experiences may assist you to decide whether you want to practise as a lawyer.

If you have already decided that you want to be a lawyer, participating in the Law Clinic can help you identify the area of law you would like to practise in.

Participating in the John Curtin Law Clinic can also give you meaningful experiences to refer to when applying for clerkships and graduate roles.

You may be able to count your hours in the John Curtin Law Clinic towards your Practical Legal Training (**PLT**) work experience hours.

Q: What sort of work do students do in the John Curtin Law Clinic?

A: Students work on matters in the following practice areas:

- **advisory services:** this involves working in Curtin Link¹ to provide legal services to social enterprises, start-ups, and not-for-profit organisations. You will gain experience in legal areas relevant to working in governance, corporate or commercial law;
- **discrimination law and human rights:** this involves assisting vulnerable individuals who have experienced unlawful discrimination and organisations working in the area of human rights – through direct casework and/or research;
- **law reform:** this involves identifying a law reform area of interest, conducting research, liaising with a relevant stakeholder and drafting submissions. There will be a focus on social justice issues; and
- **dispute resolution:** this involves assisting small **businesses** with commercial disputes. You will gain useful experience in litigation and dispute resolution.

Students are responsible (under supervision) for:

- meeting with clients and stakeholders and obtaining instructions;
- drafting legal advice;

¹ For more on **Curtin Link**, see:

<https://engage.curtin.edu.au/partnerships/business-industry/curtin-link/>

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- drafting legal documents (e.g. contracts, court documents, letters of demand, and law reform submissions);
- legal research;
- drafting law reform submissions;
- recording time; and
- managing client files using legal practice management software.

Students also gain exposure to a wide range of legal documents, including: company constitutions, leases, supply terms and conditions, and negotiation correspondence.

Q: Can students participate in the John Curtin Law Clinic without prior legal work experience?

A: All students are encouraged to participate in the John Curtin Law Clinic.

One of the main objectives of the Law Clinic is to provide opportunities to Curtin Law School students. The Legal Clinic unit has been designed to optimise the student learning experience.

Students attend weekly seminars to consolidate their client work in the Law Clinic. Seminars involve excursions to referral organisations, guest lecturers, workshops to develop practical legal skills, and discussions about legal practice and professional obligations.

Once students have completed the Legal Clinic unit, Curtin Law School may be able to facilitate external placements through the Legal Internships program. These include placements at the Magistrates Court and Children's Court, and with barristers, in-house legal teams, law firms, and community legal centres. For more information, contact legal.internships@curtin.edu.au.

Legal Clinic unit information

Q: How do students participate in the John Curtin Law Clinic?

A: Students can participate in the John Curtin Law Clinic as:

- an undergraduate student, while enrolled in the optional unit **Legal Clinic (LAWS3005)** as part of your Bachelor of Laws degree – this unit is offered in **every trimester**; or
- a postgraduate student, while enrolled in the **Clinical Workplace Experience (LAWS5014)** or **Legal Workplace Experience (LAWS5007)** units as part of your Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice – for more information on these units, contact the Curtin PLT team (curtin.plt@curtin.edu.au).

Q: Is a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) required to participate in the John Curtin Law Clinic?

A: No, there is no minimum GPA to participate in the Law Clinic. All Curtin Law School students are encouraged to participate.

Q: Are there any assessments?

A: Yes.

For the **undergraduate unit**, assessment is on a Pass/Fail basis, determined based on the following components:

- legal drafting;
- reflective learning participation; and
- professional practice skills.

For more detail on the assessments, please see the Unit Outline.

No grade is recorded on your academic transcript and it does not affect your GPA.

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Q: What if I don't have enough optional units to do both Legal Clinic and Legal Internships?

A: No problem. If you don't have enough optional units to undertake a legal internship (as part of your undergraduate Bachelor of Laws degree), you can undertake a co-curricular, or not-for-degree placement (provided you are enrolled in a program of studies at Curtin University).

Legal Clinic and PLT work experience hours

Q: Can hours in the John Curtin Law Clinic as an undergraduate student be credited towards a student's Practical Legal Training work experience hours?

A: If you enrol in the Curtin PLT program, it is possible for your hours in the Law Clinic to be credited towards your PLT work experience hours. The placement needs to meet all requirements of the Curtin PLT [Work Experience Rules](#).

Students are responsible for satisfying all requirements for the hours in the Law Clinic to be credited towards the PLT work experience hours, including that the placement must be undertaken **within 2 years** of starting your PLT coursework.

Students seeking to have their hours in the Law Clinic recognised by another PLT provider should contact the provider to determine whether such credit will be provided under that provider's PLT work experience rules.

Links to the national and WA PLT work experience requirements are included below:

- National Standards:
https://www.lawcouncil.asn.au/files/web-pdf/LACC%20docs/240769433_9_Standards%20for%20PLT%20Workplace%20Experience.pdf
- WA Standards:
<https://www.lpbwa.org.au/Documents/Beco>

[ming-A-Lawyer/Admission-Forms/LPB-Form-A5-Application-for-approval-of-PLT-course](#).

For information on the **postgraduate units**, contact the Curtin PLT team (curtin.plt@curtin.edu.au).

Q: Why must students attend an induction prior to starting the placement in the Law Clinic?

A: The induction allows you to participate in the clinic effectively, knowing your obligations and responsibilities. Material covered during the induction includes:

- how to make the most of supervision during workplace experience;
- how to obtain feedback on performance;
- working in a professional environment;
- communicating with supervisors; and
- assessment information.

Q: Where are the inductions held?

A: Inductions are usually held at Curtin Law School's city campus at 57 Murray Street, Perth.

Legal Clinic and the pandemic

Q: What arrangements does the John Curtin Law Clinic have in place to deal with pandemic lockdowns?

A: The Law Clinic has remote supervision and remote access arrangements in place to enable the Law Clinic to continue to operate during lockdowns.

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Q: I have further questions that have not been covered in these FAQs. Who should I speak to?

A: Please see below contact details:

John Curtin Law Clinic and Curtin Link:

lawclinic-admin@curtin.edu.au

Legal Internships program:

legal.internships@curtin.edu.au

**Curtin Practical Legal Training
(Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice):**

curtin.plt@curtin.edu.au