

e3i Employability Case Study



Student-led seminars on providing immigration advice

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Subject group:	Law
Number of students involved:	2 delivering presentation; 48 on the module
Elements of the employability framework addressed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of autonomy;• Key skills development• PDP;• Real world activities;• Work related learning;• Reflection on use of knowledge and skills: transfer of these to work environment;• Preparation for specific professional areas;• Enterprise, innovation and creativity.

Description of learning and teaching approach adopted

The seminar is designed to bring "real world activities" to the classroom by presenting situations in which an immigration practitioner would give advice to an asylum seeker. The students leading the seminar work as volunteers in an advice centre and were able to bring real life situations to the learning experience. Asylum is the most important part of immigration law and a potential employer would be looking for exactly these kinds of skills among candidates.

The preparation for the students' presentation was supervised throughout since this is a sensitive area of implementation of legal rules and practices since it involves real questions that the immigration authorities put to asylum seekers. Secondly, a scenario was created in which a student would be "applying for asylum" while the student running the seminar would be asking the relevant questions and applying law to a given set of facts thereby role playing an immigration official. In this part advice was given to students on how to advise their clients on asylum, e.g. what to put in an asylum application. The second part of the presentation contains very detailed and concrete advice to potential practitioners among students on correspondence with immigration authorities, use of legislation and case law.

The rest of the students had the opportunity to put various questions in relation to asylum application procedure. Finally, oral feedback was given at the end of session, which students expect and appreciate. Seminar delivery and participation in this module are not formally assessed.

Three main points: supervision; control and guidance; immediate feedback; act as a learner facilitator rather than traditional teacher.

Employability objectives and intended learning outcomes

Two particular groups of learning objectives are intended to be achieved through this new practice: subject specific, professional and practical skills and communication skills, reflection and goal setting.

I Subject specific, professional and practical skills:

1. Identify, justify and use methods of analysis that are appropriate to immigration law;
2. Extend and improve knowledge by applying the methods to new and unpredictable situations;
3. Identify, access and comment on sources and information obtained and evaluate them.

II Communication Skills; Reflection; Setting Goals

1. Select and use an appropriate format and style to communicate ideas, arguments and findings;
2. Set out objectives, responsibilities and strategies in a work related environment;
3. Students reflect and evaluate their own strengths, limitations and performance and impact of them in relation to learning

5. Students identify objectives and own responsibilities in working with others e.g. in academic, practitioners' and other legal professions;

6. Students use and evaluate strategies to meet those objectives and responsibilities;

7. Students take responsibilities for identifying goals, setting targets, initiating and implementing plans and activities in the chosen career;

8. Students practice questioning and/or giving advice in a supportive environment.

Description of and tips for good practice; lessons learned

- Create a scenario; prepare a set of facts requiring the application of rules to reality; support and award students and participants in order to encourage participation and good delivery.
- Ask the student to reflect on his/her presentation and ask all participants about their perception and feedback on the session.
- Students need encouragement and a non-intimidating atmosphere to implement this kind of learning experience; control and supervision must be maintained in an authoritative but non-intrusive manner. Be ready to help the student in handling questions by peers since this can significantly impact on the smoothness of the delivery and student confidence.

This type of learning/seminar delivery is crucial for modules involving practical aspects as well as academic argument. It provides students with the opportunity to experience the situation, practice the skills, make mistakes etc. all in a supportive environment, and see 'how it is done' by someone who knows.

Student-run seminars are most directly linked to developing learner autonomy and personal development planning since they involve cyclical activities required in the process: planning; doing; recording/reviewing; reflecting; and developing through a process supported by staff.

Key points of any feedback gathered or evaluation undertaken with students or staff

Students' feedback was required and received during the implementation of this new method of delivery as a part of embedding employability in the module. The feedback was extremely positive and it showed that students appreciated not only the content and relevance of this work-related exercise - bringing "real world activities" to the classroom, but also the fact that it was delivered by students themselves. This in my view made a positive impact on students' confidence since some students find it inherently intimidating to get involved in active seminar and workshop participation.

Some of students' feedback:

"This was the best seminar ever"!

"This workshop enabled me to see the application of the law to a real life situation."

"The coursework questions are much clearer to me after this session."

Resources used

Power Point and Word in addition to academic and practitioner's resources:

OISC Training Level 2: Immigration Law – The practice of Asylum law.

CABLearn – Asylum seekers and refugees.

The Home Office - Border & Immigration Agency - <http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

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