

CAL Undergraduate Research Scholarships Scheme 2017
Project Proposal Form

Project Proposer/s:	Prof. Erika Rackley
School/Dept:	Law
Project Title:	Women's Legal Landmarks

Project Summary

The Women's Legal Landmarks Project, co-led by Rackley with Auchmuty (Reading), is an innovative interdisciplinary collaboration involving 80 feminist legal and history scholars and activists from across the UK and Ireland (incl UOB). Participants have been engaged in the process of 'landmarking' key legal events, cases and statutes which mark an important stage or turning point in women's engagement with law and law reform. The 100+ landmarks cover a range of topics, including the right to vote, sex discrimination, divorce, equal pay, forced marriage, prostitution, rape, twitter abuse and the ordination of women bishops, as well as the life stories of a number of women who were the first to undertake key legal roles and positions. By combining legal and historical expertise to create the first comprehensive scholarly anthology of the legal landmarks for women (c.950-2015), the project seeks to demonstrate, in a sustained and disciplined way, women's agency and activism in the achievement of law reform and justice, and to embed women's legal history in legal scholarship and mainstream knowledge.

The landmarks will be published as an edited collection in 2018 (350,000 words). Rackley and Auchmuty will also co-author a peer-reviewed paper developing the theoretical underpinnings of feminist legal history, which will be first of its kind in the UK. A number of public- and education-facing activities, including public lectures/seminars, podcasts, teaching resources, will follow, timed to coincide with the centenaries of the extension of the franchise to (some) women in 1918 and women's admission into the legal profession the following year. These will be supported by/housed on a comprehensive website which will be located at UOB and, ultimately, archived in the British Library Open UK web archive.

What the researcher will do

The research will assist with the development of the project's impact/dissemination pathways. Their primary task will be to build and populate the project website. This will be the public-facing hub of the project. This will involve:

1. building the project website – using wordpress.
2. drafting short (500 word) summaries of each landmark and liaising with the landmark author/s.
3. researching publicly-available primary and secondary sources (photos, case reports, newspaper articles, podcasts etc) to accompany each landmark.
4. producing a 'Birmingham Law School Spotlight' about the project (with potential to be a co-author).
5. identifying topics and, if time allows, preparing a number of educational worksheets for key stage 2-4 history/citizenship classes.

Skills required by the Scholarship holder

Organisation, attention to detail and independence; Clear, concise and engaging writing style; Ability to use Word, and experience of website design/production (word press); Initiative and an active interest in feminism and (legal) history.

How will your Project benefit the Scholarship holder?

The project will benefit the scholarship holder in four ways. (1) It will provide them with a detailed overview of key legal cases, legislation and events spanning 11 centuries, which will expand their core knowledge of specific areas of law and feminist activism/women's history, the processes and potential/limits of law reform, and the importance of social/political contexts. (2) The process of presenting each landmark in a way that is accessible to multiple audiences, looking for primary/secondary sources, as well as thinking about how to engage school students with the project as a whole, will hone the holder's written, research and communication skills. (3) There is potential for the scholarship to provide groundwork for further study in women/feminist (legal) history, at advanced UG, Masters or PhD level. (4) The holder will become familiar with the process of academic writing and collaboration and have the opportunity to 'meet' (by email) a large number of legal academics/activists.

How will the Scholarship benefit your Project?

The scholarship will greatly benefit the project. The assistance will come in the final, key stages of the project. The development of resources and impact pathways can be time-consuming but ultimately rewarding. The scholarship will be vital in ensuring the effective and wide-reaching dissemination of the project.