

DEVELOPING RESEARCH ON THE LEGAL PROFESSION: A Paper Development Workshop for Postgraduate Researchers and Early Career Researchers



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SCHOOL OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Call for Papers

Are you a Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) or Early Career Researcher (ECR) interested in the legal profession, legal practice, or lawyers' role in society?

The Society of Legal Scholars (Practice, Profession and Ethics Section) and the **Legal Professions Research Group** at the University of Leeds invite submissions for a one-day paper development workshop designed specifically for PGRs and ECRs.

This event aims to provide a supportive and collaborative environment in which participants can present research at any stage of development, receive constructive feedback from peers and established scholars, and develop their ideas for future conference presentations, publications, grant applications, and doctoral projects.

We particularly welcome participants who are new to legal professions research or who are exploring innovative theoretical, interdisciplinary, empirical, or methodological approaches to the study of legal practice and professional life.

Why Research the Legal Profession?

This is an especially exciting and important moment to conduct research on lawyers and legal practice. The modern legal profession remains a powerful institution within contemporary society, shaping access to justice, economic activity, public administration, and the rule of law. At the same time, the sector has experienced profound changes over recent decades, including globalisation, technological innovation, changing business structures, regulatory reform, increasing attention to diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing, and evolving understandings of professional identity and ethics.

These developments raise important questions about the organisation, culture, governance, and future of legal practice, as well as access to justice more broadly. They also provide rich opportunities for interdisciplinary research drawing upon law, sociology, socio-legal studies, history, psychology, business and management, political science, and related fields.

Workshop Objectives

The workshop has three principal aims:

1. **To support the development of PGR and ECR research** on legal professions and legal practice.
2. **To build a network of emerging scholars** working in this field across disciplines and institutions.
3. **To assist participants in developing papers** for future presentation at conferences, including The Society of Legal Scholars (SLS) Annual Conference, and for eventual publication.

Submissions are welcome at **any stage of development**. This includes:

- Initial research ideas
- Doctoral projects in progress
- Literature review papers
- Methodological reflections
- Pilot studies
- Early empirical findings
- Draft conference papers
- Work being prepared for publication

Participants are not expected to present completed research but work in progress and developing papers may later be submitted for presentation at the SLS Annual Conference in 2027.

Themes and Topics

We welcome submissions on any aspect of the legal profession and legal practice, including but not limited to:

- Globalisation and legal practice
- Legal professionalism and professional identity
- Lawyers and post-colonialism
- Professional regulation and governance
- Technology, AI, and the digital transformation of legal services
- Changing business models and alternative legal service providers
- Professional culture and wellbeing
- Recruitment, education, and social mobility
- Ethics, integrity, and professional responsibility
- High-profile scandals, accountability, and the importance of public trust
- Diversity, inclusion, and inequality within the profession
- Access to justice and the role of lawyers in wider society

- Comparative and international perspectives on legal professions
- Historical studies of lawyers and legal institutions
- Methodological and theoretical innovations in researching legal practice
- Lawyers, courts, and the administration of justice
- Cause lawyering, public interest law, and legal activism

We welcome doctrinal, theoretical, empirical, historical, comparative, socio-legal, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research.

Who Should Submit

This is an interdisciplinary conference. We welcome PGRs, ECRs, and recently appointed academic staff or researchers working in legal practice, policy, regulation, or related fields from all relevant disciplines, including the following:

- Law
- Ethics
- Legal History
- Sociology
- Socio-Legal Studies
- Psychology
- Business and Management
- Organisational Studies
- Criminology
- Legal and Regulatory Policy
- Political Science
- Regulatory Studies

Workshop Format

Participants will be allocated to small groups where they will:

- Present their research ideas or papers
- Receive detailed feedback from peers and mentors
- Discuss methodological and theoretical challenges
- Explore opportunities for publication and future collaboration

To support students and early career scholars in publishing and developing an academic profile in this field, the day will also include two plenary sessions led by established scholars addressing:

- Researching the legal profession across disciplinary boundaries
- Methodological approaches and challenges in legal professions research

Participants will receive feedback designed to help them strengthen and develop their work following the workshop.

Submission Instructions

Please submit an abstract of **up to 300 words** outlining:

- The proposed topic
- Research question(s)
- Theoretical or methodological approach (where relevant)
- Current stage of development

We welcome both individual and multi-author papers as well as works in progress.

Important Dates



Submissions and Enquiries

Please send your abstracts and any enquiries to:

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Organisers:

Practice, Profession and Ethics Section

The Society of Legal Scholars

and

Legal Professions Research Group

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