



**Windsor Law**  
University of Windsor

# CLINIC PRACTICE PROGRAM

## STUDENT MANUAL



# Windsor Law

University of Windsor

Dear Windsor Law Student,

We are excited to welcome you to the Clinic Practice Program at Windsor Law and are looking forward to supporting you throughout your experience from the application process to preparing successful candidates for their placement.

The Clinic Practice Program at the University of Windsor's Faculty of Law allows students the opportunity to engage in experiential learning, or 'learning in place', at a legal clinic, providing legal services to clients living in poverty under the supervision of a lawyer.

This manual offers information, resources, and various policies of the Legal Clinic Practice Program that will assist you in navigating the application process for the program and will prepare you to enrol in the clinics for credit. It is designed to assist you to understand the basic contours of the program. Students who are accepted into the program will also receive syllabi, course materials, orientation materials, and office procedures and policies. This manual is not a replacement for those materials, rather it is intended to supplement them.

If you have any feedback about the manual or the program, please feel free to forward your comments to the Clinic Professor. Please feel free to connect with the Clinic Professor, Jillian Rogin, and the Clinical and Experiential Learning Coordinator, Stacey Marion, at any time before or during your term at the clinic. Our contact information is as follows:

Jillian Rogin [roginjl@uwindsor.ca](mailto:roginjl@uwindsor.ca), 519-253-3000 x4358  
Stacey Marion [smarion@uwindsor.ca](mailto:smarion@uwindsor.ca), 519-253-3000 x4297

We wish you all the best for a successful term!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JR'.

Professor Jillian Rogin  
Assistant (Clinic) Professor

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## Overview

The Faculty of Law at the University of Windsor recognizes the importance of clinical programs<sup>1</sup> in meeting the mission of educating well-rounded, competent, ethical students with an understanding of social justice practice.

As with most clinical programs, there are both in-clinic and in-class portions of the Clinic Practice Program. The in-class portion is met through taking the Clinic Seminar course. The in-clinic portion is met through attendance at the Clinic for a certain number of credits per term (the in-Clinic Placement). The Clinic Seminar and the in-Clinic Placement are two separate courses, with separate course codes, that combine to create the Clinic Practice Program. Students must enrol in both courses which are taken simultaneously.

The Clinic Practice Program credit stream is intended to give students a focused practice experience while also recognizing the importance of reflective practice, critical self-awareness, critical engagement with lawyering ideologies and approaches, and a deeper understanding of law as it operates in the lives of clients, most of whom are living on low income.

The **in-Clinic Placement** portion of the Practice Program is evaluated on a pass/fail basis. Students have a wide variety of credit options for enrollment in the in-Clinic Placement portion of the Practice Program depending on which clinic the student is placed at. Community Legal Aid (CLA) accepts students on a part-time basis (4-7 credits) for one or both academic terms or on a full-time basis (8-11 credits) for one academic term. Legal Assistance of Windsor (LAW) encourages full-time placements (8-11 credits) and Community Legal Assistance Sarnia (CLAS) and Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic (CKLC) only accept students who are able to enroll for 11 credits. Each credit equals three hours per week at the respective clinic. For example, enrolling for 11 credits means that the student will spend 33 hours per week at the clinic. During the term, students will complete self-assessment forms to articulate their development of competencies relating to the in-Clinic Placement portion of the Practice Program. Supervising lawyers and the Clinic Professor will review their assessments and provide regular feedback on the student's skill development and progress.

Students are also required to additionally enroll in the **Clinic Seminar** course which is the in-class component of the Clinic Practice Program. The Seminar course is a 3-credit seminar-style course where students engage with readings and other materials focusing on reflective practice and self-awareness. Students will critically engage with lawyering and legal processes, centering around social justice themes including decolonization, anti-Black racism, anti-oppression praxis, and professional identity development. The Seminar requires students to integrate reading, reflection, practice, and classroom discussions about the process of lawyering, the role of the advocate in community, and in poverty law settings. The Seminar course is a numerically graded course.

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<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Professor Rose Voyvodic who was largely responsible for developing the legal clinic academic program at Windsor law and to Professor Gemma Smyth who took over the program after Rose passed away in 2007. The work of Professor Voyvodic and Professor Smyth in developing clinic and experiential learning continues to inform the Clinic Practice Program including the material presented in this manual.

## The Clinics

The Clinic Practice Program generally operates at four legal clinics in the Southwest region: Community Legal Aid (CLA), Legal Assistance of Windsor (LAW), Community Legal Assistance Sarnia (CLAS) and Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic (CKLC)<sup>2</sup>. Students who are placed at either CLAS or CKLC are encouraged to live in the same region as these clinics for the duration of the academic term. Commuting is not encouraged. Further information about each clinic follows:

### Community Legal Aid

Located in downtown Windsor, CLA is a Student Legal Aid Services Society (SLASS) legal clinic offering services to University of Windsor undergraduate students and members of the Windsor-Essex community living on low income. Both full-time and part-time placements are available for students. Students work in the following areas of law: summary conviction criminal matters, provincial offences, housing law for tenants, small claims including wrongful dismissal, employment standards, family, and academic integrity matters. More information is available on the CLA website (<http://communitylegalaidservices.com>).

### Legal Assistance of Windsor

Located in downtown Windsor, LAW is a community legal clinic offering services to members of the Windsor-Essex community living on low income. Full-time placements are strongly encouraged; part-time placements occur on an exceptional basis. Students work in a multidisciplinary model with social workers and lawyers in the following areas of law: housing law for tenants, Criminal Injuries Compensation, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Employment Insurance, and refugee/immigration. More information is available on the LAW website (<http://legalassistanceofwindsor.com>).

### Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic (CKLC)

Located in Chatham, CKLC is a community legal clinic offering services to members of the Chatham-Kent community. Students work in a variety of areas of law including housing law for tenants, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Canada Pension Plan, disability issues, Wills and Powers of Attorney, employment law, Human Rights in the Workplace, and Criminal Injury Compensation. More information is available on the CKLC website (<http://www.cklc.ca>).

### Community Legal Assistance Sarnia (CLAS)

Located in Sarnia, CLAS is a community legal clinic that provides legal assistance to low-income residents of Sarnia and Lambton County. Students work in a variety of areas of law including housing law for tenants, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Canada Pension Plan, employment law, access to health and community care, Human Rights, and Criminal Injury Compensation. More information is available on the CLAS website ([https://www.facebook.com/pg/SarniaCLAS/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/SarniaCLAS/about/?ref=page_internal)).

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<sup>2</sup> Note that CKLC has not been able to take students on in the past number of years.

## Academic Program at Each Clinic: In-Clinic Placement

### Legal Assistance of Windsor (LAW) General Program, Immigration Program

University of Windsor Law students who are in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of law school can enroll at LAW for course credit during the fall and/or winter academic terms. The LAW in-Clinic Placement awards course credits to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year law students who, under the supervision of a lawyer, take on all aspects of the client file, including litigation.

#### Academic Credit

1. Full-time in the fall or winter terms – you would choose to take LAW for between 8-11 credits in one academic term. Each credit equals 3 hours of work at the clinic. For example, 8 credits = 24 hours of work at the clinic per week.
2. Part-time in both the fall and winter terms – you would choose to take LAW for between 4-7 credits in both academic terms. Each credit equals 3 hours of work at the clinic. For example, 4 credits = 12 hours of work at the clinic per week for both the fall and winter academic terms. Note that part-time placements are available on an exceptional basis.

Students must complete 3 self-assessments and review them with the Clinic Professor during scheduled meetings throughout the term. The assessments allow students to reflect on their performance as advocates, development of professional skills and knowledge, and the application of the *Rules of Professional Conduct*. The evaluations are meant to supplement the ongoing mentorship and supervisory relationship with the supervising lawyers. Students in both the part-time and the full-time program must also enroll in the 3-credit Clinic Seminar Course during the term the student participates at the clinic. Students who have no prior experience at LAW (ie. did not work there for paid employment in the summer months) are not able to participate in the part-time credit option and are encouraged to enroll for the maximum number of credits (11).

### Community Legal Aid (CLA) General Program

University of Windsor Law students can enroll at CLA for course credit during the fall and winter academic terms. The CLA Academic Program awards course credits to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year law students who, under the supervision of a lawyer, take on all aspects of the client file including litigation. As a Clinic Practice Program student at CLA, you will be assigned to a group, but unlike volunteers you will perform the role of both a Caseworker and Senior Caseworker on your own caseload.

Please note that the CLA General Program is only able to enroll students into the program on an exceptional basis. There are no guaranteed spots available for academic credit. Only applicants that have demonstrated exceptional ability in their prior work at CLA will be considered for academic credit positions.

CLA students who have worked at CLA during the summer months are invited to be enrolled in the Clinic Practice Program for academic credit as group leaders. No application is required.

## Academic Credit

University of Windsor Law students can enroll at CLA for course credit during the fall and/or winter academic terms.

### Credit Options:

1. Full-time in the fall or winter terms – you would choose to take CLA for between 8-11 credits in one academic term. Each credit equals 3 hours of work at the clinic. For example, 8 credits = 24 hours of work at the clinic per week.
2. Part-time in one or both the fall and winter terms – you would choose to take CLA for between 4-7 credits in one or both academic terms. Each credit equals 3 hours of work at the clinic. For example, 4 credits = 12 hours of work at the clinic per week for both the fall and/or winter academic terms.

Students must complete 3 self-evaluations and review them with the Clinic Professor. The evaluations allow students to reflect on their performance as advocates, development of professional skills and knowledge, and application of the *Rules of Professional Conduct*. The evaluations are meant to supplement the ongoing mentorship and supervisory relationship with the supervising lawyers.

Students in both the part-time and the full-time program must also additionally enroll in the 3-credit Clinic Seminar Course during the term the student participates at the clinic.

Pre-Requisites – Students applying for an Academic Practice position in the CLA general program must have volunteered for two terms at CLA and must have successfully completed Evidence and Criminal Procedure. Exceptions to these pre-requisites may be made on a case-by-case basis.



## Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic (CKLC)

University of Windsor Law students can enroll full-time at CKLC for course credit during the fall or winter academic terms. CKLC is located in Chatham, Ontario, a 45-minute drive from Windsor. Students interested in this program are often from the Chatham community or hope to work there in the future. Students must provide their own transportation and are expected to attend a weekly Clinic Seminar class in Windsor.

### Credit Options:

1. Full-time in the fall or winter terms – the Clinic Practice Program requires students to enroll for 11 credits which equals 33 hours per week at CKLC.

Students must complete 3 self-evaluations and review them with the Clinic Professor. The evaluations allow students to reflect on their performance as advocates, development of professional skills and knowledge, and application of the *Rules of Professional Conduct*. The evaluations are meant to supplement the ongoing mentorship and supervisory relationship with the supervising lawyers. Students must also enroll in the 3-credit Clinic Seminar Course during the term the student participates at the clinic.

## Community Legal Assistance Sarnia (CLAS)

University of Windsor Law students can enroll full-time at CLAS for course credit during the fall or winter academic terms. Students interested in this program are often from the Sarnia community or hope to work there in the future. Students must provide their own transportation and are expected to attend a weekly Clinic Seminar class in Windsor.

### Credit Options:

1. Full-time in the fall or winter terms – the Clinic Practice Program requires students to enroll for 11 credits which equals 33 hours per week at CLAS.

Students must complete 3 self-evaluations and review them with the Clinic Professor. The evaluations allow students to reflect on their performance as advocates, development of professional skills and knowledge, and application of the Rules of Professional Conduct. The evaluations are meant to supplement the ongoing mentorship and supervisory relationship with the supervising lawyers. Students must also enroll in the 3-credit Clinic Seminar Course during the term the student participates at the clinic.



## Applying for a Position

Before you apply for a position at one of the legal clinics, there are a number of things to consider. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they graduate law school having completed all of their program requirements. For questions regarding the program requirements, students should contact the Windsor Law Academic Coordinator ([lawac@uwindsor.ca](mailto:lawac@uwindsor.ca)).

Students should map out their remaining terms and credit requirements to ensure that they are able to take on a term at the clinic and to ensure they are able to create a manageable schedule/credit allotment during their term. At LAW, students are strongly encouraged to enroll in the in-Clinic Placement portion of the Practice Program for the maximum number of credits (11) and not take any courses apart from the Clinic Seminar (3 credits). Many, if not most, former clinic students report regret when they enroll in multiple courses other than the In-Clinic Placement, and the Clinic Seminar. The Clinic Professor is always available to meet with you, both prior to applying and after being accepted, to assist you in mapping out a course schedule that makes sense for both you and the clinic

Working with a vulnerable and marginalized client-base often means working with clients who have experienced trauma and sometimes, very severe trauma. While working with clients can be incredibly rewarding, it can also be incredibly emotionally difficult particularly for law students who do not bring prior experience in this regard. Before applying, students should understand that the nature of the work at the clinic can be difficult in many respects. The challenging nature of the work is one of the reasons why we discourage students from taking classes outside of the Clinic Practice Program courses.

Once you have applied and have been offered a position at one of the clinics, it is imperative that you only accept if you are positive that you are able to commit. Once a student accepts an offer to enroll in a clinic or experiential learning opportunity, the student is expected to follow through with their commitment. We urge students to finalize their course schedules as early as possible as extensive arrangements often need to be made to replace a student who 'drops' the program. In particular, CLA and LAW are adversely affected when students withdraw their acceptance into the program. As such, a policy has been created that requires the permission of the Clinic Professor before a student is able to withdraw (once enrolled).

## Enrolling/Registering for the Clinic Practice Program

Students who are accepted in the Clinic Practice Program are not able to enroll/register for their clinic courses on the UWinsite Student without 'permission'. Prior to the start of each term, the Clinic Professor emails the Academic Coordinator to provide a list of the clinic students who are enrolled for the upcoming academic term. The Academic Coordinator then sends the students 'permission' to enroll, and the student enrolls using UWinsite Student. If the student faces any difficulty enrolling, they should contact the Academic Coordinator ([lawac@uwindsor.ca](mailto:lawac@uwindsor.ca)) and the Clinic Professor ([roginjl@uwindsor.ca](mailto:roginjl@uwindsor.ca)).

## Student Roles and Responsibilities

Students are placed at one of the four legal clinics for the duration of the academic term. Regardless of which clinic the student is placed at, the role of the student remains relatively similar<sup>3</sup>. Under the close supervision of review counsel or a staff lawyer, the student assumes all aspects of the work involved in representing live clients, including but not limited to intake, client meetings, client management, legal research and writing, case theory and development, litigation including conducting hearings, and attending court/tribunal appearances. The student is responsible for all aspects of the client file but is closely supervised by a licensed lawyer.<sup>4</sup>

The litigation involved at the legal clinics requires the student to speak in courts and tribunals. In many circumstances, the supervising lawyer will be present in court but there may be circumstances where the student is not directly supervised (ie. in particular at CLA). Law students working for credit at the legal clinic carry full caseloads and workloads are adjusted having regard to the number of credits the student is enrolled for.

Students are encouraged to seek out opportunities to engage in systemic advocacy work. This may include creating and conducting Public Legal Education presentations (PLE's), developing systemic litigation strategies, and generally engaging in the systemic advocacy work that each clinic may be involved in.

Students are responsible for their engagement with learning in the context of a legal clinic. We expect students to actively seek feedback, to understand their mistakes as learning opportunities, and to practice active resilience in these processes. We also expect students to identify when they are feeling overwhelmed and to communicate this to their supervising lawyers and the Clinic Professor.

### Student Roles and Responsibilities – CLA Group Leaders

When enrolled for academic credit, CLA group leaders are responsible for running a weekly group meeting time. Each group is comprised of approximately 8 caseworkers, and 2 senior caseworkers. Group leaders are responsible for providing leadership, mentorship, and assistance to the students in their group. Please also refer to “CLA Group Leader Expectations”, a document that has been created with the input of former CLA group leaders.

Group leaders enrolled at CLA in the Clinic Practice Program may also be required to be placed on the litigation ladder and may also have carriage of their own files. They may also be asked to fill in when one of their students is sick or unavailable to complete tasks on their files, including appearing in court.

In all other respects, Group Leaders are expected to fulfill the roles and responsibilities that are noted above.

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<sup>3</sup> Group leaders are an exception to this as they may or may not directly represent clients. The primary responsibilities of group leaders is outlined *infra*. At CLAS, the student may or may not have carriage of their own files. Students applying to CLAS may want to speak to the Clinic Professor to inquire about the nature of the work they will undertake as there are some differences between CLAS and LAW/CLA.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of the rights of appearance for law students, see here: <https://lso.ca/becoming-licensed/lawyer-licensing-process/articling-candidates/during-a-placement/rights-of-appearance/rights-of-appearance-for-law-students>.

## Supervision

The supervising lawyers at the clinics are akin to supervisors in a typical employment setting. They are mentors, role models, and teachers. Clinic Lawyers are an essential part of the students' learning experience and professional development. Because students receive academic credit for their work at the clinic, it is important that meaningful and ongoing constructive feedback is provided to students. In addition to the formal feedback process conducted with the Clinic Professor, students should regularly seek opportunities to elicit feedback from their supervising lawyers.

All clinic students must be aware that they are working under the direct supervision of their supervising lawyer(s). This means that the law student must never act without express permission of their supervising lawyer; all correspondence (every email, fax, letter) must be approved by the lawyer, advice and legal information provided to a client must be approved in advance by the lawyer, and all actions taken on a file must be pre-approved by the lawyer including correspondence with any third party. When students act without the express approval or authorization of the supervising lawyer, that student is in breach of the *Rules of Professional Conduct*.

## Expectations and the Rules of Professional Conduct

All students enrolled in the Clinic Practice Program are deemed to be bound by the Law Society of Ontario's *Rules of Professional Conduct* in all aspects of their work at the clinic. We expect the highest level of adherence to the Rules and the highest level of integrity! Students are also expected to abide by and uphold the *University of Windsor Student Code of Conduct* and act in an ethical and professional manner whether on site at the clinic, or off-site. All students are expected to read and review both the [Rules of Professional Conduct](#) as well as the [University of Windsor Student Code of Conduct](#) in advance of starting their placement at the clinics.

The student should approach their work at the legal clinic as they would approach any professional work environment. Students are expected to attend their weekly hours on time, complete all work on time, should only engage in clinic work while they are at the clinic, and should maintain the highest standards of professionalism in their role. Any absence from the clinic during the student's regularly scheduled clinic hours must be reported in accordance with the attendance policies of that clinic (available on blackboard through the Clinic Practice Program course page).

## Scheduling and Timelines

Clinic students are expected to begin their weekly scheduled hours at the clinic the first week that law school classes begin. Students fulfill their weekly scheduled hours until the last date of law school exams at the end of each term. Please review the policies and procedures for attendance on the blackboard course page.

## Policies and Procedures

Each clinic is bound by the Human Rights Code (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>) and has its own policies on workplace harassment, discrimination, and other related Human Rights policies. Each clinic also has its own complaint policies and procedures. Students should familiarize themselves with these policies. The in-Clinic Placement portion of the Practice Program also has policies with respect to vacation requests, attendance, and other aspects of the program. These policies are posted on Blackboard each academic term.

## Withdrawing from the Program

Windsor Law has implemented the following “withdraw policy” with respect to student withdrawals from Clinic and Experiential learning opportunities. This policy is particularly important at CLA and LAW as CLA and LAW are adversely affected when students change their enrollment prior to the start of term. Therefore, course and clinic decisions should be confirmed at the earliest opportunity. The withdraw policy in effect at Windsor law is as follows:

### **Background**

Windsor Law recognizes that students who agree to a clinical or experiential learning placement take on unique professional and academic responsibilities. This policy is intended to acknowledge the unique nature of clinical and experiential learning placements and to improve communication between the placement site, the university and the student.

### **Application / Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to students enrolled in a clinical or experiential learning placement at Windsor Law. This includes all for-credit placements involving clients including CLA, LAW, the Externship Program, Project Based Externship Placements, the Class Actions Clinic, and other clinical opportunities at Windsor Law. This does not include experiential learning courses such as Civil Trial Advocacy, the Windsor Legal Practice Simulation, and so on.

### **Exceptions to Policy**

None.

### **Policy Statement**

Students must receive express, written permission of their instructor or professor before being either enrolled or withdrawn from a clinical placement. Students will be permitted to withdraw where there is a valid reason to do so (ie. compassionate or medical grounds, scheduling conflicts, or other exceptional circumstances that may arise). This policy applies both before the add/drop date as well as withdrawing from the program after that date. Where the student is withdrawing after the add/drop date, the matter will proceed to the Academic Status Committee for determination (in consultation with the course instructor or professor).

### **Commentary**

Once a student accepts an offer to enroll in a clinic or experiential learning opportunity, the student is expected to follow through with their commitment to the specific program. We urge students to finalize their course schedules as early as possible as extensive arrangements often need to be made to replace a student who “drops” the program.

## Removal Policy

In the many decades that Windsor law has had students enrolled for credit at one of the legal clinics, no student has ever been removed from the program. However, in recognition that students work with clients who have or are experiencing marginalization, we have a policy that allows us to remove a student from the program where the student causes harm to clients or to staff and students. The removal policy is as follows:

**Policy Title: Removal Policy from Clinical and Experiential Learning Placements**

**Approved By: Faculty Council, October 14, 2020**

**Date Established: Fall 2020**

**Office with Administrative Responsibility:** Academic Coordinator

### ***Background***

Windsor Law recognises that students who agree to a clinical or experiential learning placement take on unique professional, ethical, and academic responsibilities. This policy is intended to acknowledge the unique nature of clinical and experiential learning placements and to improve communication between the placement site, the university and the student.

### ***Application / Scope of Policy***

This policy applies to students enrolled in a clinical or experiential learning placement at Windsor Law. This includes all for-credit placements involving clients including CLA, LAW, the Externship Program, Project Based Externship Placements, the Class Actions Clinic, and other clinical opportunities at Windsor Law. This does not include experiential learning courses such as Civil Trial Advocacy, the Windsor Legal Practice Simulation, and so on.

### ***Exceptions to Policy***

None.

### ***Policy Statement***

Students engaged in clinic and experiential learning at the Faculty of Law are required to demonstrate behaviours consistent with the University of Windsor standards of acceptable behaviour (see Senate Bylaw 31), the Law Society of Ontario's *Rules of Professional Conduct* and of the academic policies of the University of Windsor. Failure of any law student to conform to the principles of these documents may result in removal from clinic and experiential learning programs at Windsor Law.

The Faculty of Law reserves the right to remove a law student from a clinic or experiential learning placement in instances where the instructor has reason to believe that the student is rendering the learning environment unsafe and/or unprofessional and/or is demonstrating unethical legal practice. A student who is removed from a clinical or experiential learning placement course due to rendering unsafe and/or unprofessional and/or unethical practice will receive a failing grade. If a student is removed and receives a failing grade, Section III (regarding Supplemental Examinations) of the Academic Status regulations is not applicable.

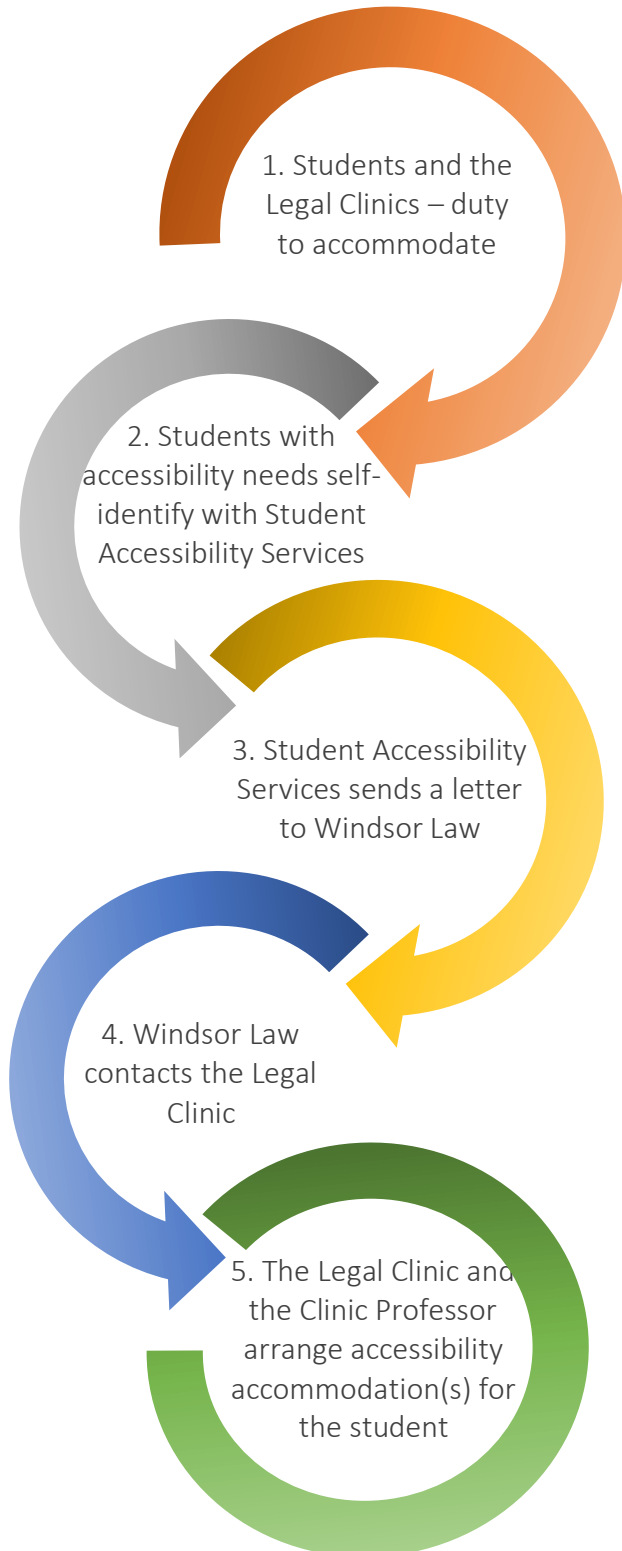
## Insurance

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) provides insurance coverage for workplace injuries incurred by students participating in an unpaid work placement as part of their academic program (at no cost to the student). All students must fill out the requisite MAESD form(s) prior to the start of term. The Clinical and Experiential Learning Coordinator ([smarion@uwindsor.ca](mailto:smarion@uwindsor.ca)) will contact students with the requisite paperwork to fill out.



## Accessibility

Legal Clinics and the University of Windsor are required to accommodate the accessibility requirements of Clinic students. The student must self-identify with Student Accessibility Services on campus in order to have an accommodation implemented. Please see the diagram below for information on the Accessibility process for students and the Clinics.



Windsor Law encourages students in experiential programs to connect with Student Accessibility Services if required. Students are supplied with information related to documentation and next steps. Placement organizations/Clinics/the University of Windsor are aware of their duty to accommodate.

Students meet with a Student Accessibility Services Advisor and review documentation that will be required to support the requested accessibility accommodations. Students are provided with all necessary forms and additional information.

The Student Accessibility Services Advisor sends a letter to the Associate Dean outlining the accommodation(s) being sought by the student. The Associate Dean consults with the Clinic Professor regarding the accommodation.

The Clinic Professor contacts the Legal Clinic to discuss the logistics of the accommodation(s) required for the student, as necessary.

Clinics are required to accommodate the accessibility requirements of placement students. Costs incurred for accommodations will be undertaken by Windsor Law.



## Frequently Asked Questions/Concerns

Q. I want to enroll in the Clinic Practice Program but I'm worried that if I do, I won't be able to take enough other classes, especially those that are more relevant to the **Bar Admissions Exams**.

A. As noted by the Law Society of Ontario (<https://lso.ca/becoming-licensed/lawyer-licensing-process/licensing-examinations>), in addition to testing on specific areas of the law, both the Barrister and the Solicitor exams also test knowledge and application of the following skills: ethical and professional responsibilities, maintaining the lawyer-client relationship, problem/issue identification, the litigation process, fulfilling the retainer, and practice management issues. These are all skills that are taught and learned by law students who enroll at the clinics for credit. As well, it is highly doubtful that any clinic student in the history of the clinics has ever looked back on their law school experience and said to themselves "Gee, I wish I had taken more classes instead of being at the clinic for credit".

Q. I want to enroll in the Clinic Practice Program, but **I'm scared** and feel I don't know enough to be able to represent clients, especially representing them in court or at a tribunal.

A. All law students have every reason to be scared and feel apprehensive and in fact, if you feel this way, it is a good indication that you are indeed prepared to work at a legal clinic – it means you already understand that it is a big responsibility! No one at any of the legal clinics expects students to 'know what they're doing'. The point of the Clinic Practice Program is to provide students with the opportunity to gain valuable legal experience under the close supervision of a lawyer and with the support of the Clinic Professor. We expect students to make mistakes (even big ones) and we provide feedback in order to assist students to learn. There is no expectation that 2nd and 3rd year law students will 'know' what they're doing before they enroll in the Clinic Practice Program.

Q. Is the **Clinic Seminar** included in the credits I take for the in-Clinic Placement?

A. NO. The Clinic Practice Program includes two separate course codes: the Clinic Seminar (3 credits) and the in-Clinic Placement (part-time 4-7 credits or full-time 8-11 credits). For example, if a student enrolls in the in-Clinic Placement portion of the program for 9 credits, they will additionally need to enroll in the Clinic Seminar for 3 credits for a total of 12 credits devoted to the Clinic Practice Program.

Q. I like the idea of working at a legal clinic but I'm not sure the experience aligns with my career goals – I want to work on **Bay Street** and those firms won't value experience at a legal clinic.

A. Many students who have volunteered at the clinics go on to work on Bay street. The skills that students learn at the clinics – file management, client interviewing, legal research and writing, oral advocacy, time management, etc. – are transferrable to any/all areas of law. Indeed, many students report that during OCI's, they talk a great deal about their clinic experiences as many of the interviewing lawyers also have past legal clinic experiences of their own!

Q. I'm worried that the in-Clinic Placement is evaluated on a pass/fail basis – don't I need **numerical grades** in order to be successful in getting a job and for other reasons?

A. The Clinic Seminar **is** numerically graded. Most law school classes are indeed numerically graded. As well, keep in mind that there are many lawyers who will not hire a student if that student does not have prior clinic experience. Legal clinic experience assists with gaining valuable skills and experience that are attractive to potential employers.

Q. I am about to start my summer employment/and or academic placement with a legal clinic. Is there anything I can do to **prepare** for the experience?

A. Read the following book (available at the law library): Sarah Buhler, Sarah Marsden, Gemma Smyth, *Clinical Law: Practice, Theory, and Social Justice Activism* (Toronto, ON: Emond, 2016). This book is the bible for preparing to engage in work at a legal clinic.

Q. I want to work at the legal clinic for credit, but it means I will have to **overload on credits** because of other courses I want/need to take. Is this doable?

A. NO. Overloading on credits while you are at the legal clinic for credit is completely discouraged. You might need to prioritize and either drop other classes that are not essential for you to fulfill the law school program requirements or you might need to consider the legal clinic option in another semester. Working at the clinics can be very challenging and students have the best experience when they just focus on their clinic work.

Q. I want to work at the clinic, but I also want to do a **moot for credit** and do an **externship** in the same semester. Can I fit it all in?

A. The legal clinics have a policy that students who enroll in the Clinic Practice Program are not able to simultaneously do a for-credit moot. It is possible to do an externship and enroll in the Clinic Practice Program simultaneously; however, permission from both the Clinic Professor and the Externship Professor is needed.

Q. I originally told the Clinic Professor I wanted to enroll in the in-Clinic Placement for 10 credits and now I want to **change and do 11 credits**. Is this possible?

A. In most cases, yes, changing the number of credits is possible. You just need to email the Clinic Professor to inquire. We try to be as flexible and accommodating as possible.

## Testimonials

“Working at Legal Assistance of Windsor was one of the best decisions I made as a law student. It exposed me to the practice of law and the complex ways in which administrative law can sometimes reinforce social inequity. It helped me understand my courses from a new perspective and I had a lot of experiences to draw from when being interviewed for summer and articling jobs. To this day some of the things I learned at LAW still inform my practice of law. I highly recommend that every student try to gain some practical clinical experience while at law school regardless of their future career goals.”

~ Zahra Binbrek, Human Rights lawyer

“Thanks to my involvement with CLA, I gained invaluable skills that have come in especially handy during my first few years of practice. What you learn in school is not enough to prepare you for the actual practice of law. During my time at the clinic, I learned how to interact with clients and build rapport so that they trust my advice. I learned how to take ownership of my files early on, how to edit my own work, and effectively work in a legal team environment. The ability to appear in court and make mistakes as a student also went a long way in helping me develop my litigation skills”

~Irina Rosca, Civil Litigator

"As a person who learns best by doing, the clinic opportunities at Windsor Law were instrumental in developing my own client advocacy skills. I learned firsthand how to go from an intake meeting to representing that person at a hearing. The staff lawyers shared their insights, supported me, and provided me with the resources I needed to learn how to effectively represent clients in difficult situations. The clinic experience allowed me to quickly understand how to apply my legal education to real-world situations and provided a solid foundation of my developing litigation skills."

~Andrew Eckart, Class action lawyer, civil litigator, and mediator.

"Clinic work is hands down the most beneficial thing you can do for yourself and your career while in law school. You will gain considerable practical experience in diverse areas of the law, you will form invaluable relationships with members of the local bar and judiciary, and you will be provided unparalleled discretion to develop your advocacy style. During my time at Windsor Law, I immersed myself in clinic work, having worked as a caseworker, litigator, summer student, group leader, and academic student. The experiences I had at Community Legal Aid propelled my success. I went on to work at Derstine Penman Criminal Lawyers in Toronto, complete a Superior Court Clerkship in lieu of articles, and get hired as an Assistant Crown Attorney. I would encourage all students to pursue clinic work and to make the work a priority."

~ Shelby Odom, Assistant Crown Attorney

“In my second year at Windsor Law, I was selected as the only law student to work on a specialized project called “I-Decide” with Legal Assistance of Windsor (LAW). This project focused on legal issues that people with physical and developmental disabilities face every day. I was able to gain exposure to different legal areas including human rights, corporate, consumer protection, health law and criminal matters. I am confident that my time at LAW helped me stand out to both private and public employers in the OCI and articling recruit process. I was able to discuss the legal work I had done at the clinic to demonstrate a genuine interest in that firm or organization’s area(s) of expertise which is something that many of my

colleagues were unable to match. My experience at LAW and subsequent experiential learning projects at Windsor Law were most likely the biggest factors for me getting a summer job at the Ministry of the Attorney General. In a world where there is not much to separate successful law students from one another, participating in one of Windsor Law's legal clinics is sure to set you apart in student recruitment processes and your legal studies."

~Luigi A. Iantosca, JD-Windsor Law Class of 2020

Articling Student: Ministry of the Attorney General-Ministry of Indigenous Affairs Ontario

"My first day in court as a licenced lawyer was three days after my call to the bar. I was terrified. All I could think about was how I wished I had spent more time at CLA learning how to be a lawyer. I was a law student volunteer at CLA all six semesters of my time at law school and I enrolled at CLA for credit for one term. And in that moment when I was standing in court and the accused's liberty was in my hands, I wished I had been able to have even more prior experience at the legal clinic".

~Jillian Rogin, Assistant Clinic Professor and criminal defence lawyer.

