Document Q3.5

CONTACT WITH PRACTICE POLICY

Approved by Academic Board – November 2017
Contact With Practice Policy

1 The University of Law’s Contact With Practice Policy has been informed by the Quality Assurance Agency’s Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically the Advice and Guidance on Learning and Teaching. The QAA’s Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities are assured and enhanced. This policy sits within the University of Law’s Quality and Standards Code which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of The University of Law and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the code.

Introduction

2 The University is in the unique position of employing predominantly qualified solicitors and barristers to teach across its law and business programmes. This enables it to ensure that teaching on those programmes is not only of the necessary academic rigour but also provides the best possible preparation for practice. The University needs to maintain the highest standards of design and delivery of its courses through excellent legal knowledge, design and facilitation skills. Academic staff need to be up to date with not only substantive law but also changes in office practice and current trends and developments. It is therefore vitally important that tutors maintain links with practice.

3 The University also needs to secure and maintain strong relationships with firms and other agencies for strategic and business development purposes.

Contact With Practice (CWP)

4 The type and extent of contact with practice will vary enormously from one tutor to the next depending upon a range of factors including their role, their location and their prior experience and seniority. It may also vary to reflect the differing circumstances, in particular size, of our sites and campuses. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the types of contact in which tutors might participate:

4.1 Some tutors are already engaged in outside activities such as: acting as a solicitor or barrister, or as a consultant to a firm of solicitors or chambers; acting as Deputy District Judge or other judicial appointment (e.g. part-time Tribunal Judge); sitting on public committees;

4.2 Carrying out/supervising pro bono legal work;

4.3 Visits to firms/chambers: tutors and designers are strongly encouraged to visit client firms. These visits may take the form of contact with PSL/knowledge lawyers or fee-earners;
4.4 Membership of practitioner groups e.g. local law societies, Association of Women Solicitors etc.;

4.5 Practitioner talks/Q&A sessions, at firms or organised at sites or on campuses, and/or by subject teams;

4.6 Update talks by members of PD/PSC training team.

5 All members of academic staff are strongly encouraged to retain some contact with practice by participation in one or more of the above types of activity.

6 Academic staff members are responsible for arranging contact with practice. This will be supplemented wherever possible by opportunities arranged by others within the University including other colleagues, managers, Business Development, Marketing and others.

7 Tutors should record the contact for a number of different purposes:

7.1 their own learning & development for discussion with their line manager as part of their PDR. This record can then inform the plans for that tutor’s future training and development;

7.2 dissemination of the knowledge learned to subject teams within the University;

7.3 QA purposes so that the University can demonstrate to QAA, SRA, BSB and others that links with practice are maintained.

8 Campus management will be responsible for ensuring that their tutors’ records are maintained. BPTC tutors should also report staff development activity including contact with practice to the National Programme and Student Affairs Director - BPTC, who is under an obligation to report to the Bar Standards Board.

Benefits of CWP

9 There are a number of benefits to participating in CWP for both the staff member and the University. These include:

9.1 maintaining and improving the individual’s knowledge of relevant black letter law and of its application in practice

9.2 promoting and marketing the University

9.2 working through areas of law and practice so as to brief other members of the team
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9.3 ensuring that the delivery of our main programmes is at a consistently high standard

9.4 career progression - external engagement with the profession and/or academia is one of the criteria for appointment as Associate Professor.

Resourcing CWP

10 There is no ring-fenced time allowance for this activity. Time spent on Contact With Practice will form part of the notional tutor development allowance. Tutors will need the approval of their Dean of Campus and the timetabling department before finalising CWP arrangements.

Outside Working Policy

11 Some members of staff may already have or be interested in pursuing longer-term practice-related work. The University recognises that certain categories of outside working, particularly scholarly or practice-based activities, can be very beneficial to the University and/or to the skills and reputation of the member of staff.

12 Against this is the need to ensure that University employees are not working beyond the limits imposed by the Working Time Directive, that there is no conflict with the interest or reputation of the University, and that external commitments do not intrude or adversely affect their responsibilities towards students or colleagues.

13 Employees should consult the Outside Working Policy for further information in the first instance.

Date for next review:

November 2020

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