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National Teaching Excellence award for Northumbria's Student Law Office

Northumbria University's Student Law Office has won a national award in recognition of its work providing students with an excellent professional

education through a project which offers free legal services to the public.

Every year more than 200 students and around 25 staff provide thousands of hours of pro bono legal advice to businesses, community groups and individuals, delivering a much-needed service, raising awareness of access to justice and giving students valuable real-life work experience.

Now this work has been recognised by the Higher Education Academy, with the Student Law Office winning a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) – a new award which celebrates collaborative work in teaching and learning and highlights innovative practice which supports student learning.

Carol Boothby, Director of the Student Law Office, said: “We are delighted to have won this highly prestigious award, recognising the excellence of our teaching team. This is recognition of their commitment to provide the best possible learning experience for our students, whilst at the same time also leading research into the benefits to students and the local community of this type of real-life experience.”

Since 2008 the Student Law Office has dealt with over 3,000 enquiries and represented more than 1,000 clients, securing over £1m on their behalf.

It was one of 15 projects across the UK to be shortlisted for a CATE award, and one of just six to be named a winner. As part of the prize the Student Law Office has been awarded a grant of £15,000 to help disseminate its learning further.

Professor Stephanie Marshall, CEO of the HEA said: “This year’s new Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence puts a spotlight on those who work together as a team to provide innovative and engaging opportunities, for the first time. Six universities were named as the winners for 2016, each gaining a contribution of £15,000 to further fund their development projects.

“The 15 finalists, including the six winners, presented exceptional entries. There is so much great material to share with the sector and HEA is delighted to play a leading role in disseminating those ideas.”

Carol Boothby added: “This award will enable us to identify, develop and share excellence in experiential teaching and clinical legal education, ensuring maximum benefit not only to students, but also to the clients to whom we provide free legal services.”

Peter Francis, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, added: “This award highlights the achievement of Northumbria’s vision of professional excellence allied to Research Rich Learning delivered through our commitment to experiential learning. The Student Law Office is an exemplar of this practice within this university and beyond.”

The CATE awards were announced at the Higher Education Academy's annual award ceremony in London. During the ceremony [Elaine Campbell](#), a solicitor tutor in Northumbria's Student Law Office, also received a National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) – the most prestigious individual award for excellence in teaching in higher education.

Professor Stephanie Marshal of the HEA added: "A National Teaching Fellowship recognises exceptional and inspirational teaching. NTFs have a really important role in sharing ideas and best practice, and this is why the award is so important."

Northumbria Law School is the largest law school in the North East, with a national and international reputation for academic excellence in legal education. It was recognised at the highest level in 2013 when the University was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize in Further and Higher Education in for the outstanding community work of the Student Law Office.

For more information about the Student Law Office visit <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/academic-departments/northumbria-law-school/study/student-law-office/>

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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