

CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION AT NUI GALWAY

Part-Time Placements with Galway Solicitors Sought for Final Year Law Students

Dear Sir/Madam:

In January of each academic year, a number of final year undergraduate students from the School of Law at NUI Galway undertake part-time placements in a variety of law and law-related environments under the rubric of our clinical legal education programme. The programme has been in existence since academic year 2006-2007, seeks to complement the theory students learn in the lecture theatre with “real world” experience and has been recognised as a significant innovation in university legal training nationally and internationally.

The placements last for ten weeks and students are available for between 80 and 100 hours. This is the equivalent of one full day per week, but students and supervisors are encouraged to work out whatever model works to the maximum benefit of both. Payment is strongly discouraged because the students are earning academic credit for their work while on placement, just as they would for a traditional module. Supervisors are required solely to complete a one page evaluation form at the close of the placement. Also, it is expected that students will be given actual legal work (e.g., research of law, attending court proceedings, participating in meetings, reviewing files, assisting with conferences, drafting policy documents, etc.) while on placement, not more mundane tasks (e.g., photocopying, making coffee, etc.).

The programme has been a huge success since it was established and the law school now has long-running partnerships with a wide range of organisations here in Galway and throughout the country. Supervisors often comment to me that they love the enthusiasm and fresh perspectives offered by law students and that they wish they had a similar opportunity when they were in university.

This year, there is unprecedented demand for the placements – largely because the students who preceded them had such wonderful experiences. I know I speak for the law school as a whole when I say that we would hugely appreciate new placement partners.

Placements for academic year 2019-2020 will commence the week of 20th January. Anyone who has not participated in the programme before and who is interested in taking on one or more students should contact Larry Donnelly, Lecturer & Director of Clinical Legal Education in the School of Law, by email at larry.donnelly@nuigalway.ie or by phone at 087 7425965 or 091 495372.

Best regards,

Larry Donnelly
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