

Pro Bono Programme for Law Students

Criteria and Guidelines for Approved Pro Bono Work

I. Criteria

1. Approved Pro Bono Work to be undertaken by law students should have, as their primary purposes, increasing access to justice (which includes raising awareness of legal rights, liabilities and responsibilities, and of self-help remedies such as mediation, negotiation and alternative means of conflict resolution) for disadvantaged persons. Activities should ideally involve the application of legal knowledge and skills by law students and must be undertaken without financial reward or academic credit (other than to fulfil a graduation requirement).
2. For the purposes of applying the criteria, 'disadvantaged persons' include:
 - a. persons from households with low income, whether determined by a means test or by other means;
 - b. persons who are disadvantaged because of financial hardship, intellectual or physical disability, mental or physical illness, lack of education or other circumstances;
 - c. persons who are unable to afford legal representation; and
 - d. persons who are unaware of their legal rights, liabilities and responsibilities, or their right to legal representation.
3. By way of illustration, Approved Pro Bono Work which fulfils the criteria set out above may include:
 - a. Assistance provided to any charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental or educational organisations that primarily seek to assist the classes of persons listed above, whether directly or indirectly and without financial reward; and
 - b. Assistance provided to organisations, entities, schemes, or programmes established for the promotion of access to justice, including the Legal Aid Bureau, the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme, the Association of Criminal Lawyers of Singapore Legal Advice Scheme, the Supreme Court Legal Assistance Scheme for Capital Offences and the Community Justice Centre.

II. Guidelines

4. Apart from meeting the above criteria, Approved Pro Bono Work should also require active participation by the law students. In order to provide a meaningful opportunity for the students to assist and learn, Approved Pro Bono Work should include the following types of work:
 - a. Intake and registration: Students can assist in conducting means/merits tests and other client-screening tests. They can also help register potential clients/clients.
 - b. Interviewing: Students can assist in client interviews. They can also help to contact and interview prospective witnesses.

- c. Translation: Students with the necessary qualifications can provide translation services.
- d. Research: Students can conduct legal research and prepare draft advice.
- e. Trial work: Students can assist in trial preparation, for example by preparing draft court documents. Students can assist during trial, for example by recording notes of evidence. Students can also assist with sentencing research.
- f. Mackenzie friends: Students can assist in Subordinate Courts Mackenzie friends programmes.
- g. Non-contentious legal work: Students can assist in drafting simple documents such as deeds of separation. They can also help prepare lawyer-client correspondence. They can assist in mediation if supervised.
- h. Legal clinics: Students can assist in the administration of legal clinics. They can also take notes for lawyers giving advice at legal clinics.
- i. Administrative/clerical work: Students can provide general administrative support. For example, students can help in file opening and management.

(Updated June 2014)
