



Professional Practice

Monash Law commenced its clinical legal education program in 1975. Organised into elective units, the program can be taken sequentially. The clinics continue to provide an example to other Australian law schools in terms of the numbers of participating students and in the rationale of its sequential stages and has a solid profile in the profession with over 1500 graduates, many of whom have returned as volunteer supervisors in later years to pass on their skills and values to succeeding generations of law students.

Professional Practice LAW5216 is the primary clinical elective unit. Each semester enrolls a quota of 40 students – a total of 120 per annum - with variable waiting lists in all semesters. Students who enrol in this unit are typically required to be available for 4 months for several days per week and to look after their clients' legal problems notwithstanding normal University vacation periods.

This unit is offered in two community-accessible locations: Monash-Oakleigh Legal Service (MOLS), which is housed in University premises in Clayton and takes 12 students per semester and Springvale Monash Legal Service (SMLS), which is located in City of Greater Dandenong premises in Springvale and takes 28 students per semester.

In Professional Practice students look after the legal problems of low income clients. With 10 to 15 ongoing clients – and always under the careful supervision of an experienced clinical teacher – each student learns the basic skills of client interviewing and legal 'diagnosis', the use and management of legal interpreters, the boundaries between a lawyers' role and those of other human service professionals, letter writing, oral and written legal negotiation, accountability to supervisors and to their clients, client file construction and management, the impact of trust accounting, lawyer-assisted mediation and court advocacy.

How to apply:

In order to apply for this unit, students must complete a form entitled "Application for a Place in Professional Practice Law 5216". This form is available from Student Services and must be completed and returned to them.

In order to be given a place, students must have passed, as a minimum, *Introduction to Legal Reasoning, Research and Writing, Criminal Law and Procedure, Contract and Torts*.



Monash Oakleigh Legal Service

Places are subject to a quota. In granting places the following factors are taken into account:

- a) How close the student is to completing their degree. Preference is given to students who would be completing Professional Practice towards the end of their degree.
- b) How many hours of paid work the student is doing. If a student is doing more than 20 hours per week of paid work, then it normally they would not be accepted into the unit. Students may be contacted to discuss this further regarding flexibility.
- c) How many other units would be taken with Professional Practice. If the student is doing more than three other units as well as Professional Practice, normally they would not be accepted into the unit. It may be necessary to look at enrolments in more than one semester if the clinical period overlaps two semesters.
- d) Less importantly –
 - i. if a student speaks languages other than English;
 - ii. if a student has had relevant community sector experience.

The Convenor of Legal Practice Programs makes the ultimate decision of whether a student is offered a place in the program, subject to the above factors and his/her discretion.

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