



## Sussex Law School

# HUMAN RIGHTS LAW CLINIC

### GUIDANCE FOR CLIENT BRIEFS (2017)

Thank you for your interest in being a client of Sussex Law School's *Human Rights Law Clinic*. This note has been prepared to provide you with further information on the operation of the Clinic in 2017.

#### Preparing a client brief

The main objective at this point is to prepare a 'client brief', which will operate as your instructions to the Clinic student, in response to which she or he will prepare a legal memorandum. As convenor of the Clinic, I will assist with this. What is needed as a first step is a one-to-two paragraph description of what research work you want the Clinic student to undertake.

The Clinic seeks to be as flexible as possible in the design of client briefs in order to ensure that they are of the greatest possible use to you and your operational requirements. 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). For example, a research brief might be sought to feed into a report being prepared by you. You may seek legal analysis of a country situation on a specific issue(s) for you to subsequently use in the preparation of submissions to a government, one of the UN treaty bodies, the UN's Universal Periodic Review or to a regional human rights system. Lawyers or NGOs 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>

#### Considerations for the client brief

##### Length of the memorandum

- Normally, one student will work on one client brief to produce a 5,000 word legal memorandum. For more complex projects, students may work together to produce a 10-15,000 word legal memorandum.

##### Confidentiality

- Where possible, in order to showcase the work of Clinic students, we would like to publish the final memorandum on the website of the Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research (subject to your review of the document).
- We understand, however, that there may be several reasons why this may not be desirable. In such cases, the memorandum will not be publicised and will remain subject to full confidentiality between you and the Clinic participants.

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)

#### Client contact person

- Wherever possible, I will deal with student queries during the research process.
- Failing this, it would be useful to know whether your contact person is willing to receive email communications direct from the student, or through me as Clinic convenor.

#### Timing

- In order to finalise documentation for the Clinic students, the University requires that I have all documents ready by the end of 2016. **Ideally, therefore, it would be best to aim to have client briefs finalised by the end of November 2016, or early December at the latest.**

## How will the research work be undertaken?

#### Allocation of client briefs

- At the start of the Spring academic term (the week of 30 January 2017), and based on student preferences, I will allocate client projects to each student.
- The Clinic aims to match the number of client briefs with the number of Clinic students. This aims to ensure that, unless a student withdraws from the Clinic, all briefs will be taken up.

#### First client meeting

- On the week of 6 February, I will convene a series of short meetings (by Skype or phone) with each client and student to discuss the brief and the development of an issues paper.

#### Issues paper

- Students will prepare a short (1,000 word) issues paper, explaining the aims of the research to be undertaken, describing the methodology and any relevant limitations, and setting out the key issues to be addressed and structure to be adopted in the memoranda.
- The issues paper will be shared with you on 20 February, for your feedback. Since this will form the basis and structure of the memorandum, it will allow you to check that the proposed approach will meet your needs.

#### Research work

- Research work will be undertaken under my supervision.
- Students will meet with me on a one-to-one basis and will also present their work in progress to other students in group sessions. They will submit a full draft memorandum to me in late March. I will review each memorandum and provide detailed feedback for students to take into account in preparing revised draft memoranda.
- Revised draft memoranda will be due for submission by Friday 24 April and will be shared with each client.
- On dates and times suitable to each client, ideally in the following week, I will convene a video meeting at which time the student(s) assigned to your brief will present their work. You will be invited to comment and ask questions and/or make suggestions for matters to be considered in the finalisation of the memorandum.

#### Finalisation of the memorandum

- Final submission of memoranda will be on a date fixed by the University, in the assessment period from 11 May to 9 June. Students will have until that time to finalise their work.
- The submitted document will undergo a short editing and formatting process and provided to you as the client.

Alex Conte

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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)