

Sussex Law School

# HUMAN RIGHTS LAW CLINIC

## INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS (2018)

Sussex Law School's *Human Rights Law Clinic* is a programme providing graduate students in the LLM in International Human Rights Law at the University of Sussex with the opportunity to work with real clients, on real issues.

### What does the Human Rights Law Clinic do?

Students participating in the Clinic do so as part of their LLM degree in International Human Rights Law, which means that they will have successfully completed the degree's core module on international human rights law. The Clinic offers students the chance to build on law and theory through the preparation of pro bono legal opinions for clients. The Clinic is convened by a human rights academic with experience of engaging with practitioners, NGOs and inter-governmental organisations and all students will be supervised by an academic member of faculty with a specialism in human rights. The opinions prepared by students respond to a specific legal question related to international human rights law set by and tailored to the clients' needs. Depending on the complexity and nature of the legal opinions sought, students work individually or in small groups to produce memoranda for their clients, following a process of consultation with clients, close supervision, oversight and review by the Clinic's convenor, seminar discussions on work in progress, and presentations to clients of draft memoranda.

### When does the Clinic operate?

To allow Clinic students to first complete the degree's core module on international human rights law, which is taught in the Autumn Term of each year, the Clinic operates each Spring Term. For 2018, the Clinic will operate between February and May.

Please note that the Clinic does not operate as a placement programme. Clinic students undertake their work at the University of Sussex, in Brighton, under the supervision of academic members of staff.

### Who can be a client of the Clinic?

At present, the Clinic receives project briefings from intergovernmental organisations, governments, (international and UK-based) non-governmental organisations and lawyers practising in the area of human rights. **If you wish to be a client of the Human Rights Law Clinic, please contact the Clinic convenor, Dr Stephanie Berry** ([stephanie.e.berry@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:stephanie.e.berry@sussex.ac.uk)).

## Why be a client of the Clinic?

### Complementing resources

- Intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as governments, come under increasing pressure to deal appropriately with human rights issues, but often in situations where resources are lacking or stretched to maximum capacity.

### Free comprehensive legal research

- The Human Rights Clinic operates on a pro bono basis. The legal research undertaken by its students is provided at no cost to the client.
- At the same time, clients can rest assured that students, while unpaid, undertake their work for the purpose of obtaining course credit in their degree in international human rights law.

### Quality assurance

- All Clinic students will have successfully completed the degree's core module on international human rights law before taking on a Clinic project.
- Students work under close supervision by both their allocated academic supervisor and the Clinic's convenor.
- Short 'issues papers' are produced for clients early on in the process so that clients can be sure that the proposed approach of students is in accord with what is being sought by the client.
- Students participate in regular work in progress meetings, under the supervision of the Clinic convenor.
- Draft memoranda are closely reviewed by the Clinic convenor, and then revised, before being sent to the client.

### Providing students with a valuable experience

- Working with clients means that students can build on and apply law and theory to real situations, thereby providing a means to research and apply international human rights law in context.
- This experience is not only valuable as part of students' studies, but it also provides them with a great insight, and with something that can help make their CVs stand out.

## What projects does the Clinic take on?

Project briefings may be on any thematic or country-specific issue concerning the application or implementation of international or regional human rights law, framed within the context of a legal question(s) that allow students to prepare a 5,000-word legal memorandum to clients. For more complex projects, students may work together to produce a 10-15,000-word legal memorandum.

For example, a research brief might be sought to feed into a report being prepared by a client. A client may seek legal analysis of a country situation on a specific issue(s) for the client to subsequently use in the preparation of submissions to government, one of the UN treaty bodies, or the UN's Universal Periodic Review mechanism. Lawyers or non-governmental organisations may wish to have preparatory research undertaken in the context of proposed or continuing human rights litigation, or to feed into an *amicus* brief.

See past papers produced by the Human Rights Law Clinic here:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schrr/clinic/papers>

## Client testimonies

To find out what some of our clients have said about working with the Sussex Human Rights Law Clinic:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schrr/clinic/clients>

To find out more, visit the website of the Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research:

[www.sussex.ac.uk/schrr/clinic](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schrr/clinic)