

Establishing a Migration Clinic at Ulster University Law Clinic

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Introduction



Scoping



Aims:

- to explore the needs and gaps in the migration advice sector in Northern Ireland.
- to understand the different ways in which law clinics in other UK universities have incorporated migration-related work.
- to understand the regulation of immigration advice in the UK and the implications for any migration-related work at Ulster Law Clinic.
- to ensure that migration-related work at Ulster Law Clinic will complement and support existing work, while also serving an educational purpose.

Scoping



Needs and gaps in migration advice sector

Asylum advice: solicitors in single figures; huge need, essential tasks only.

Demand vastly exceeds capacity.

No capacity for additional assistance, e.g. eVisa support, S96 support applications.

Approach of other law clinics

Range of approaches: usually one or two specialist areas developed. Some IAA accredited, others work via external firms/agencies.

eVisa Clinic & LCNI



eVisa Clinic (Spring–Summer 2025)

Monthly outreach sessions at 2 Royal Avenue (community hub, Belfast)

Non-regulated support (eVisas fall outside IAA scope)

Typical throughput: 3–4 clients per session (Feb–Jun 2025)

Student roles: intake, note-taking, drafting follow-up advice

Common tasks: UKVI account access, registration, resolving complications

Partnership with Law Centre NI (LCNI)

LCNI provided training; attended first session for support

Referral pathway via LCNI ensured appropriate interpreting provision

Clinic funded interpreters during pilot; future funding needed

Collaboration eased pressure on overstretched asylum/migration advisers

Joint learning loop: case trends informed student teaching & next steps

Lessons learned: opportunities

Educational

- Cultural Diversity
- Refugee status
- Collaboration
- Travel documents
- Citizenship skills
- Adaptability



Community Outreach

- Accessibility
- Visibility
- Inclusivity
- Existing community initiatives



Lessons learned: challenges

- Language barriers and cost of translation.
- Time constraints.
- Complex personal/family situations: vulnerability and risk.
- Limited student awareness/cultural sensitivity.

Identification of challenges = can inform next steps.

Next steps

1. Second iteration of international migration law module
2. Section 96 support (in partnership with LCNI)
3. Continued eVisa support
4. Partnership with solicitors for:
 - drop in advice clinic;
 - assistance with initial statements in refugee applications;
 - country of origin research.

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Thank you!
Questions?

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in Law)

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