

## **Response to Call for Evidence by the Justice Commission for Wales**

*Cardiff School for Law and Politics*

*Cardiff University*

### **Law at Cardiff**

1. The School of Law and Politics at Cardiff University comprises three departments: the Department of Politics and International Relations, the Department of Law and the Centre for Professional Legal Studies.
  - a. The Department of Law occupies two buildings within the Civic Centre site, close to courts and major legal firms. At undergraduate level, our students come from three main geographical sources: Wales, the rest of the UK (mostly south West England) and the wider common law world, outside the UK. The significant number of international undergraduates who join the School enter into years one, two and three of the LLB programme. The Department of Law has around 900 undergraduate students and nearly 150 postgraduate students enrolled on its programmes, which include Law, Law with another discipline (Criminology, French, Politics, Sociology, Welsh) at undergraduate level, and a Master's programme which enables students to select a specialised 'route' of study, including in Canon Law, European Legal Studies, Human Rights, International Commercial Law and Legal Aspects of Medical Practice. There are around 30 postgraduate research students enrolled in the School.
  - b. The Centre for Professional Legal Studies offers the postgraduate routes to professional qualification for barristers and solicitors-the latter on both a full and part time basis. It has validated places for more than 300 students. The Centre for Professional Legal Studies also offers nationwide assessment to Duty Solicitors and Police Station Representatives, as well as to expert witnesses.
2. Undergraduate legal provision at Cardiff aims to provide an outstanding liberal education in the common law. This education provides a strong foundation for students to go on to qualify as lawyers and then pursue successful legal careers, as well as in other fields. From Calgary to Kuala Lumpur, London and Cardiff our

graduates have gone on to hold leading positions in legal practice across the common law world. We envisage continuing to provide an outstanding academic education in the common law relevant to all these jurisdictions in the future.

3. We provide our undergraduate Law students with an academic education in the fundamentals of the common law, enabling them either to practice in any common law jurisdiction (subject to further education and training) or to enter a graduate level occupation.

### **Research Intensive**

4. We are a research-led School with a reputation for internationally excellent research. This reflects our membership of both the Russell Group and the Great Western 4 consortium (GW4).
  - a. Cardiff University is a member of the Russell Group which represents the 24 leading research-intensive universities in the UK. In 2012/13, Russell Group universities accounted for 74% (over £3.5 billion) of UK universities' research grant and contract income and 75% (over £1.1 billion) of total income from the UK Research Councils. We are the only Russell Group University to offer all the courses which lead to qualification as a barrister or as a solicitor.
  - b. Cardiff is also member of GW4, which brings together the four leading, research-intensive universities in Wales and the South West of England. With a combined turnover of more than £1 billion, GW4 has a research power of significant scale.
5. We have a rich tradition of both doctrinal and socio-legal research, being the home of the acclaimed Journal of Law and Society. Much of our research activity is interdisciplinary in nature. This notably includes the Wales Governance Centre, an interdisciplinary unit involving both lawyers and political scientists. The Centre's activities focus on the Law, Politics and Political Economy of Wales, set in the context of devolution across the UK and in a wider international context.
6. We have a growing PhD community and regularly obtain AHRC and ESRC funding. The AHRC funding requires us to co-supervise with another GW4 University. ESRC

and other funding often require collaborative scholarships: these often involve Welsh organisations such as Family Mediation Cymru, and the Wales Rugby Union.

Including under the auspices of the Wales Governance Centre, we have an ongoing interest in supervising PhD students on Welsh Law and policy; recent completions include on topics such as social housing law.

### **High Quality Teaching and Pro-Bono Activities**

7. At undergraduate level, our primary objectives are:
  - a. To deliver a Qualifying Law Degree (QLD) in accordance with the requirements of the Joint Statement of the BSB and the SRA, provision that, after further training, allows our graduates to practice in many common law jurisdictions across the world.
  - b. To expose students to a broad range of optional modules that enable them to develop excellent critical thinking and legal research skills
  - c. To offer our students a curriculum enriched by provision for employability and further employment-enhancing opportunities.
8. We have sought to develop our Welsh language provision in recent years. Our undergraduate students are now able to study over 70% of their degree, including all QLD subjects, through the medium of Welsh (in terms of small group teaching). Students may also opt to undertake assessments in other modules through the medium of Welsh. We have recruited staff extensively to support this provision. Financial support for this provision is crucial for its long-term sustainability.
9. Our location in Wales' capital city gives us a unique opportunity to engage with devolved institutions to offer students access to real legal/law making processes. We achieve this through elements in our formal curriculum and through pro-bono work.
10. Our undergraduate and postgraduate modules incorporate aspects of devolved law as appropriate. We expect modules to be updated to include any future Wales-specific developments in the curriculum-areas they cover. A number of our modules examine the constitutional and legal dimensions of devolution. These often include engagement with devolved institutions through visits and work placement schemes:

- a. We run an optional LLB module on Welsh Devolution, as well as an optional work-placement-based Devolution in Practice module.
  - b. We run an LLM Governance and Devolution programme which includes a number of modules on these topics.
11. We place particular emphasis upon student employability through high our careers service, placement year scheme and our pro-bono offering. We have an extensive pro-bono offering and this – in line with Cardiff University’s community engagement agenda - involves partnership with community groups focused on serving local needs. Several of our pro-bono schemes are focused on devolved matters and include collaboration with devolved institutions and Welsh organisations. We offer a placement year provision with Hugh James. We will be expanding our activities in this area.
12. We see opportunities for the production of Welsh-medium/ Wales-specific content teaching materials, as well as Welsh-medium/ Welsh-specific content public legal education resources. We are open to collaborating with appropriately qualified colleagues from other Law Schools on such projects. We would also be keen to host a regular symposium for the discussion of Welsh legal education, including Welsh-medium legal education, needs and priorities. Such an event could serve as a gateway to fostering networks and collaborations of legal academics with an interest in the Welsh context.