

Editorial

It is with a sense of responsibility and gratitude that we take on editorial responsibility for *Legal Studies*. The journal is, as our immediate predecessors remarked, ‘one of the foremost academic law journals in the common law world’.¹ We will endeavour to maintain and enhance its quality and standing. We are grateful to the Society of Legal Scholars for entrusting to us the responsibilities associated with editing *Legal Studies*. Our gratitude extends to past editorial boards, past reviewers and members of the Society.

As a generalist journal, *Legal Studies* offers an academic platform to interrogate long-established legal questions. The journal also offers an opportunity to discover and explore new trends in law, legal institutions, and principles. As an editorial board we are eager to encourage all forms of legal scholarship.

Legal Studies is a global law journal. It receives submissions from all corners of the world – from common law and non-common law jurisdictions. As recognition of its importance, it is viewed as being in the top-tier of law journals written in the English language. In the UK, the number of articles published in *Legal Studies* which are submitted to the REF exceeds every other legal journal. In Australia, *Legal Studies* is amongst the most highly ranked academic journals. In other jurisdictions, where pressures are different, *Legal Studies* is widely recognised as a ‘target journal’. We aim to continue to publish original and significant legal scholarship with global appeal.

Increasingly, scholars are competing in an academic world that evaluates quality through quantitative measurement. *Legal Studies* has recently been accepted for inclusion in Thomson Reuters’ Social Science Citation Index with coverage starting from the 2013 volume. The journal will obtain an Impact Factor commencing in 2017 which is based on the mean number of citations received by papers in the journal. We plan to build on this momentum by maintaining the vibrant readership of the journal and publishing high quality content.

Other than quality, our only restrictions are that the work must be accessible, of interest to generalist readers and within our word count limitations. We will publish articles that reflect and engage with both our readers’ interests and emerging trends in legal scholarship. To this end we would welcome submissions that focus on private and commercial law, and those which use an empirical methodology.

Our editorial procedures do not vary from those of our predecessors. Double blind peer review is the gold standard, to which we will adhere. It is for this reason that we ask for, and will ensure, anonymised submissions. A ten-week turnaround is our goal. Achieving this depends upon the continuing goodwill of our reviewers to deliver within a six-week timeframe.

We wish to encourage new generations of legal academics to think of *Legal Studies* as the logical home for their papers. Our review process will make the authors’ pieces better works, whether published in *Legal Studies* or ultimately elsewhere. The journal will remain accessible to all working within the legal academic community. We will work with the organisers of the SLS’s annual meetings to ensure *Legal Studies* represents the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the Society. In addition to the publication of the Best Paper (subject to an expedited review process), we will seek to publish other high-quality work from the annual conference. As an editorial board, we plan to

1. ‘Editorial’ (2012) 32 *Legal Studies* 1, 1.

increase our reach within law schools across the UK. We will be running 'how to get published' sessions and would encourage law schools to contact the editorial board to arrange a session.

The legal academy is not immune from external pressures to change and must embrace contemporary methods. *Legal Studies* is still published in hard-copy format. By being placed in the mail slots of academics worldwide, the journal's very presence makes it the de facto journal of record of the UK and Irish legal community. *Legal Studies* also has an on-line presence which presents opportunities to shape upcoming research agendas and to support research activity. We encourage our readers to download and use the Legal Studies 'apps,' which are available for both Apple and Android devices.

Our predecessors used this electronic presence to publish three on-line virtual issues in Public Law, Law and Culture, and Private Law. These virtual issues take the form of 'best of' collections, highlighting selected articles. We will expand the use of this on-line space and make available opportunities for online 'special issues.' These special issues will provide a vehicle for disseminating collections of papers on specific themes. Such special issues may provide the ideal fora for the publication of conference and symposium proceedings, and the editors welcome proposals. Online special issues will continue to be subject to our existing and rigorous review process.

While we are eager to exploit the opportunities that can come from using online space and to communicate new content through *Legal Studies*' new twitter feed (@SLSLegalStudies), traditional elements of the journal will continue to feature fully. The book review section will remain an integral part of the journal and we aim to facilitate a lively and critical engagement with recent scholarship. Authors will be given space to review in depth when appropriate and the publication of longer reviews as well as shorter ones will continue. We welcome and encourage proposals for review from authors at all career stages.

As a final note, we wish to thank our predecessors (Professors Blanaid Clarke, Fiona de Londras, Imelda Maher and Colin Scott) for making the transition between editorial boards as smooth as it was. Their patience while we navigated a steep learning curve, and their willingness to provide advice and answer sometimes urgent questions is very much appreciated.

The Editors