

Student Handbook

Your role on the Future of Law Programme
2024-2025



qLegal

The small print for BIG IDEAS

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Welcome message

Congratulations on being selected for the Future of Law!

Alongside your fellow qLegal students, you will undergo rigorous training before starting your stream. Whether that's in Public Legal Education (PLE) or Projects, the aim of the programme is for you to develop a range of skills and knowledge by delivering practical services to your client.

Whoever your client, you will learn to research and produce high standard deliverables to meet the client brief. You will receive training and feedback from internal and external supervisors throughout the process and get a chance to reflect on your experience with your peers and qLegal staff.

You are now part of a valued, wider pro bono programme at Queen Mary University of London, which has helped hundreds of people access free legal advice and support since 2006. In 2019, we were delighted to receive an award for Best Contribution by a Law School from the Solicitor General of England & Wales in the LawWorks & Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards.

This handbook summarises the way qLegal operates and provides essential information on the Future of Law (FoL) programme. Please read it carefully and then undertake the next steps of your role.

Your participation is greatly appreciated by us, our clients and our external partners. We expect your full commitment to qLegal and we look forward to working with you.

Best wishes,
The **qLegal** Team



Our Team



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**If you need to contact qLegal please use this address. Emails are checked regularly, and it will avoid delays if a staff member is out of the office.

Who we are

qLegal is a simulation of an innovative commercial legal services firm. Students engage in the same activities as professional lawyers and so learn by doing.

qLegal's services are pro bono and students and external partners are volunteers. Clients - start-ups, scale-ups, companies and entrepreneurs - are real, and the standards to which qLegal operates are high. Students, clients, external partners and Queen Mary benefit from this arrangement.

The Programme

Future of Law students provide **practical support to clients, paying extra attention to the clients' own stakeholders - with a focus on one-to-many**. The exact nature of the support depends on the stream within the FoL programme. In all cases, students work to professional standards and must comply with professional ethics.



Training

FoL students are set up for success through a **comprehensive and interactive** training programme delivered by qLegal and guest speakers. The training will take place in October.

Under the terms of the Pro Bono Protocol and qLegal's indemnity insurance policy, students must have undergone sufficient training to engage on any client facing work. Failure to attend training sessions without due notice (see Attendance information on page 9) could result in removal from qLegal.

Training sessions focus on a variety of topics, including:

Technical Legal Areas and Commercial Awareness

- Applying Data Protection law and GDPR
- Applying IP law
- Applying corporate and commercial law
- Legal Issues for Start-Ups

Soft Skills

- Effective team-working and collaboration
- How to give and receive feedback
- Self-awareness and adaptability
- Owning up and managing up
- How to sell your qLegal experience

Professional Ethics, Client Care and Professional Standards

- Professional Ethics – SRA Code and Bar Core Duties Code – and Professional Etiquette
- Introduction to qLegal and what is expected from a qLegal student

Business Skills

- Legal research
 - Stakeholder management
 - Project management/organisation skills
 - Design thinking
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More opportunities

In addition to Trainings, Inductions and Meetups, qLegal organises an array of opportunities throughout the year including:

- A holiday party at the end of semester 1 where we collectively reflect and celebrate with festive drinks and nibbles
- A graduation party at the end of semester 2 to celebrate your completion of the programme
- A CCLS bake sale, as part of the Great Legal Bake, to support access to justice across the UK
- A panel and networking event celebrating Pro Bono Week

Professionalism

To maintain a high level of professionalism, qLegal has a Removal Policy. Please read it carefully and make sure you understand its requirements. As a qLegal student, you are expected to align with our values and professional behaviours. In the rare occasions that a student does not, we may issue a warning. If you receive three warnings, you will no longer be able to participate in qLegal.

- Showing respect for other people's time and expertise. This includes being responsive and checking your QMUL emails *every day*.
- Teamwork & taking responsibility (balancing input/output from all team members, taking responsibility for the completion of the entire project, not just your section/task.)
- Producing high quality work. Every piece of work that is submitted to qLegal or produced in the context of your programme needs to be proofread and final.
- Appropriate tone in communication with all qLegal stakeholders: think of how it will sound to the recipient.
- Showing up authentically, avoiding plagiarism.
- Being truthful.
- Expecting and welcoming feedback and offering it when it is appropriate. Additionally, reflecting on your experience and practicing lifelong learning.
- Dealing with difficult conversations is part of professional life. Strive to address disagreements in an objective, timely and calm manner.
- Being a qLegal and QMUL ambassador. When networking, please be aware of stakeholder management and commercial awareness and how your behaviour might impact qLegal. E.g. approaching a qLegal partner to ask them for a job/work experience out of the blue wouldn't be appropriate.

Workplace Etiquette

qLegal simulates a law firm and gives you experience in a professional workplace. Below, you will find guidance on general workplace etiquette.

In the Office

- This is a professional working environment. If you are working from the qLegal space, you must do so quietly as staff members may be taking client calls.
- Staff are always on hand to help, but they need a break too so may ask you to come back if they are busy. If a matter is not urgent, the best thing to do is email a staff member or arrange an online call.

Meetings (with qLegal and with external partners)

- Any meeting with qLegal or your external partner(s), however warm and friendly, is a professional meeting.
- Come to all meetings prepared to speak.
- Ensure you have a working microphone and webcam when necessary.
- Arrive early or allow enough time to log in and address any tech issue, so you are confident and relaxed when the meeting starts.
- Your full attention must be on the meeting taking place. All other electronic devices must be turned off or on silent mode and out of reach.
- Protect your and others' privacy: make sure you are in a private workspace. If you live with other people, ask them not to disturb or interrupt. Consider blurring your background if you do not want third parties to see what's behind you.

Communicating by Email

- You must check your email every day.
- Always use specific subject lines.
- 'Dear' is the most appropriate greeting. Good practice is generally to follow the host's level of formality.
- Never send a blank email with an attachment.
- Be concise.
- Always make sure you read your email before sending it.
- If you make a request in an email, ensure you give a reasonable amount of time for a response before sending a follow up. If the matter is urgent, consider a call.
- Sign off using your name. To sign off, we recommend 'regards', 'sincerely' or 'best wishes.'

Working together

qLegal strives to create a respectful and collaborative environment that fosters innovation and practical learning. If you experience any issues in this regard please let us know.

Working Respectfully

We expect students to behave courteously and professionally towards each other. If a teammate or any stakeholder behaves inappropriately towards you (e.g., sends you inappropriate messages or behaves inappropriately on a video call), you should immediately give your apologies and leave the call.

Please discuss the matter with qLegal for further guidance.

Working Collaboratively

You will be part of a team. Working with others can be challenging due to different schedules, backgrounds, personalities and expectations. When working with your team, take the time to get acquainted with them and to set clear deadlines and expectations.

Each member of the team is responsible for bringing their part of the work in and communicating issues in a timely manner. In the event of repeated and unjustified missed meetings and/or deadlines, teammates should report the issues to qLegal staff which may result in a warning under our Removal Policy.

Attendance

Proper attendance and diary management is an important element of the qLegal programme. We understand that circumstances can arise (such as a family emergency, illness, etc.) that can affect attendance, and in those instances, we expect you to communicate professionally and as soon as possible to the relevant stakeholders. The full guide on how qLegal will notify you of upcoming trainings and meetings, and how you inform of your attendance, is explained in the The Removal Policy on QM+.

Trainings and Meetings

- As part of qLegal you are expected to attend training days, as well as take-part in regular meetings.
- You will receive notification of a training or meeting day from qLegal via Outlook. You then have the choice to accept or decline the invitation (with a response explaining the reason for your absence).
- If your circumstances change and you can no longer attend an accepted scheduled training or meeting, inform qLegal by email via the original Outlook invite *at least 1 hour before* the event starts, including your reason for absence. If you fail to do this, you will be marked as absent and receive a warning under qLegal's removal policy.
- You must attend at least 80% of training sessions (including boot camp days) to get HEAR accreditation (volunteers only).
- You must attend at least 80% of scheduled meetings to get HEAR accreditation (volunteers only).
- To learn more, please familiarise yourself with the Removal Policy.

qLegal Policies

- On QM+ you will be able to read in full qLegal's policies on the following matters:
 - Student contract
 - LinkedIn & references
 - QWE policy
 - Removal policy (volunteers only)
 - HEAR criteria (volunteers only)
- It is your responsibility to familiarise and follow the information set-out in these policies.

Your Role on the FoL Programme

The exact requirements of your role will depend on which stream you are on within the FoL programme. **You will be allocated to a particular stream during the induction and training period.** See the appendices for an overview of the streams:

Appendix 1 – PLE Overview

Appendix 2 - Projects Overview

Further details will be provided by qLegal staff members as part of the training within your allocated stream.

Resources

This section contains a list of resources you can use for legal research. If you find any other helpful resources, please let us know so that we can share them with the team.

1. Subscription Based Resources:

As a QMUL student you have access to multiple [legal databases](#) that are provided by the university. QMUL has access to these databases under an educational license (as opposed to a license for commercial activity). Our educational subscriptions, such as Lexis+ or Practical Law, offer access to numerous resources and using them for research purposes is permitted. However, sharing downloaded templates or articles with a client would violate the licensing terms.

As a member of [Law Works](#), qLegal has also been given exclusive access to Lexis PSL. Please **do not share the Lexis PSL password** with anyone who is not a qLegal student.

Practical Law: Practical Law is a database that provides practical resources for legal practitioners such as standard documents, practice notes, checklists, legal updates, how-to guides. It's a great way of grasping complex legal issues and seeing how they would apply practically. Below are some of the key types of resource on Practical Law:

- Practice – these resources give an overview of the law in a succinct and clear way.
- Checklists – these are step by step guides that help you ensure you have covered all elements of an area.
- Standard clauses/documents – these are broadly applicable template documents and clauses that can serve as a helpful reference point when drafting.
- With drafting notes (explaining the purpose of clauses/sections and considerations when drafting)
- Without drafting notes
- Note: template documents are sometimes referred to as 'boilerplate' documents
- Glossary – this resource defines any key terms used in legal practice.

Lexis +: Lexis + is a database providing information on legal research, legal news and practical guidance. This database is an excellent option for legal research and the practical guidance and template can be useful reference points.

LexisPSL: Lexis PSL is a similar resource to Practical law, providing simple and succinct information and tools for legal practitioners. It provides templates (with drafting notes), toolkits, commercial trackers and summaries. The login information is:

- ID: qlegal@qmul.ac.uk
- Password: QMuLLaw23

Resources (cont.)

2. Free Resources:

In addition to subscription-based resources, you can use free and publicly available resources (on the condition that they are legitimate, trusted and referenced).

CooleyGo: This database provides a wide range of free legal and business content covering formation, financing, building a team, working with directors and advisers, intellectual property, M&A, IPOs and more.

- [Legal guidance](#) (make sure you select the UK filter)
- [Document generators](#) (very general wording but a good point of comparison when making a template)
- [Glossary](#)

qLegal: The ‘resource’ section on qLegal’s website contains many legal resources produced by students and reviewed by solicitors.

Gov UK: This website contains some basic legal guidance and templates which are good starting points when researching and looking to grasp legal concepts.

Legal Blogs: Legal blogs can be a great source for general guidance on the law and to stay up to date on new developments. Always check the jurisdiction and the writer’s credentials before using legal blogs’ content for guidance.

3. Using ChatGPT in your Programme

ChatGPT, other large language models (“LLMs”), and AI.

As innovative lawyers, we anticipate you may want to make use of LLMs and AI where appropriate during your programme. However, any LLM should be used ethically and responsibly, in accordance with the terms in our Student Contract. Further guidance will be given during induction and training.

In any event:

- You must **not include confidential client information** in your prompts.
- You should **always use reputable legal resources to validate the information** you receive using these tools. LLMs are language prediction tools and are known to make up facts or ‘hallucinate’.
- You should **make it clear** in any output you produce as part of your programme when you have used LLMs and AI (including, if relevant, in any bibliography that should detail the LLM/AI, and the prompts used).

Appendix 1- PLE Overview

What is Public Legal Education?

Public legal education, or “PLE”, strives to improve the level of legal awareness and legal understanding in the general public, as opposed to among legal professionals. PLE is delivered through interactive workshops, videos, checklists, visual guides, annotated templates, etc.

[This guide](#) provides excellent, practical tips for how to create and deliver effective PLE resources.

What will I learn by participating in PLE?

You will learn how to explain complicated legal concepts in a way that non-legal audiences can understand. You will design interactive, engaging workshops and resources explaining the law and raising awareness about the law. You will practise your public speaking skills. You will solidify your own understanding of an area of commercial law. You will develop empathy and commercial awareness of your audience and will build strong bonds with your teammates and PLE peers.

How will my work impact the clients?

In qLegal’s PLE programme, we aim to raise awareness of legal issues so the start-ups and students in our audience see the law as a tool that can help them and that is accessible to them.

Our PLE teams explain legal concepts and information but do not give legal advice. We encourage our audience to seek legal advice by booking an appointment with qLegal’s 1:1 Legal Advice Clinic.

The PLE resources that you create and deliver might even be uploaded to the qLegal website.

Appendix 1- PLE Overview (cont.)

Who are our PLE clients?

- Sixth-form students at Ada National College for Digital Skills
- Start-ups affiliated with the University of Essex and QMUL
- qLegal start-up clients and externship hosts
- Entrepreneurs affiliated with Hatch, The Fore
- Artists affiliated with Makerversity, ArtsAdmin and the Royal College of Art
- QMUL Electronic Engineering and Computer Science School students, including students at the Centre for Digital Music and Design, Innovation and Creative Engineering students.

How will I learn how to do PLE?

- qLegal volunteer training including 2 Saturday Bootcamps in October.
- qLegal skills training sessions, and substantive law training sessions from solicitors in October.
- Weekly Case Rounds at CCLS.
- Extensive feedback from qLegal staff and from practising solicitors at City law firms.
- Feedback after your final delivery: shortly after your workshop, save another 30 minutes to reflect individually and as a team with your qLegal supervisors.
- Team check-ins with with qLegal staff: you and your teammates will have 30-minute team meetings (online or in-person) with your qLegal supervisor to discuss and ask any questions about the progress of your deliverable.

Appendix 1- PLE Overview (cont.)



What are the steps and timelines for my Semester 1 PLE work?

- Sign up for your PLE assignment for Semester 1 (and Semester 2)
- Research client, prepare a client interview outline, connect with team
- Initial meeting with client (30-45mins)
- Initial meeting with external solicitors (30-45mins)
- Send meeting memos to qLegal within two days after calls with clients and solicitors.
- Meet deadlines for emailing drafts to qLegal and then to external solicitors, ensure to give qLegal staff and the solicitors 3 work days for their review
- Dress rehearsal at CCLS with qLegal staff and at least one other PLE team (2 hours)
- Final delivery of PLE workshop or resource (1-2 hours) + debrief with the qLegal supervisor (30 mins)

Appendix 1- PLE Overview (cont.)

How will I receive feedback from qLegal?

- You will send your draft to qLegal staff in Word format. They will then add their track changes and comments to your document. Here is an example script with qLegal comments: [03.03.2024-Draft Setting up a Website Workshop Script qLegal edits 4.3.24.docx](#)
- Here is the cover email from qLegal staff to the team:

‘... Big picture:

It is important to keep the audience engaged throughout the workshop. You did a good job by using plain English as much as possible. We expect you to also add real-life examples while introducing the legal concepts. We need to determine how to make the session a bit more interactive, including when to open up the workshop to discussion with the audience. For example, after discussing the requirements of a best practice, you can implement images from websites or even go to a website to show a good or a bad example. You can then ask the audience if a certain example meets the criteria of the 'best practice', facilitating a discussion.

Showing examples is especially relevant for teaching purposes. If you further explain a topic, such as 'consent mechanisms,' by demonstrating a website and how it obtains consent, the audience can easily relate and better understand the concepts like 'cookie consent banners' or 'opt-in consent,' etc.

I see that you added Lego's and Ambessa Play's cookie policies as good examples as we discussed earlier. I would suggest you show examples like these after and/or throughout each section. Another point is that these are good examples for children, so you might as well consider adding an 'adult' version of a cookie policy...’

Appendix 2- Projects Overview

What is involved in the Projects stream?

In this stream, postgraduate law students collaborate with students from other parts of Queen Mary to develop a solution that meets a client's brief. Whatever the project, you will be required to conduct research and apply creative and analytical thinking. You will also be working in a team and, for some projects, may be competing against other teams to provide the winning solution, as decided by your client and a panel of judges.

	Examples
Project	There are several types of projects available, with the specifics varying each year. You might be part of a team producing a multi-episode podcast; or be involved in a hackathon-style project to design a child-friendly privacy policy for a social enterprise; or presenting your research on cutting edge legal innovation.
Client	Clients vary but have included a pro bono unit of an international law firm, an internationally renowned photographer and performance artist, and a legal tech enterprise improving legal communications.
Client wants	Something innovative and relevant. As an example, a previous project deliverable was a user-friendly guide to a firm's standard Terms & Conditions. Our client wanted to give a good impression to its clients.
Collaborate with	Most projects are all about interdisciplinary collaboration so you will team up with students across different schools within QMUL. Law students have collaborated with students of tech, linguistics, psychology, economics and finance and business, as well as working alongside law students at our sister clinic, the Legal Advice Centre.
Learning gain	Soft and hard skills you might develop over the course of the project lifecycle can include collaboration, networking, managing your stakeholders, creative problem-solving using Design Thinking, detailed legal research, and how to pitch to a critical audience.
Impact	Solutions have been positively received by our clients with several implementing the suggested improvements, and outcomes from the projects being featured in academic publications and studies. You can read about the impact of project work on our website, or listen to previous episodes of the Podcast project to learn more.
Timing	Projects generally start with training from mid-October and can last for one semester or two. Your project Lead will be able to give specific details about timings and weekly commitments.

Appendix 2- Projects Overview (cont.)

How will I learn?

- Two qLegal volunteer training Saturday Bootcamps in October.
 - qLegal training sessions at CCLS in October.
 - Scheduled project meetings to develop key skills, support each other, and receive feedback.
 - You will receive extensive feedback throughout the project.
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Good Luck!

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