



Free note-takers for your court hearings and conferences

Our Student Outdoor Clerk Scheme (SOCS) provides UEA Law students to act as note-takers or agents to attend counsel at hearings or conferences.

- For all law firms and barristers
- It's **free** (travel expenses requested if outside Norwich)
- Trained, sensible, law students
- Easy to book
- Secure document control
- Provides reassurance to clients and practical support to counsel
- Receive detailed attendance notes without needing a fee-earner present.

How it works

If instructed by a law firm, they attend the conference or hearing your firm's agent, meeting the client, introducing the barrister, taking a note of the barrister's advice, and liaising between barrister and client during the hearing. They can offer reassurance to your clients and help the client stay calm and focused. They prepare an attendance note for you, and report back to you about what happened and next steps.

If instructed by counsel directly, they will take a note, liaise with and keep company

with the client if desired, and ensure that counsel has what they need to perform their role without distraction.

If you book with us, we will set up a secure data transfer point to you using Superlawyer. We will advise you of your note-taker's identity and contact details. They will contact you and introduce themselves.

Students cannot and will not give legal advice. If the client has a question when counsel is out of the room, they will ensure that it is accurately noted and relayed.

Students do not have advocacy rights in court. The service does not provide advocates or McKenzie Friends.

Is it new?

No. It's been running for some time for a local criminal defence firm, and now we are rolling it out to other firms and across all areas of law. The scheme is modelled on one at the University of Kent which has run successfully for several years.

The students

Our students have been carefully selected through a competitive process, for common sense and aptitude; and have been trained in de-escalation strategies, note-taking, confidentiality and data compliance; and court procedures.

They will act professionally, knowing that they represent you and UEA Law.

Why it works

We know that legal aid does not pay for a solicitor to attend when counsel is instructed, and this can be hard for both firms and clients who have built up a relationship of trust with one another. It may be that the client is privately funded but just can't afford to pay for the solicitor to attend. It may be that the lawyer needs a note-taker for other reasons such as a disability or because they are across several hearings simultaneously.

Our role is to ensure practical support for the lawyer and the client.

Our students get to see lawyers in action including the all-important client care part of the work, see some great advocacy, develop their legal knowledge, and build links with the local legal community.

We find it's a useful trainee recruitment tool for law firms too.

How to book

We have a short online form which you can use to provide your details and those of the hearing.

We use this to find a clerk for you and set up the secure file for sharing information.

Link to book: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/groups-and-centres/law-clinic/student-outdoor-clerk-scheme>

If you wish to use us regularly, we can set up an excel spreadsheet for your events, if that is more convenient.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us on law.clinic@uea.ac.uk.

Sharing information

We recommend you tell your client /instructing solicitor that a clerk may be present. An easy way to do this would be to add it to your standard hearing advice letter or client care letter/terms of business.

We offer a secure data transfer mechanism using an ISO 27001 certified UK-based legal provider, Superlawyer, where you can provide the student with the relevant papers and retrieve their attendance note. You remain the data controller and decide what information our student receives.

We are the processor and Superlawyer is our sub processor. You can add and remove your data using the link provided at any time, but we will of course close matters regularly. We have an excellent data compliance team at UEA (dataprotection@uea.ac.uk) and they and we are available at any time to assist.

Who runs this

Professor Polly Morgan is the Director of UEA Law Clinic and a qualified solicitor. The Student Managers for this scheme are Saskia Rey and Evie Matson.

If you have any questions about the scheme then please do not hesitate to contact us on law.clinic@uea.ac.uk.