

Researchers propose compulsory climate change teaching in core law curriculum

January 24 2023



Credit: Durham University

Academics from Durham University are urging that climate change education should be made compulsory across the core law curriculum in Higher Education.

The researchers evaluated students' engagement and their broader views concerning [climate change](#) education by integrating climate change and [environmental law](#) into the core curriculum at the University of Exeter, a Russell Group University.

The results showed that [law students](#) want to study climate law and the climate context of law as part of their core curriculum.

Students also said that climate change education should be compulsory and taught across the program.

In the study, the researchers argue that climate change is still perceived as a niche topic and that students are leaving Law School without a proper understanding of the legal framework or [social context](#) within which they will practice.

They emphasize the importance of understanding climate constitutional legislation and net zero, climate risk and interpretation of legal rules in the context of climate change.

Their findings are published in the journal, *Legal Studies*.

Students graduating from law school will spend their working lives needing to understand and apply legal norms in the context of a society dealing with the impacts of climate change, while transitioning to 'net zero' carbon economies.

Legal educators now face the responsibility of ensuring that law graduates are equipped with adequate knowledge of climate law and social context in which they will operate.

Lead researcher Dr. Kim Bower, of Durham Law School, Durham University, said, "We have been working on a cross-curriculum approach

to climate education at Durham Law School for this [academic year](#), and have found that integrating materials relating to climate change in various modules not only has been very natural, but also supports students' study of law."

"We are considering how to approach this long term as part of a broader curriculum review."

The approach has been developed based upon previous research by Dr. Kim Bouwer conducted at the University of Exeter.

As a part of the experiment, Dr. Bouwer designed and delivered climate change education in Land Law and conducted the study to evaluate students' engagement and their broader views concerning climate change education.

The work was carried out by three Exeter graduates, who were law students at the time of the research, who surveyed, and held focus groups with, other students.

More information: Kim Bouwer et al, 'Climate Change isn't Optional': Climate Change in the Core Law Curriculum, *Legal Studies* (2022). [DOI: 10.1017/lst.2022.35](#)

Provided by Durham University

Citation: Researchers propose compulsory climate change teaching in core law curriculum (2023, January 24) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-01-compulsory-climate-core-law-curriculum.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.