qLegal is: a simulation of an innovative commercial legal practice. Postgraduate law students at the Centre for Commercial Law Studies, Queen Mary University of London, and supporting external professional partners volunteer their time to provide pro bono services to real clients–budding entrepreneurs, start-ups and community groups – on corporate and commercial law matters.

Our mission is to help the next generation of lawyers help the next generation of clients to create value in the world.

In the past year, the outstanding theme for qLegal has been one of growth: with more students, more clients, more partners and more programmes than ever before.

There are always more students applying to qLegal than places available, so we are trying to meet student demand - but not at the expense of quality.

Our overarching aim is to help students develop and grow as reflective and innovative practitioners, while helping early stage businesses grow and thrive to benefit their community.

Professor Ian Walden,
Director of the Centre for Commercial Law Studies, Queen Mary University of London

 highlights

95%
increase in students on a qLegal programme

New compliance mentoring programme

Establishing a qLegal alumni network

Winning funding for new interdisciplinary programmes

Delivering 10% of Law Clinic cases remotely

13 new toolkits for the start-up community

Appointment of the qLegal Advisory Board

New external partners

First Legal Design challenge

2 new team members

New collaboration with Strathmore University, Kenya

10% of Law Clinic cases remotely
I was a commercial disputes lawyer for 10 years, before starting my own business, and then moving into project management. I really enjoy working with such a diverse range of students.

Emily Wapples
qLegal Project Coordinator

The Future Clients programme tests how to adapt the way we communicate and collaborate with each other...We found that, in the end, it was not difficult to communicate with strangers. It greatly helped all of our social skills. Globally, this is the valuable experience we have learned through qLegal.

Kamila Kararzyna Gomolka, Poland, Future Clients

As a student adviser it was great to interview real-life clients, knowing that my advice would influence how they operate their start-up in future. The experience has given me confidence expressing legal advice in a practical and succinct way, that will serve me well in my future career.

Daniel Harvey, England, Student Adviser

qLegal gives you a wholesome experience in your LLM that your other taught courses do not necessarily offer. The experience helped me to perceive law differently, from the perspective of the user, not the advocate.

Gathirwa Githinji, Kenya, Design the Law

I learned the truth about working in a fragile economical environment. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, most of my externship took place remotely. This was a very challenging time...because although I was able to reach my colleagues through emails, it was not as easy as it would have been in person. I am proud that I have been able to overcome such a challenge.

Emma Suarez, France, Externships (Habito)
I have been teaching clinical law in the US for over a decade. I think that the practical skills students learn across our programmes give them a head start on their peers. **Four new programmes** started this year.

**Eliza Platts-Mills**
qLegal Teaching Fellow

**Advising clients and managing files**
In pairs, students interview clients from the start-up community, research the law and provide tailored written legal advice, supervised by external lawyers.

*Student Advisers (Law Clinic) / Entrepreneurship Law Clinic Module: 41 students*

**Gaining commercial awareness (akin to a secondment)**
Students typically spend one day a week with a LawTech business, for 3-6 months, assisting in legal and commercial matters, with structured learning and reflection.

*LawTech Externships / Internships: 27 students*

**Stakeholder management and organisation skills**
Students help run the qLegal clinic, booking in and liaising with clients, and assisting students and external lawyers.

*Client Managers: 4 students*

**Innovating and legal process improvement**
In teams, students use Legal Design methodology to produce solutions to law-related problems (for example, creating improved T&Cs and/or user experience for an online LawTech business).

*Design the Law: 19 students*

**Communication skills and emotional intelligence**
Students mentor pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, using coaching techniques.

*qLegal x CoachBright: 6 students*

**Pro bono/outreach, supporting the generation below**
Students design and deliver lessons on law and entrepreneurship to pupils in disadvantaged areas, culminating in an incubator-style Pitch It competition for the pupils, run with external lawyers.

*StreetLAB: 15 students*

**Future Clients: 12 students**

**Business development/profile-raising**
Students identify and develop leads for qLegal – producing and presenting a written report identifying opportunities for future qLegal students to run legal workshops for community groups.

**Personal development and managing up**
Students take responsibility for developing a 6-month plus mentoring relationship with senior compliance professionals.

*Compliance Mentoring Programme: 32 students*
I am the qLegal Development Facilitator. I have experience designing programmes which provide experiential learning opportunities to our students, while delivering key support to our very diverse range of clients.

**Clemence Tanzi**
qLegal Development Facilitator

"qLegal students competed to redesign F-LEX’s Terms & Conditions in our first Legal Design challenge. We were blown away by their presentations. I really can’t get over the effort they put into this; it was SO impressive and so inspiring, and the fact that they did this alongside their studies, was even more amazing."

Mary Bonsor
F-LEX CEO and Co-Founder

"Our start-up has a social impact and defining it without any legal knowledge or expertise was challenging. The prudent approach was to seek help. We are very confident in the advice we received and would recommend qLegal’s professional services!"

Bridget Oliseneku
AmaZania founder

"The students delivered a really amazing workshop for our London College of Fashion students. They came across so clearly and professionally."

Tiff Radmore
Unit Coordinator at London College of Fashion

"As a start-up with very limited funds, I had not realised how much legal advice costs. Ensuring I was GDPR compliant and protecting my IP was critical to safeguard my business. The whole process was professional, thorough and I felt in safe hands."

Barum Jeffries
Director, relearn – recruitment training that works!

**What kind of legal advice did we provide in the Student Adviser programme?**

- **35%** Intellectual Property (including NDAs)
- **29%** GDPR
- **18%** Corporate
- **10%** Third-party contracts
- **8%** Other

**Who have we helped?**

- **28** clients received one-to-one advice on 37 separate issues
- **300+** clients attended workshops in partnership with other institutions: Queen Mary’s own Qincubator, University of the Arts, Ada National College for Digital Skills
- **23** StreetLAB school pupils received interactive lessons on Law and Entrepreneurship, and pitched their business ideas during a final competition
- **4** teams competed to redesign the Terms & Conditions on F-LEX’s website
- **10** start-ups received support from students in our Externship programme
- **6** young pupils were mentored by qLegal student coaches trained by CoachBright, to raise pupils’ educational attainment

**What do they say about us?**

From the clients who responded to our Student Adviser programme survey

- 100% would use qLegal’s services again
- 100% would recommend qLegal to colleagues, friends and family
- 100% feel more confident in their understanding of the law relating to their issue after receiving our advice

**How did we support entrepreneurs?**

- we sent 37 advice letters
- we published 13 online publications/toolkits
- we delivered 10 workshops
- we delivered four market-tested prototypes of new Terms & Conditions
- we provided 1,500 hours of practical support within start-ups
- we ran a mini-incubator programme for the next generation of budding entrepreneurs
- we identified areas for future collaboration
None of this would be possible without the generous support of our partners. We are delighted to welcome new partners this year and greatly appreciate the continued support of our longstanding partners. We would like to thank:

Our Legal & Compliance Department has really enjoyed working with qLegal’s student advisers on StreetLAB and the Entrepreneurship Law Clinic, and we are particularly pleased to have co-founded a Compliance mentoring programme that has already achieved positive results. We look forward to continuing to build our partnership with qLegal.

Mia Motiee and Mitesh Jagatia, Co-Chairs of Bloomberg LP’s EMEA Pro Bono Committee

Being able to publish the toolkits prepared by students on our website is a win-win situation for us. Sue McLean, Partner, Baker McKenzie

Working with qLegal is a great way for partners to give something back and to help shape the next generation of lawyers. It is a pleasure to work with such motivated and enthusiastic students.

Eamon Gallagher, Associate, Ropes & Gray
Law tech start-up Lawren.io has partnered with qLegal for two years now. Lawren.io has developed a Covid-19 virtual assistant helping European lawyers to provide pro bono support to SMEs, and were able to expand that offering into the UK with the help of four qLegal student volunteers.

Dries Wijnen
Lawren.io Co-Founder

Former qLegal client BuddyHub is a social enterprise connecting older people with others in the community to ward off loneliness and self-isolation. Launched as a membership club for older people in late 2017, following a pilot phase, BuddyHub's services are needed more than ever.

Catherine McClen
BuddyHub Founder & CEO

Enrol Yourself is a social business reimagining lifelong learning through peer groups. We host the Learning Marathon: a six-month, peer-led learning accelerator designed to allow participants to pool their skills and resources to multiply their development. Enrol Yourself train ‘Hosts’ who initiate and run the Learning Marathon locally, or around a specific theme.

Zahra Davidson
Enrol Yourself Founder and Director

Karen Watton
qLegal Director

As we adjusted to the pandemic, we checked in with former clients and existing partners to see how they were helping others adapt. We also caught up with former qLegal students as we set up our new alumni network.

Alumni

Last time I visited Queen Mary I had just set up my own firm, and the firm is one year old now. I’m very happy with the past year, and we have grown a lot already, handling many clients both from Brazil and the UK. As I always say, qlegal helped me to gain the confidence I needed to take this step and to start my own business.

Cassio Mosse
Student Adviser, 2014 – 2015

I am working as faculty in a university in India. Apart from my teaching, I am engaged in research in the techno-legal field. Working for a techno legal start-up through qlegal gave me a practical insight. Taking a cue from this experience, I have plans to start my own venture sometime in the near future.

Prajakta Kale
Externship Student, 2018 – 2019

I came back to Mexico in December last year and in January I set up my own legal tech start-up intended for the Mexican market. It’s like Booking.com for lawyers. The [StreetLAB] programme gave me more than public speaking skills and good memories, it boosted an entrepreneur spirit in me.

Sofia Mancilla
Street LAB Student, 2018 – 2019

Clients

Karen Watton
qLegal Director

I practised law for 15 years and now focus on the future of legal services. qLegal is not just about short-term outcomes. It’s lovely to hear about its wider impact.

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Street LAB Student, 2018 – 2019
**2019 – 2020**

Expansion into new programmes, allowing students to develop a wider range of skills for the fourth industrial revolution.

Welcoming new partners, new clients, our Advisory Board and more students than ever before.

Supporting Strathmore University in Kenya to develop its entrepreneur law clinic.

Expanding into compliance as a reflection of changing commercial practice.

**2014 – 2019**

Establishing a highly regarded entrepreneurship law clinic, one of the first in the UK.

Completion of the three-year EU-funded eHealth Hub programme.


**2020 +**

Streamlining programmes and creating new modular packages to add flexibility for students, clients and partners in the areas of:

- One-to-one Legal Advisory
- Public Legal Education
- Legal Projects

- **Compliance and regulation:** a new experiential learning programme from autumn 2020, co-developed with Bloomberg

Focusing on interdisciplinary projects so that law students collaborate with students of finance, business, computer science and other subjects, better reflecting real-life practice.

Introducing new tech and embedding innovation across all programmes.

To find out more, or to get involved (we’d love to hear from you), please get in touch:

- qlegal.qmul.ac.uk
- linkedin.com/company/qlegal
- twitter.com/qlegal_
- en-gb.facebook.com/QMqlegal

future focus