

Extending access to 'Exceptional Case Funding' (ECF) applications for legal aid in the context of clinical legal education

Researcher name and institution:



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(on secondment to the Public Law Project until March 2018)

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The South West Doctoral Training Partnership/ Economic and Social Research Council

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1. Brief summary of what the research is about.

The research assesses the role that university legal clinics have in supporting individuals to access 'Exceptional Case Funding' (ECF) applications in areas of legal aid that would otherwise be out-of-scope.

The research is being conducted by the Public Law Project (PLP), a national legal charity that aims to improve access to public law remedies. PLP has previously conducted research

	with university legal clinics to investigate how clinical legal education can extend access to justice. The ECF research builds on this work, by assessing how feasible it is to develop a model that can be adopted by university legal clinics, in order to extend the availability of support for individuals who need to make an ECF application. The purpose of the research is to investigate the work that university legal clinics are doing to support ECF applications, and the potential advantages and/or challenges of promoting ECF as an area of work to be conducted by university legal clinics. The research is being conducted by Emma Marshall, on behalf of the Public Law Project (PLP). Emma Marshall is a PhD candidate at the University of Exeter, who is seconded to PLP for six months as part of her doctoral research.
2. What are the research questions?	1. To what extent do university legal clinics offer potential to expand the support available for ECF applications in the UK? 2. What are the possible models for setting up and running ECF clinics within existing or developing university legal clinics, and what are the advantages or disadvantages of these models?

	3. What are the resources or types of support that university legal clinics require to make good quality ECF applications, and how can PLP offer assistance?
3. What, if any, outputs so far?	n/a
4. What outputs are planned?	1. To produce a feasibility report to assess the advantages and limitations of developing university ECF Clinics to offer assistance for ECF applications. 2. To develop guidance or other resources for universities that are running, or considering setting up, an ECF Clinic. For example, this could take the form of best practice guidance, to be made publically available for university legal clinics, or a resource pack for universities to assist with setting up and running ECF clinics.
5. What is the anticipated impact?	The research is anticipated to assist PLP with the development of work to improve access to legal aid. It will provide university legal clinics and other interested parties with important information about how to incorporate work on ECF applications into clinical legal education, as well as the challenges or limitations of such projects, and the ways in which to overcome these challenges or mitigate risks.
6. Comments / additional information / requests for data or input from the broader administrative justice community	For further information about the project, or for university legal clinics interested in participating in the research, please contact e.marshall@publiclawproject.org.uk .