

**The Clinical Legal Education Handbook** edited by Linden Thomas and Nick Johnson, London, University of London Press, 2020, 465pp. £35 or Open Access edition free to read online or downloadable from Observing Law ISBNs 978-1-911507-16-1 (paperback edition) 978-1-911507-17-8 (PDF edition)

The number of clinical legal education programmes, which can be defined as the study of law through real, or simulated, casework, have grown considerably in United Kingdom law schools in the last fifteen years. However, the regulation of university law clinics has not kept up with developments. Previously writing in *The Law Teacher*, Linden Thomas memorably, and usefully, described them as being in a “regulatory black hole”,<sup>1</sup> which makes the publication of *The Clinical Legal Education Handbook* a particularly welcome development.

The book aims to “act as a practice guide and practical resource for those engaged in the design and delivery of clinical legal education programmes at university law schools” and succeeds admirably in achieving this aim. Whilst primarily aimed at clinics in England and Wales, it is likely to be of “interest to those engaged in clinic in other jurisdictions”. Similarly, whilst primarily aimed at clinic supervisors, it will be of interest to clinic students, particularly those involved in clinic governance. Its focus is supporting real casework and it does not cover simulated activities.

Part One provides a useful overview of the myriad number of forms university law clinics can take. Although the book will have been written before the Covid-19 pandemic struck there is useful guidance on setting up a virtual clinic.

Part Two deals with the regulatory framework in which clinics operate. Whether it’s regulation of solicitors and barristers in relation to clinics, debt, immigration advice or complying with universities’ regulatory frameworks, law clinics have a particularly challenging time navigating their way through regulatory requirements. Therefore, this section of the book will be a welcome guide to clinic supervisors attempting to do this. As there are relatively few law clinics regulated as alternative business structures or as immigration clinics these sections could well influence the development of future clinics in these areas. This part of the book is England-centric and would have benefitted with some consideration of the Welsh government’s Information and Advice Quality Framework, particularly how current advice standards can get passported through for recognition under it. Having said that, this part of the book is a much needed and valuable guide to the regulatory maze.

Assessing clinical practice is an incredibly thorny issue, which has been exercising the minds of clinic supervisors since the day law clinics started. Part Three sets out the options for assessment and will be welcomed not only by those new to assessing clinic but also by those who wish to reflect on their current assessment practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Linden Thomas, ‘Law clinics in England and Wales: a regulatory black hole’ (2017) 51(4) *The Law Teacher: The International Journal of Legal Education* 469 - 485

Part Four provides a useful oversight of the current research into clinical practice and has pointers as to how the research agenda can be developed.

Part Five contains a number of useful precedent documents and resources. This will be invaluable for those establishing or expanding existing clinical provision and can also serve as a repository of good practice.

The inception of the book can be traced back to the Clinical Legal Education Organisation's (CLEO) conference in June 2016 when the need for such a book was first identified. This shows how supportive clinicians tend to be of each other, as members of CLEO quickly rose to the challenge and came forward to contribute sections to the Handbook. It is fitting therefore that Part Six provides a glossary of clinical legal education networks.

Part Seven is a nice touch. A number of eminent clinicians reflect on: 'Things I wish I'd known before I started doing clinical legal education', This will provide encouragement to those less far along the road of clinical practice and will sustain them on the inevitable days when things do not go entirely to plan.

*The Clinical Legal Education Handbook*, which acts primarily as a guide for clinic supervisors, does fill a gap in the market. It is a useful complement to *A Student Guide to Clinical Legal Education and Pro Bono* edited by Kevin Kerrigan and Victoria Murray (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), which guides students through their clinical experience. Its advice on the various models of law clinics and how clinicians can interact with university authorities to ensure the sustainability of their provision complements *Promoting Justice Through Clinical Legal Education* by Jeff Giddings (Justice Press, 2013) although that is written more from an Australian rather than British perspective. The *Handbook's* focus on regulatory compliance means that there is scope for further books which concentrate on the development of soft skills in clinical settings such as dealing with clients living with vulnerabilities.

In conclusion, *The Clinical Legal Education Handbook* contains a wealth of knowledge and experience between its covers. It is a book borne out of generosity with several contributors providing their materials and reflections on their experiences for the benefit of the wider clinical legal education community. It should never be far from the law clinic supervisor's side.

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