LEGAL AID CLINIC (LAC) - SEMESTER TWO, 2016
ANALYSIS OF INTERN EVALUATION FORMS

This report provides survey results from students who participated in the LAC Program in the second half of 2016.

1. INTERN INFORMATION

1.1 Interns who had visited a legal office
Yes 15  No 7

1.2 Interns who had visited a legal aid office or community legal centre
Yes 5  No 17

1.3 Interns who had done a student placement in a legal office
Yes 5  No 17

1.4 Interns who had worked in a legal office or in a legal environment
Yes 10  No 12

If “Yes” to any above, please give details and explain what skills you gained:

- I’ve learnt about being professional in dealing with clients and colleagues. I’ve learnt to draft legal correspondence.
- I have worked under a sole practitioner in Melbourne and at Baker & McKenzie in Malaysia. I worked on numerous practice areas without any prior knowledge and thus had to adapt and familiarise myself with the areas of law. Well adept in legal research.
- In Centrelink and ATSIC I worked in the Legal Departments. I did discharges of Mortgages and looked after the amalgamation of Centrelink/Medicare/Child support and made up comparative provisions table.
- I signed my parents will/legal guardianship documents. I learned about how to describe a will & discuss incapacity etc.
- I had experience in a law firm, the Family Court and government. I had legal writing and analytical skills.
- I developed effective communication skills, ability to conduct legal research and drafting legal documents.
- Legal Aid client interviews. Drafting documents on behalf of solicitor for review, eg letters of demand.
- EDO clinic. Advice.
- Visited lawyers for family business. It was really long time ago.
- Did work with Albury/Wodonga Legal Community Centre Hume.

1.5 University Law School attended by Interns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Interns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of New England</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Canberra</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of South Australia</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Darwin University</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>UC/ANU</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1.6 Interns who did clinical legal work as a course requirement for their law degree
Yes 5  No 17

1.7 If “Yes”, give details and explain what skills you gained
- Interviewing skills, legal research, working in a legal environment. Learned how to respond to various demands from clients.
- GDLP at ANU
- EDO clinic. Advice.
- Did work with Albury/Wodonga Legal Community Centre Hume

2. PREPARATORY WORKSHOP

2.1 How useful was the Preparatory Workshop for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Useful</th>
<th>Fairly Useful</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Suggestions about how the LAC Preparatory Workshop could be improved
- Everything is perfect!
- I don’t think you can adequately prepare to a level of 100% comfortability, because it’s not until you are in the situation or arrive for the day that things make sense or come together.
- None. Thanks.
- No, it was great!
- Not really; I have benefited from existing program.
- I knew what was expected of me at initial workshop.
- Clearer details of date and location (I thought it was a week earlier).
- No.
- Maybe more about how to actually write letters of demand because having no experience was intimidating.
- I don’t think the way the session was run could improve, it was well done. My only suggestion would be a more detailed outline of areas we should focus on when doing observations and how to prepare for interviews.

3. LAC ON-SITE PROGRAM
[The LAC On-Site Program comprises 7 days of on-site observation, learning and practice]

3.1 What skills did you learn or practice?
- Interviewing 21
- Providing information 11
- Work organisation 8
- Drafting correspondence 18
- Drafting court documents 3
- Other drafting 3
- Phone calls 5
- Organising legal material 3
- Negotiating 1
- Managing clients 9
- Court/tribunal attendance 19
- Administrative tasks 13
- Research 16
- Other 2
3.2 How would you rate the LAC Program as a learning experience for you?

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<tr>
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<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

3.3 How could the LAC Program be improved?

- Everything is good!
- I would’ve preferred to have more opportunities to “shadow” duty lawyers. Because that’s a point of view that can’t be observed from the public.
- It’s an excellent course.
- More interview placements. Allow us to be more proactive rather than just observing.
- Children’s Crim Law to be more organised? Was assigned but for some reason was not available and I shadowed A2 Duty Lawyer instead!
- More days of interviewing clients.
- More opportunity to practice skills/more variety in practical tasks would always be appreciated, although have to be realistic.
- It could be longer. I know the interview days are valuable but the court observation is also important.
- Slightly more contact with Legal Aid staff and a bit more direction would help.
- If we were given more opportunities for legal researches after client interviews, it would be more helpful for our understandings and dealing with similar cases in the future.
- I would like there to be an additional round of interviews for participants. They were very interesting and great learning experience.
- The LAC program was an excellent experience.
- Notify duty lawyers that they can give responsibility to students.
- More things to do in the afternoons.
- Can’t imagine – it’s great!
- Possibly by offering a lawyer placement period. I have enjoyed LAC more and more as it has progressed and very much wish I could continue for another 7 days.

4. ABOUT SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF LAC

4.1 Main LAC Program at Civic Legal Aid Office

4.1.1 How did you generally find the following? 1

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Assistance/direction in relation to tasks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Feedback from instructors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. Adequacy of supervision</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Adequacy of resources on-site</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2 How would you rate the Main LAC Program as a learning experience for you?

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</table>
Poor | Average | Good | Very Good |

4.1.3 Comments on the Main LAC Program

- It is a good experience to deal with client and in working out the relevant legal issues and apply them to the law that we have learnt in law school!
- Interviews were great. The opportunity to be in the interview room ALONE with a client (even for a mere 5 – 10 mins) was very valuable experience. It helps build confidence to a great extent. Having the opportunity to shadow legal and duty lawyers from the DV unit & criminal was an eye-opener. I have a greater appreciation for the kind of work done at legal aid.
- I think that the LAC Program has been such a valuable experience. I feel like I have learnt so much and that law students who want to go into practice should do this program.
- Grateful for the experience.
- More LAC tags at the office! Email accounts to send approved correspondence to clients would be great.
- Really valuable experience, especially for me – as I do not have much practical legal experience at all! Really grateful for the opportunity to exercise what I learned at uni in practice a bit – and it is very, very different!!
- Great supervisor & learning experience. Will recommend it anytime.
- Very valuable – broad range of issues. Would have liked more time at LAO with clients and listening to LAO solicitors advice and approaches to issues.
- I learned a lot from the hands-on experience.
- Enjoyable, quite challenging (especially if experiencing for first time) – exposure to wide variety of clients and matters I think an eye-opening aspect.
- ACAT was hard because it was watching a really hard negotiation. Not enjoying. DV was good but short (half day).
- Interviews were very interesting and a great experience.
- So interesting – great to actually speak to clients. I feel much more confident now to go into practice. All of the solicitors were of a high standard and willing to answer my questions.
- I really enjoyed the client interviews held in the legal aid office. However, I think more assistance on guidance can be provided to students when they are involved in the Criminal section of the Legal Aid. More student involvement would be better than just sitting in, but overall was a good experience.
- Extremely insightful. Loved the first-hand experience to social justice and life circumstances. How to identify legal issues.
- Incredibly insightful, exciting and unique experience. I would recommend it without hesitation to peers.
- Interviews are the best part. Real clients are valuable experience.
- More interviews – maybe in other areas?
4.2 Domestic Violence Duty Service

4.2.1 Did you attend the Domestic Violence Duty Service?
Yes 14  No 7

4.2.2 If yes, how would you rate the DVDS as a learning experience for you?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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4.2.3 Comments on DVDS

- I learnt a lot of the court process from that day. I have been part of the process of how a personal protection order/DVO been applied to a registrar hearing to the grant.
- It was quite a quiet day when I went to the DV unit. But nevertheless, observing how the lawyers dealt with individual cases was a good learning experience.
- It’s very useful to contrast ACAT with a court. I gained a lot from watching the directions hearings. More focussed on evidence & case preparation. The informality makes for a comfortable and accessible experience for people.
- Informal but highly valuable to see alternatives to the Court system. Mental Health hearings were also extremely valuable, as could see how those orders are made & processed. Could also observe the decision process.
- Good experience interacting with lawyer and clients. Gained insight on the process and related legal/enforcement systems as well as issues re gender bias, conflict of interest, admin & emotional considerations.
- Great supervision by duty lawyer from legal aid.
- Lack of clients made things not very enterprising – don’t know what can really be done about that though.
- Too short, only half a day.
- I just attended a PPO interview and interim orders, so not what I was expecting, but still good to learn from.
- Very different experience – I would have liked having the opportunity to learn more about the legislation (although I can do this in my own time), but a great introduction to issues surrounding DV.
- The LAC lawyer was excellent.
- Amazing to see how lawyers interact with such sensitive issues. Being allowed to witness such sensitive interviews.
- There were not many clients, so limited exposure.

4.3 ACT Civil & Administrative Tribunal

4.3.1 Did you attend any Hearings at ACAT? Please indicate which:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential Tenancy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy &amp; Water</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Law</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Land &amp; Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational Discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil disputes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: FOI</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2 If "yes", how would you rate the observations at ACAT as a learning experience for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
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4.3.3 Comments on the ACAT Placement

- Prior to this experience, I didn’t have much exposure to the workings of a tribunal. I’m glad to have this opportunity and realise how interesting cases are at the tribunal. The staff and tribunal members were very warm and helpful, ensuring I got the most out of my visits.
- Very valuable experience & shows the depth & relationships of poverty & justice.
- Tribunal community members very helpful & accommodating. Really made an effort to make my time there an educational experience. Promoted a lot of that insightful discussion was great to engage in.
- Great learning opportunity.
- One really unengaging negotiation. No other open hearings today.
- The mental health hearings were confronting, but the experience was a positive one.
- I found it very practical because I believe that people can have dispute from a small matter, and that can be escalated if not resolved properly. And because of the nature claimed in the ACAT, the amount of claim is small and people would not resolve the issues due to the fear of costs they may have to pay. So, I now understand how I can help people in the future.
- I learnt a lot about ACAT as a body & its powers. I appreciated being given a role in guardianship (calling the parties) rather than just observing.
- The guardianship hearings were very fact based. Not much of legal issues has been raised. It was interesting to see another aspect of law and how it can be applied to help the mentally impaired people in society.
- Very useful to understand ACAT processes & procedure.
- Didn’t realise FOI was dealt with at ACAT. The informal contrast with courts. Much more about reaching an agreement. Felt more personal.
- Good to see!
- Surprisingly informal. Particularly beneficial to see the non-adversarial approach in practice and the different approaches of each member.

5. OVERALL

5.1 Aspects of LAC Which Interns Found Most Useful/Instructive

- All of it was beneficial. I have learnt a lot of real world practice knowledge from all of them. It is like putting together a puzzle from what we have learnt in law school and into practice. If I were to have to choose one that is the most instructive for me, I would choose the client legal interviews. This is because I get to deal with clients in a professional manner which I lack the most in. Also, I get to learn how to provide legal advice from our professional lawyers.
- Opportunity to interview clients independently. Shadowing duty lawyers. Exposure to ACAT & the opportunity to do a 10-day placement at ACAT.
- The practical, hands-on interviews develop your confidence and knowledge in the law. To shadow solicitors/barristers is invaluable in creating a human real interaction.
- Mental Health was very valuable experience and shows the depth & relationship of poverty & justice.
- Interviews! These were real practical experiences where we could interact with real clients and deal with real matters. It also taught me how to handle client instructions & stories – not to over analyse what they say and to clarify issues. This isn’t a law school
exam where all the relevant information is served on a dish.

- Feedback from instructors/lawyer/community tribunal member. Linking up with a lawyer – being able to ask questions and chat with them. Observing lawyer-patient communication & advice given. Interview days. Debriefing at end of day.
- All, including observations.
- All aspects were useful however the interviews were particularly of assistance – different issues, different approaches to solution.
- I enjoyed all aspects as I learned a lot about the services available.
- Interviewing days, which included writing file notes, drafting letters etc. Re observation days: again, seeing how lawyers speak to clients, other parties; their approach to advocacy; and so on.
- The Family Court observation & client interviewing.
- The variety and exposure to different areas.
- The interviews – felt that they were the most participative aspect and I appreciated the constructive feedback.
- What I enjoy the most about LAC was the opportunities to interview clients and see how lawyers give advice on a range of matters. I enjoy the variety of the cases that comes before us and it was rewarding to see how we can assisted from the valuable information they can get from an half hour advice.
- Interviewing clients and sitting in a client interview. Seeing the lawyers try and decide how to deal with a client in an encouraging, but firm way. Barriers to justice in such a huge, confrontational way. Differing knowledge of clients.
- The interviews.
- Participation. Supervision from practising solicitors.
- Interviews! Although Supreme Court observation was very beneficial in terms of advocacy & evidence.
- Experience in client management. Understanding of legal system. Exploring different areas of law in practice.

5.2 Aspects of LAC Which Interns Found Least Useful/Instructive

- As I have mentioned above, I find all of them useful to me. I have shadowed the criminal law section, DV unit and family law section. I learnt a lot from shadowing the lawyers. If I were to choose the least instructive one, I would say family law because I only got to shadow the solicitor for half a day and I did court observations in the afternoon. I also learn a lot from court observation but as compared to the rest, I would say family law.
- Observing court sessions that are ordinarily available to the general public.
- Maybe the Children's rotation because we weren't allowed in but that's no-one's fault.
- None.
- Children's Criminal Section – as I was unable to enter the Children’s Court, I essentially had to do Court observations. I have done this multiple times for my law courses, so I didn’t really learn anything new.
- None.
- Nil.
- There were none.
- The interviews – I need to build up my confidence in talking to people.
- Sitting in court, at least when no inside knowledge to connect the dots with (in terms of matching what is discussed in, for example, an interviews with what is later said in court)
- ACAT
- Long down periods whilst interviewing.
- Probably observations at Supreme Court – it was very interesting but I preferred the aspects of the clinic where I had a more active role – felt I learnt more.
- The rotation on court observations was the least attractive activities because there was not much student involvement and is an activity that student can do outside of the LAC program.
• Duty lawyers not explaining what they were doing.
• General court observations.
• All instructive.
• Family Court observation: simply because there were only two matters being heard on the day of my observation.
• Waiting around when there is no case to observe.

5.3 Would you recommend participation in LAC to other Legal Workshop students?

Yes  20    No  0

5.4 Any other comments?

• Loved this opportunity! Had a great time. Thank you 😊
• Overall, it is still a great program! You get to observe matters that you probably would not be able to normally (e.g. Mental Health) or would not consider (e.g. ACAT). It gives a holistic experience of the capabilities and avenues of the legal system. 😊
• Really great experience – wish I did the clinical program during my undergraduate!
• I think we all need hands-on practice and experience to prepare us for our future in law.
• Thanks!
• I learnt a great deal – such a great opportunity – all law students should do it!
• The LAC program was a fantastic experience for me! I would recommend to any law student. Thank you for organising this program!
• Thank you. Amazing experiences!
• Thank you for your flexibility!
• A big thank you to Peter S, Peter C & Margie. They have been wonderful teachers and I have greatly enjoyed to know them and learning from them.
• Thank you for a good experience!