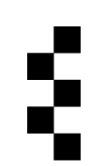




# **Examining Equality and Diversity in Law Clinic Student Recruitment**

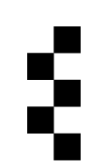
**CLEO Conference – 5 September 2025**

Lee Hansen



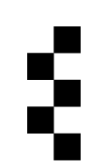
# Why This Matters & Aim

- Access to and within higher education is stratified. Not all students benefit equally from opportunities once inside university.
- Do working-class, first-generation, and minority ethnic students face barriers to extracurricular participation?
- Law clinics are important for employability, skills, and professional pathways, but may inadvertently replicate inequalities.
- The legal profession is under pressure to widen access and diversify.
- Aim: Evaluate whether Essex Law Clinic recruitment is equitable and develop a replicable evaluation framework for others.



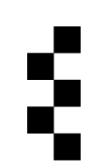
# Funding, Ethics & Methodology

- Team: Lee Hansen (PI); Prof. Donald Nicolson; Dr. Olayinka Lewis.
- Funded by a small ALT Grant; ethics approved as service evaluation.
- Dataset: 3 years of student data (sex, ethnicity, POLAR4, parental education) matched against clinic applications/outcomes.
- Quantitative focus: compare applicants vs non-applicants; successful vs unsuccessful.



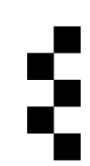
# Key Questions

- Do students from different backgrounds apply at different rates?
- Are some groups less likely to be accepted once they apply?
- Can we identify patterns where factors intersect?
- What qualitative research might be needed in future to explore why some groups may not apply or face indirect barriers (e.g. childcare, financial pressures, lack of awareness)?



## Current Stage

- Dataset secured (3 years of student data).
- RA appointment in progress; analysis not yet started.
- Framework under refinement.
- CLEO is our first opportunity to share our proposed approach and invite sector feedback before analysis begins.



# Anticipated Outcomes & Future Directions

- Share a replicable evaluation methodology for use or adaptation in other clinics.
- Publish blog entry and final report.
- Contribute to debates on widening participation and employability.
- Future research: multi-institutional quantitative and qualitative study; examine variables such as clinic models (eg. curricular vs extracurricular); application methods (eg. written/interview) qualitative follow-up on why some groups don't apply; consider additional characteristics (e.g. disability).



**Thank you**

**[essex.ac.uk](http://essex.ac.uk)**

- Questions & Comments?
- Are we asking the right questions?
- Interested in collaboration on future multi-clinic study?

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