

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

**for the award of
LLM IN LEGAL PRACTICE****Managed by the Faculty of HSS****Delivered by the SCHOOL OF LAW**

Date approved:	28/3/18
Applies to students commencing study in:	Month/Year SEPTEMBER 2018

RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended*	Nature of amendment**	Reason for amendment**

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Oxford Brookes University, Headington Hill Hall
Language of study:	English
Final award:	Master of Law (LLM)
Programme title:	Legal Practice
Interim exit awards and award titles available:	N/A
Brookes course code:	LP50
UCAS code:	UKPASS Code: P042057
JACS code:	M100
HECoS code:	100683, 100692
Mode of delivery: (Mode of Study given in brackets)	Distance Learning (part-time)
Mode and Duration of study:	Part Time 1 year
Language of study	English
QAA subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:	QAA Characteristics Statement Masters Degree, September 2015
Professional accreditation attached to the programme:	N/A
University Regulations:	https://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/

SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?

2.1 Rationale for/distinctiveness of the programme

The LL.M in Legal Practice Programme combines the practical knowledge and skills gained on a legal vocational course, such as the Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice, with a period of further academic study that culminates in the production of a written dissertation on a chosen area of legal practice. The Programme has been designed to allow solicitors and barristers as well as those wishing to enter the professions to convert their legal vocational qualification¹ into a Masters level qualification by undertaking a further year of academic study.

Upon entry to the Programme all students will be awarded 120 generic Level 7 CATS. Thereafter students will first undertake a module in Advanced Legal Research Methods before researching and writing a 12000 word dissertation on an area of legal practice.

The LL.M allows students to develop the knowledge and skills gained from their vocational course and, where appropriate, relevant expertise from legal practice. Legal practice is constantly changing. At the same time, lawyers often specialise in a particular area of law at an early stage in their career. While vocational courses provide a wide experience of key practice areas and skills, the LL.M is intended to offer the opportunity to study an area of legal practice in depth. Lawyers need to be aware of not just what the law is but how it came to be like that and, importantly, how it may develop in the future. Lawyers are often required not merely to practise the law but to engage in the process of its development e.g. through consultation processes with government agencies and the representative bodies of the legal profession. Today, more than ever, the development of the law is a democratic process involving public opinion and the media as well as the legal profession, the judiciary and legislature. Solicitors and barristers have a key role to play in this process.

The best and most successful lawyers are those able to combine a lively and creative academic intelligence with the practical initiative and resilience required in legal practice. Increasingly, a Masters degree is recognised as the required level of qualification in professions where a high degree of applied specialist knowledge is necessary. Students about to enter legal practice can use the LL.M to demonstrate commitment to an area of legal practice they are particularly interested in or would like to practise. Equally, those who are already practitioners can use the LL.M to develop experience of legal practice in a broader and deeper way than is usually possible in the day-to-day working environment. A key objective of the LL.M in Legal Practice is that it increases the employment and promotion opportunities of successful candidates.

The LL.M in Legal Practice at Oxford Brookes University provides a specialist degree which allows students to engage constructively with the changing nature of their respective legal system and its professional practice.

Names of the staff teaching on the programme and available to supervise your dissertation can be found on the School of Law [website](#). As you will see from reading their profiles, a number of members of staff were qualified solicitors or barristers before they came into teaching and thus have a keen appreciation of the needs of legal practitioners. In addition, a number specialise in the laws of small jurisdictions.

¹ See the section of the Handbook entitled 'Recognition of Incoming Credit'.
Updated May 2016

SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes:

Academic Literacy

- Systematic understanding and critical awareness of the fundamentals of advanced legal research
- Ability to form and effectively communicate complex research conclusions

Digital and Information Literacy

- Confident use of appropriate technology to locate relevant sources of law
- Ability to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research skills required for accessing hard copy and on-line legal practice and other related materials

Research Literacy

- Knowledge of legal research sources and the ability to evaluate their reliability
- Understanding of the fundamentals of historical, doctrinal, and comparative legal research methods and awareness of the circumstances in which those techniques may be effectively applied
- Ability to write clearly and effectively to a level appropriate to professional legal practice and to meet approved criteria for formal presentation of an academic written dissertation
- Ability to synthesise knowledge of relevant research techniques with issues of legal practice to demonstrate the ability to create, design and plan a dissertation project.

Critical Self-awareness and Personal Literacy

- Self-direction and originality in tackling and solving current problems in an area of legal practice
- Ability to evaluate current research and formulate written arguments on an area of contemporary legal practice.
- Ability to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level and in particular through the significant independent learning required in the preparation of a supervised dissertation
- Ability to analyse critically legal practice issues, within a group setting.
- Ability to discuss positions on legal practice issues, within a group setting

Active Citizenship

- A critical awareness of the structures of the legal system and the general framework of the legal profession.
- Informed reflection upon the efficacy of the legal system, legal profession and the provision of legal services.

SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

The Programme has two component parts: a module in Advanced Legal Research Methods and a Dissertation Module, as listed in the table below.

Code	Module Title	Credits	Level	Status	Coursework: Exam ratio
P22322	Advanced Legal Research Methods	10	M	Compulsory	100% coursework
P22323	Dissertation	50	M	Compulsory	100% coursework

This structure allows students to complete the Programme in a way that fits in with both career and/or domestic demands.

4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Students who fail to successfully complete P22322 or P22323 will receive no qualification from the University.

4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable.

SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching methods:

Students will experience a variety of teaching methods which are used to provide a high quality learning experience.

For the module in Advanced Legal Research Methods this will include: directed reading; 10 x one hour narrated PowerPoints; 8 x one hour 'eseminars'; up to a maximum of 2 x one hour video consultations with a supervisor to discuss the student's detailed research proposal; and up to 80 hours of independent study.

For the Dissertation module this will include individual supervision by means of video consultations, skype or other arrangement to be agreed between the student and supervisor, to discuss progress on the dissertation and for the supervisor to comment on draft chapters. The schedule of such supervisions will be agreed in advance between the student and his or her supervisor and will normally amount in total to between 4 to 8 hours. Prior to each video consultation the student will be provided with written feedback on the draft chapter that has been submitted to the supervisor.

The effectiveness of these methods is monitored and analysed by students and staff through student module evaluation questionnaires and the LL.M in Legal Practice Annual Review process. This allows the programme team to respond innovatively to any feedback which suggests that any of these methods are not working effectively. .

Assessment methods:

There will be two assessment points:

The Advanced Legal Research Module will be assessed by the production of a research proposal of up to 2,000 words to be agreed with the dissertation supervisor. The mark for this assessment will represent 10% of the final combined marks for the Programme.

The Dissertation module will be assessed through the submission of a 12,000 word dissertation.

The dissertation will be assessed according to the assessment criteria in Table One of the Programme Handbook. The mark for the dissertation will represent 90% of the final combined marks for the Advanced Legal Research Methods module and the Dissertation module.

The Examination Committee reserves the right to conduct a viva.

Indicative Timetable of Assessments

Number	Course/Module Name	Assessment	Deadline	Feedback
P22322	Advanced Legal Research Methods	Submission of research project (up to 2,000 words)	21 st December year one	After semester 1 exam committee
P22323	Dissertation	Submission of 12,000 word dissertation	30th September year two	1 st week of January following submission.

Students may receive one of the following classifications in the overall degree result: "Distinction" for 70% and above; "Merit" for 60% to 69%; and a "Pass" for 50% to 59%. 49% or less will result in a fail grade. The conditions for the award of LL.M (Legal Practice) are set out in the Programme Regulations.

Relation to Brookes Assessment Compact (BAC)

The assessment methods are closely tied to the principles of the BAC. Modular assessment is designed specifically to test the skills and core knowledge identified in the Learning Outcomes. Assessment methods are reviewed annually and fed through module reports and the Annual Review procedure.

Assessment Regulations

The Specific Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes can be found at <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/specific/b4/>

The Core Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes can be found at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/acadregs1.html>

SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Prior qualifications necessary for entry to the programme, including English language requirements.

Please see <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/how-to-apply/entry-requirements/postgraduate-courses/>

Applicants to the programme must have a prior legal vocational qualification, such as the LPC/BPTC or their equivalent.

The legal vocational qualification should normally have been obtained within 5 years of commencement of the LL.M (Legal Practice), but currency can be maintained either through continued work in legal practice as a solicitor or barrister or through teaching on a legal professional training course.

Students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to work independently in a self-directed way. As a significant part of the programme involves the application of academic research skills, students will be required to think critically, deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively and evaluate research including current problems and/or new insights.

An IELTS score of 7 with at least 6.5 across all areas is required for students for whom English is not their first language.

6.2 DBS AND OTHER PRE-COURSE CHECKS REQUIRED

Not applicable.

SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Completion of the Post Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice or the LPC or equivalent will prepare students for work-based learning; and provide a general foundation for legal practice. Successful students will have reached a significant stage in the framework of their training towards becoming a lawyer; and will have begun to develop many of the areas of knowledge, problem-solving skills and client care skills and understanding expected of a newly-qualified lawyer. That course will also have provided the professional ethos necessary to secure a training contract and enable students to prosper in their work-based learning. The course is set at Masters' level and so in addition aims to enhance students' cognitive skills and independent research abilities in a professional context. The opportunity to complete an LL.M in Legal Practice will further enhance students' employability by showing their ability to analyse, research and communicate at a high level.

The course is aimed at professionals already in or about to enter legal practice, and will enhance their prospects in that career.