

LA308-15 Social Welfare Law in the Community

26/27

Department

School of Law

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Tara Mulqueen

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The Social Welfare Law in the Community module offers students an in-depth understanding of social welfare law, focusing on key areas such as housing law, welfare benefits law, community care law, and education law. This optional, one-term module combines legal knowledge, theoretical insights, and practical application in contemporary policy contexts. Each year, the course highlights a specific theme in social welfare law, allowing students to explore current issues in greater depth. Lectures and discussions, led by module convenors and guest speakers from partner organisations like the Central England Law Centre, will provide students with valuable perspectives from practitioners working in the field of social welfare law.

A key component of the assessment will involve producing a policy research report on a chosen social welfare issue, allowing students to hone their analytical skills and apply what they've learned. The module's public and community engagement aspect encourages students to work directly with communities affected by social welfare challenges. Through interviews, surveys, and focus groups, students will gain insight into the lived experiences surrounding issues in housing, welfare, community care, and education. Partnering with organisations such as the Central England Law Centre also gives students the chance to support ongoing social welfare initiatives, providing practical experience in community-based legal practice, policy research, and advocacy.

Module aims

Students will deepen their understanding of complex social welfare issues, bridging the gap between theory and practice while enhancing critical skills in analysis, communication, and research. The module also seeks to address the critical shortage of social welfare lawyers, an issue exacerbated by legal aid cuts. By exposing students to real-world social welfare issues and engaging them in research, the module aims to inspire a new generation of social welfare professionals and develop a diverse skill set for engaging in this field, including but also moving beyond traditional lawyering.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The first week of the module will include a general introduction, set shared expectations and brief students on the mode of assessment, as well as introduce students to the central policy issue the module will focus on that term. The next several weeks will focus on developing students understanding of the substantive elements of law involved, before turning to a wider critical and policy-focused analysis and focus on research, stakeholder engagement and community consultation, and advocacy skills.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand the basic legal structure and key features of the area of social welfare law under focus and apply these in practical situations
- Intervene in a contemporary policy debate concerning social welfare law, including identifying gaps and problems with the law as it is used in practice
- Produce high quality, in-depth policy briefings and related materials based on independent research
- Demonstrate understanding of the wider social impact of social welfare law, particularly the experiences of marginalised groups in accessing and navigating relevant structures
- Reflect on their own relationship to the everyday structures and operation of social welfare law

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Research element

Students will work on a case study addressing a pressing issue in social welfare law, conducting in-depth research to analyse the problem. This will involve reviewing relevant legal frameworks, academic literature, and policy documents. Where appropriate, students may also engage with

qualitative data, such as insights from community organisations or individuals directly affected by the issue. For their assessment, students will produce a comprehensive policy analysis, critically evaluating the issue and proposing evidence-based recommendations for reform or improvement.

Subject specific skills

Understanding and application of social welfare law

Legal Research Skills

Critical Analysis

Communication

Community consultation

Participatory research

Advocacy

Transferable skills

Communication

Critical Thinking

Public Engagement

Teamwork

Professionalism

Problem Solving

Ethical Values

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Private study	60 hours (40%)
Assessment	63 hours (42%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Students will have set readings and tasks for seminars each week. They will also be responsible for group work outside of seminars and in preparation for their assessment.

Costs

Category	Description	Funded by	Cost to student
Other	There will be costs associated with guest speakers and wider community engagement, including funding a community stakeholder organisation to co-organise the module each year. This will vary by year. (£1000/year)	Department	£0.00

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

Assessment component	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Critical Reflection	30%	18 hours	Yes (extension)
Students will be asked to write a critical reflective essay linking themes from the module to their own perceptions and experiences. The essay will be required to meet academic formalities and draw on at least five readings from the course materials.			
Reassessment component is the same			
Social Welfare Law Portfolio	70%	45 hours	Yes (extension)
Students will be required to choose two submission options from a list of 4-5 possibilities, including items such as a policy brief, a consultation response, a funding application, an opinion piece, a campaign plan, a problem question or a public legal education resource. Each will have specific parameters based on the content of the module that year, and each is designed to support students to develop relevant skills, based on their preferences and interests. Each component will be roughly 1000 words (or agreed equivalent if using a multi-media format). Students will also be required to submit a short (200 word) description of their method as part of the portfolio (which does not contribute to the word count). Guidance will be given by the module team of the form this will take, but can include some or all of the following information: how student approached their research, how they located materials, articles cases etc, what search engines/databases they used, reasons for the examples/materials they have selected and photographs or other evidence of engagement with the research task. The methods statement			

Weighting**Study time****Eligible for self-certification**

will not be graded and will not receive a mark but is mandatory and may be considered by both the module team and in any academic misconduct investigation.

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment group S

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
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Assessment component			
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Critical reflective essay	30%		Yes (extension)
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Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
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2000 word research essay	70%		Yes (extension)
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Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Written individual feedback will be provided on all summative assessments as well as general cohort feedback about the module cohorts assessment performance

Availability**Courses**

This module is Optional for:

- ULAA-M130 Undergraduate Law
 - Year 2 of M130 Law
 - Year 2 of M130 Law
 - Year 3 of M130 Law
 - Year 3 of M130 Law

- ULAA-M131 Undergraduate Law (4 Year)
 - Year 3 of M131 Law (4 year)
 - Year 4 of M131 Law (4 year)
- ULAA-M132 Undergraduate Law (Year Abroad)
 - Year 2 of M132 Law (Year Abroad)
 - Year 4 of M132 Law (Year Abroad)
- ULAA-M135 Undergraduate Law and Sociology
 - Year 3 of M135 Law and Sociology
 - Year 4 of M135 Law and Sociology
- ULAA-M133 Undergraduate Law with French Law
 - Year 2 of M133 Law with French Law
 - Year 4 of M133 Law with French Law
- ULAA-M134 Undergraduate Law with German Law
 - Year 2 of M134 Law with German Law
 - Year 4 of M134 Law with German Law
- ULAA-M136 Undergraduate Law with Humanities (3 Year)
 - Year 2 of M136 Law with Humanities (3 year)
 - Year 3 of M136 Law with Humanities (3 year)
- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
 - Year 3 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law