Components
The student participates at Monash-Oakleigh Legal Service, situated at 60 Beddoe Avenue, Clayton (right next to the University’s Clayton campus) attending one of the two client-intake sessions each week on either a Monday morning from 9am until 12pm (Group B) or Thursday night, from 6pm until 9pm (Group A). Students will be allocated into either Group A or B and cannot request to enrol in a particular group.

- In addition, you will be required to attend the Legal Service for a weekly file review session with your supervisor. These file review sessions will take place on an additional day, times to be arranged with your supervisor at the commencement of the unit. Further time may be required to work on your files.

- There is a seminar program of six 90 minute seminars, covering essential aspects of both legal skills and knowledge. This will usually take place on a Wednesday morning (unless otherwise indicated) at the Legal Service from 9.30 am to 11am on a weekly basis for the first six weeks of the clinical period.

Please note that attendance at both the follow on work sessions and the seminars are compulsory.

Period and value
The unit is offered on a “clinical period” basis for 14 weeks. Please note that the clinical period start and finish dates are different to those of normal teaching periods. While University holidays and lecture breaks are observed in relation to seminars, attendance at the Legal Service is continuous except for public holidays. The unit carries 12 points value in each clinical period.

Introductory Program

Orientation & Changeover (compulsory)

In all clinical periods there will be a period of changeover with the outgoing JD students.

Both streams of students will be required to attend orientation sessions. The orientation session dates are found on the CLE main page.

Group A
Group A JD students will shadow the outgoing JD students during the Legal Service session (6pm-9pm).

During the second week of changeover, Group A JD students will meet with clients with the assistance of the outgoing JD students at the Legal Service session (6 – 9pm).
**Group B**

Group B JD students will shadow the outgoing JD students during the Legal Service session (9am-12pm).

During the second week of changeover, Group B JD students will meet with clients with the assistance of the outgoing JD students at the Legal Service session (9am – 12pm).

**Workload**

The workload in Professional Practice is substantial. In addition to the formal components of the unit described above, the follow-up work required varies according to particular files and individual students, but on average will require a minimum of 2 additional days per week. Note that it is necessary to be able to spend time at the Legal Service after client interviews have finished, to do the necessary follow-up work and to meet with the supervisor.

**Legal Service**

Monash-Oakleigh Legal Service is open five days and some evenings per week to serve the University and the surrounding communities.

The Legal Service has its own management and its own responsibility to the community. Students are invited to participate in discussions of policy and administration. The legal work at Legal Service is under the supervision of professionally qualified lawyers.

It is the philosophy of the Legal Service that legal advice should be accessible to the public and that self-help should be encouraged.

The Legal Service handles a wide range of matters. The major categories are family, crime including traffic offences, consumer and debt issues, motor accidents, tenancy and social security. Every person seeking assistance is interviewed, and may be satisfied with advice only (between one third and one half of interviews result in advice only). If not, the Service then recommends to the client whether the matter should be handled by the student under supervision of the relevant member of staff or whether the matter should be referred to a local solicitor, under legal aid or otherwise. If the matter goes to court, counsel may be instructed and the student is given the opportunity to attend the hearing.

While the nature and extent of student workload varies according to a number of factors and each student experience may appear superficially to be different, the fundamental learning experience available to every student is the same. Every student is exposed to the operation of the law and the legal process in their social context and learns the essential skills of communication, analysis and judgment and the demands of professional ethics.
Advocacy
A highlight of the program in all clinical trimesters is the possibility of appearing on behalf of a Legal Service client before the Magistrates’ Court, Federal Circuit Court or Family Court. The Judges and Magistrates have agreed to give leave to Professional Practice students to appear (under supervision) on behalf of Legal Service clients in certain categories of cases. This is an opportunity unique to Professional Practice.

Commitment
As the unit is integrated with public Legal Services which are operated continuously, regular attendance is essential, from the taking-over of clients’ files at the beginning of the unit to the hand-over at the end. The ‘change-over’ week is the final week at the end of each clinical period and overlaps with the first week of the next clinical period. Reliability and punctuality are essential.

Assessment
Throughout each clinical trimester, emphasis is placed on the development by each student of:
- understanding of the legal process in its social context;
- analytical and decision-making skills.

1. Legal Service work (80%) - Casework at the Legal Service may be broken down into a number of aspects or processes. These are set out on a separate sheet, available on request.
2. Reflective Journal (20%) - The journal is written and submitted fortnightly to your supervisor. The purposes of the journal are to enhance your experience at the Legal Service, develop your reflective practice, to encourage analysis reflection and growth as a student and practitioner.

Students are encouraged to do student appearances (as described above) for clients. Students must have a court supervisor (usually a barrister or solicitor) oversee their appearance. It is expected that the student appearance would provide material for inclusion into a reflective journal.

Notes
1. Minimum requirements for passing the unit are:
   1. attendance at the Legal Service, as prescribed;
   2. obtaining a pass mark for Legal Service work as well as a pass in the unit as a whole; and
   3. completing the reflective journal

There is no formal examination.

2. Half way through the clinical period there is an informal ‘mid-clinical period’ review when the supervisor discuss strengths and weaknesses with each student.

3. If, at the end of the unit, further work is required of an unsatisfactory student, or if a supplementary or special examination is awarded, it will not usually be possible for the student to carry on at the Legal Service as before. In-coming students must take over. The student may be set revision work consisting, for example, of the preparation of detailed summaries and critiques of selected Legal Service files.

4. If a student fails the unit, the opportunity to repeat it will depend on the Convenor’s decision as to the availability of a place in a subsequent unit.
**Prescribed Material**

A large-format diary (to plan client consultations and follow-up work).

**Recommended Reading**
The Law Handbook, Fitzroy Legal Service

Lawyers Practice Manual (Vic) published by SMLS and Thomson (can be accessed at the legal services in hard copy or through the law library database)

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