

About UKCLE and OUP



In association with UKCLE

The UK Centre for Legal Education (UKCLE) supports effective practice in learning, teaching and assessment in law. UKCLE provides academics with a range of services, events, publications, and a website incorporating a resource bank of learning and teaching materials.

UKCLE also funds research and development in legal education, and is a subject centre of the Higher Education Academy, working in partnership with key education associations, networks and interest groups.

The Learning in Law Annual Conference is the main event in UKCLE's calendar, providing a forum for colleagues to present ideas, share practice, and debate current issues. The inclusion of the Law Teacher of the Year Award is a very welcome and fitting acknowledgement of the individual teacher's importance in the educational experience of students.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Sponsored by Oxford University Press

Oxford University Press is the world's largest university press and the UK's leading publisher of legal textbooks. It has the widest choice of legal educational materials available both in print and online for undergraduate, postgraduate, and vocational law courses.

Committed to quality, OUP continually looks for innovative ways to meet academic expectations, and is dedicated to improve and develop publishing to keep pace with new methods of teaching and learning. OUP is proud to sponsor this award and to directly reward those individuals who are really making a difference to their students' learning experience.

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide.



Reflection, reward and recognition



The Law Teacher of the Year Award is the only award that takes place on a national level. Its aim is to recognize and reward the vital role that law teachers play in the education of tomorrow's lawyers, by visiting the stages they work on and bringing to light the hard work that goes on behind the scenes, both by the candidate and their supporting teaching teams.

In 2010, the award was presented to Rebecca Huxley-Binns (Nottingham Trent University) at UKCLE's Learning in Law Annual Conference 2010.

Rebecca has since reflected on winning the award and the positive impact it has had: "Winning Law Teacher of the Year 2010 was a huge surprise and a great privilege. I am sure it had a big impact on my successful application for Reader in Legal Education in the spring of 2010. I have also been asked to publish articles in legal journals, and I led a session on communication and negotiation skills at the UKCLE National Law Students Forum in Manchester in November 2010."

The Law Teacher of the Year Award continues to gain profile not only within the legal education community but within the higher education community more widely. Two previous holders of the award have gone on to be awarded National Teaching Fellowships: 2009 holder Gary Watt (University of Warwick) and 2008 joint holder Alastair Hudson (QMUL). The vast body of evidence built up during the Law Teacher of the Year Award process, and the fact of their winning, no doubt helping their application. We offer them our sincere congratulations.

The incredible journey



With a record number of nominations from a vast range of higher education institutions and colleges, this year has again seen fierce competition for the much-sought award.

Law Teacher of the Year is very much a journey, and one that begins with the all-important nomination form. Thank you to the teachers and students who sent in nominations for their colleagues and lecturers. The nominations opened last February, and over several months a host of competitive entries highlighting teaching talent from around the UK were received for the judging panel to scrutinize. It is only once the short list of candidates is agreed on that the teacher's identities are revealed to the judges.

The judging process is rigorous; it has to be to stand up to scrutiny. If you're in any doubt just ask candidates – or even the judges – what it is like to go through.

Each short listed candidate is visited on campus and observed and filmed teaching. As well as interviewing the candidate, the judges speak to students, heads of departments and colleagues - it's a thorough process in order to find out as much about the candidates as necessary to build up a full picture.



The judges clocked up thousands of miles travelling around the country in some very wintry conditions to visit the candidates. Once all visits are conducted they independently review the body of evidence gathered: it can total over 12 hours of audio and video footage. Then they come together again for a further day of deliberation and discussion until they arrive at their decision. It's never easy or taken lightly - £3,000 is a prize worth winning!

- six finalists
- four judges
- one winner
- three thousand pounds

James Devenney **Durham University**



“...an unfailing source of support, good sense and wisdom with an encyclopaedic knowledge”



James Devenney is senior lecturer in law at Durham University, with teaching and research interests in contract and commercial law.

A colleague and a student put James forward for the Law Teacher of the Year Award 2011. The nomination describes James as an “inspirational figure,” emphasizing the ways in which James manages to “capture his students’ imagination”, and describing his course as “much more than just a course on contract – it is an introduction in how to think like a lawyer.”

The nomination also highlights James’ dedication to his role as a teacher and a colleague: “Despite being one of the busiest members of the department, James is an unfailing source of support, good sense and wisdom. With James you feel that no problem is too big or too small.” James’ skills as an effective communicator are also mentioned, with his ability to explain “often quite demanding and difficult material in a way that is easy for students to follow” aided by his “encyclopaedic” knowledge of contract law.

James’ teaching is research led, and he is widely published in the field of contract law. James often utilises his own publications in his teaching, and he has recently taken over as the editor of a popular contract law text, cases and materials textbook. James recently undertook the Certificate of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, awarded by the School of Education.

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Liz Fisher **University of Oxford**



“...an important life preserver, particularly when as a student you struggle to stay afloat”



Liz Fisher is reader in environmental law at the University of Oxford. Liz’s teaching and research interests are in environmental law and legal research methods.

A colleague and a student nominated Liz for the Law Teacher of the Year Award 2011, highlighting her ability to instil in students “a real love of the subjects she teaches”. Her support for her students is also emphasized: “knowing that she is willing to listen and help in any way she can is an important life preserver, particularly when as a student you struggle to stay afloat.”

Liz’s nomination expands on this dedication, iterating her “firm commitment to teaching environmental law in a manner that maintains its scholarly integrity”, and her aim to motivate students “to be rigorous lawyers when thinking about environmental problems.” Her style of teaching is also praised, focusing on a “constant flow of dialogue between Liz and her students - this interactive setting encourages positive discussion, debate with fellow students, and personal reflection during and after classes.”

Much of Liz’s scholarly work has explored the interrelationship between law, administration and regulatory problems - Liz won the SLS Peter Birks Prize

for Outstanding Legal Scholarship following the publication of a book on risk regulation and administrative constitutionalism. She also sits on the editorial board of the *Journal of Environmental Law* and the editorial committee of the *Modern Law Review*.

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Sarah Greer **University of Greenwich**



“...an all-rounder who goes the extra mile for her students to make learning a thing of joy”



Sarah Greer is head of department and teaching fellow at the University of Greenwich. Sarah’s teaching and research interests are in land law and equity and trusts.

A colleague and two students nominated Sarah for the Law Teacher of the Year Award 2011, describing her as a “dedicated and enthusiastic teacher with a strong belief in and commitment to widening participation,” and an “all-rounder who goes the extra mile for her students to make learning a thing of joy.”

Sarah’s nomination also highlights her “tireless” efforts in supporting her students, including setting up an employer’s forum from which a range of activities have evolved, including “mentoring schemes, essay competitions, work placements, mini-marshalling and internships.” Along with her teaching style, these efforts have led to feedback praising “her clarity, patience and humour”, and emphasizing that “her approach to teaching leaves you looking forward to the next lecture and or seminar.”

Sarah has co-authored a land law textbook, and makes use of her extra-curricular interests (e.g. as moot tutor) to enhance her seminar teaching. Sarah also researches and publishes on property law matters in a variety

of journals. She is an active member of the University of Greenwich Teaching Fellowship network, and recently co-presented a paper at the University’s Annual Teaching and Learning conference. Sarah is also a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

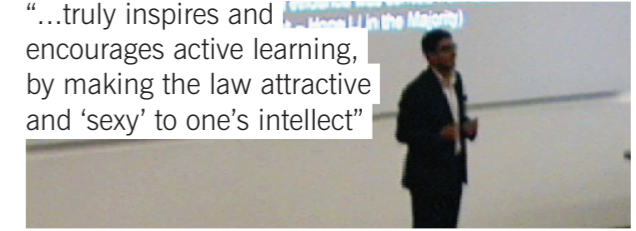
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Stewart Motha **University of Kent**



“...truly inspires and encourages active learning, by making the law attractive and ‘sexy’ to one’s intellect”



Stewart Motha is senior lecturer in law at the University of Kent, teaching subjects including public law and law and political theory.

Stewart was nominated for the Law Teacher of the Year Award 2011 by a colleague and three students, highlighting Stewart’s role in providing “invaluable intellectual contributions to the success of the rejuvenation of the curriculum.” This corresponds with the statement that Stewart has “developed the teaching of public law in ways which enhance the progressive acquisition of skills simultaneously with increasing its intellectual relevance and excitement” for the student.

The popularity of Stewart’s teaching style is also emphasized, particularly with regard to his “vision for the intellectual development of his students,” lectures “peppered with humour,” and his ability to “empathize with the sometimes far-reaching scope of legal thinking, making him a favourite among students.” This is summarized succinctly in the closing statement: “Stewart is considered among many of his students as the law teacher that truly inspires and encourages active learning, by making the law attractive, or more accurately put, by making the law ‘sexy’ to one’s intellect.”

Stewart’s research activities lie at the heart of his approach to teaching, with modules that often derive directly from his intellectual priorities. He is a Fellow of the prestigious Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study – one of the foremost research institutes in Africa. In addition to the UK, he has conducted extensive constitutional research in Australia, Southern Africa, India, and the United States. He is a member of the steering committee of the Law and Social Sciences Network of South Asia, and on the editorial board of law journals such as *Law and Critique*.

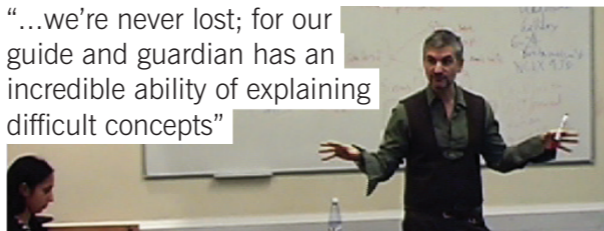
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Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos **University of Westminster**



“...we’re never lost; for our guide and guardian has an incredible ability of explaining difficult concepts”



Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos is Professor of Law and Theory at the University of Westminster, with teaching and research interests in environmental law and contemporary legal theory.

Nine students collaborated to put together a nomination in support of Andreas. They prefaced their nomination with a statement that spoke of their “thirst to improve ourselves as human beings, to broaden our horizons, to serve Justice, to communicate on a higher level of awareness, to touch the light of higher education and become ourselves carriers of this light into our social and professional lives. Andreas has been for us the answer to all our expectations, both academic and personal.”

Andreas’ nomination touches on his ability to “engage” his students with the subjects he teaches, paying particular tribute to his “inspiring and passionate” approach. His teaching support is also noted: “despite the difficulty of the subjects at hand, we were never lost; for our guide and guardian, Andreas, has an incredible ability of explaining difficult concepts using ordinary language.” The variety of his methods is also praised, including the introduction of “student presentations, presentations by subject specialists, group discussions, games, movies, art, poetry, and excursions to galleries” - all in a “continuous effort to avoid classroom monotony.”

As co-director of the Westminster International Law and Theory Centre, Andreas often organizes lectures, conferences and other events for staff. The environmental law and contemporary legal theory module recently received a special mention for pioneering teaching approaches at a survey on environmental law modules in the UK, and last year Andreas presented his teaching methodology (as an example of innovation and interdisciplinarity) at an Environmental Law Teaching conference at UCL.

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UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

Zoe Swan **University of Brighton**



“...how could we not be inspired to learn more when being taught by someone who so clearly loves what she is doing?”



Zoe Swan is senior lecturer at the University of Brighton, with teaching and research interests in family law.

Two colleagues and two students put Zoe forward for the Law Teacher of the Year Award 2011, highlighting her “natural ability to communicate and interact effectively with diverse groups of students.” Indeed, the nomination describes her teaching sessions as “unique with regard to the level of energy, enthusiasm and passion with which they are delivered, and the encouragement of students to participate.”

Zoe’s commitment to providing students with constructive feedback and advice on how to improve is highlighted in the nomination: “integral to Zoe’s teaching is her fundamental belief that detailed written and verbal feedback is essential to the development of all students... Students always know what they have done well and what they will need to do to develop.” From the students’ perspective, this is clearly seconded: “She demonstrated a genuine interest in each and every student and was keen to know our plans for the future,” and “what really sets Zoe apart is her enthusiasm for the subject – it just oozes out of every pore. How could we not be inspired to learn more when being taught by someone who so clearly loves what she is doing?”

Zoe has recently completed a Masters level thesis on contact in family proceedings and is in the process of condensing her research findings to submit articles for publication to family law journals. Zoe is also actively involved in research which supports her teaching with first year LLB students and is currently undertaking an experimental piece of research which seeks to realign the first year students’ experience of assessment. Zoe is a member of Inner Temple, an active member of the local Sussex Family Justice Council and a member of the Family Law Bar Association. Zoe takes a keen interest in supporting students that wish to develop mooting skills and on campus has the unofficial title, Mistress of the Moots.

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University of Brighton

Who decides?

The judging process behind Law Teacher of the Year is certainly comprehensive, it has been described by previous winners as “lengthy and rigorous” and “extremely thorough” yet at the same time praised by always “celebrating teaching rather than making the nominees feel like laboratory rats”.



Alison Bone is a principal lecturer and winner of a Teaching Excellence Award at the University of Brighton. Alison is recognized for her expertise in assessment mechanisms and how people learn. She is a former Chair of the Association of Law Teachers, and the originator of the award.



Julian Webb is Director of the UK Centre for Legal Education. He oversees the strategic direction of the Centre with particular responsibility for operational planning. Julian also develops and implements the Centre’s research strategy.



Chris Hull is an academic director and programme director of business law at St Mary’s University College, Twickenham. Chris has ten years’ experience of managing and teaching on a range of business, law and public services programmes in both further and higher education.



Marianne Lightowler is head of marketing in Oxford University Press’s higher education department. Marianne’s career in publishing spans 20 years, and she has a passion for legal educational materials, developing Oxford’s undergraduate law list for the last 14 years.

Every winner starts with a nomination



You’ll have seen that a lot of work goes into the Law Teacher of the Year Award and preparations for LTOTY 2012 begin almost as soon as this year’s winner is announced.

As always, the important first step begins with those that know the candidates best – the students they teach and you, the colleagues they work with. Colleagues and students alike work together to put forward a nomination that addresses all the criteria of the award, while finding that certain “edge” to capture the judges’ attention and peak their desire to find out more – heads of department are also invited to provide a supporting statement at this stage.

The award relies on you to nominate your colleague, or support and encourage students to nominate the teacher they rate highly. Visit the website to see the award criteria, we don’t look for “off the wall” teaching methods, it’s talent that counts. There must be two sponsors for each entrant, and the law teacher should agree to the nomination as should their Head of Department or line manager.

LAW TEACHER
OF THE YEAR 2012

in association with UKCLE, sponsored by OUP

This year every finalist’s nomination had received student input and it is heartening to see how the students have continually backed this award. We encourage you, as colleagues, to work with the students and have some input into the nomination, adding that important professional perspective.

A model example of a nomination form is available to download from the website, to act as a guide.

Visit the OUP or UKCLE websites for full details of the award, including eligibility, the criteria the candidates are judged against and nominate online from February 2011.

www.oup.com | www.ukcle.ac.uk