

Module Guide

Legal Skills, Legal Study, Legal Systems
("3ls")

LAW-4-SSS

School of Law and Social Sciences
Law Division

Level 4

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1. MODULE DETAILS

Module Title:	Legal Skills, Legal Study, Legal Systems ("3Is")
Module Level:	4
Module Reference Number:	LAW-4-SSS
Credit Value:	20
Student Study Hours:	112
Contact Hours:	60
Private Study Hours:	152
Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable):	None
Co-requisite Modules (If applicable):	None
Course(s):	LLB
Module Coordinator:	Cherry James
MC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room)	jamesci@lsbu.ac.uk , BR315
Teaching Team & Contact Details (If applicable):	See details on 3Is Moodle site
Subject Area:	Law
Summary of Assessment Method:	[Formative only: in class – case note/analysis]; summative: exam - MCT and prepared essay; PDP – attendance at meeting with personal tutor and production of specified work tasks
External Examiner appointed for module:	Russell Hewitson, Principal Lecturer, Northumbria University

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

This module introduces students to aspects of the English Legal System, and practical, transferable and legal skills and legal theory essential to effective engagement with their legal studies. Students are introduced to the theories of what law is and what are its sources, the court system, EU and International law, and the personnel involved in the administration of the law.

Students will encounter and develop a range of skills, including study skills, deriving law from primary sources and explaining, discussing and applying it, research, using secondary sources, problem solving, essay writing, communication and IT skills, numerical skills, and reflective learning.

3. AIMS OF THE MODULE

To enable students to

- (a) develop an understanding of the English Legal System, its operation, personnel, and the use of sources of law
- (b) consider the development of the Legal System and to identify major influences upon it
- (c) consider aspects of contemporary criticism and debates and to consider future trends
- (d) acquire a grounding in legal, transferable and practical skills essential to the study and practice of law
- (e) engage in structured practice to acquire and develop these skills
- (f) develop analytical approaches to legal problem solving
- (g) develop the skills of legal argument
- (h) encounter differing legal theories, and enable students to develop an awareness of the influences on law and its development

- (i) reflect upon their learning and to set goals and to plan to meet their study and training needs
- (j) equip themselves for further study at University.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

Students who have successfully completed the module will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

1. The essential legal, transferable and practical skills that are considered necessary for the study and practice of law.
2. How to reflect upon their learning and to set goals and to plan to meet their study and training needs.
3. Knowledge and understanding of the fundamental aspects of the English Legal System.

4.2 Intellectual Skills

Students who have successfully completed this module will be able to demonstrate an ability to:

1. Analyse and solve legal problems by selecting and applying primary sources of law and other legal materials to simple factual situations
Analyse conflicting interpretations of statutes and cases, applying the rules of statutory interpretation and the doctrine of precedent in the context of issues raised by case scenarios

4.3 Practical Skills

Students who have successfully completed this module will be able to demonstrate an ability to:

1. Communicate ideas effectively and appropriately, both orally and in writing
2. Read and understand technical legal materials
3. Produce word processed documents
4. Carry out effective internet-based research
5. Communicate by e-mail
Demonstrate numerical skills through an ability to interpret empirical data relating to the provision of legal services, and statistics on decided cases

4.4 Transferable Skills

Students who have successfully completed this module will be able to demonstrate an ability to:

1. Identify research questions and to carry out research using a variety of media
Plan their research, including setting priorities in terms of relevance and importance

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE MODULE

- Final examination (2 hours, 100%) consisting of:

- Multiple choice or short response style questions, of which some of the questions will address a statutory interpretation problem scenario, and which will cover material from across the module; and
- Short essay, prepared in advance from a choice of three topics spanning the module, written up during exam

NB This exam will be taken in the January exam period.

- Students will also have to attend scheduled PDP meeting(s) with their personal tutor at which they will discuss some short pieces of work which are required to be produced at the PDP meetings. This is a compulsory element of assessment like the assessments outlined above, but assessed on a pass/fail basis only.

The overall pass mark will be 40%. Any element of assessment not passed will be re-examined in the resit exam period.

6. FEEDBACK

Every effort will be made to enable feedback to be given to students 15 **working** days (ie excluding weekends and days falling outside term-time) after the final date for the submission of an assignment, but this may not always be possible in view of the size of the cohort undertaking the module and the number of markers involved. Feedback may be individual written feedback or it may consist of generic feedback provided on the 3Is Moodle site.

7. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE MODULE

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

- Introduction to Law and to the Study of Law
- The Nature of the Legal System of England and Wales
- Conducting Legal research
- Finding, reading and understanding statutory and common law sources
- Legal reasoning
- Writing Essays
- Answering problem questions
- Plagiarism
- The civil and criminal court structure
- Using cases, judicial precedent
- Interpreting and using statutes
- Judges, the legal profession
- The law-making processes within the UK
- The role of EU Law and Human Rights Jurisprudence
- Aspects of the civil and criminal justice systems
- Administrative justice, including an introduction to tribunals and other means of redress

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

The module is of one semester's duration and is delivered over 12 weeks, with a reading week in Week 6. Weeks 13-15 of the semester are devoted to revision by independent study and to assessment.

Each section of the delivery consists of 2 weekly whole group sessions (WGS) and one small group session (SGS) with associated guided independent study activity (ISA).

The first weekly meeting of the whole group, WGS1, is two hours in lecture format introducing the scope, background and principal features of a topic. Students then undertake guided independent study activity to consolidate understanding of the material covered in WGS1 and prepare them for the second weekly whole group meeting, WGS2, which is for one hour and offers an opportunity to focus at greater depth on key aspects and issues of the topic. Students then undertake further guided independent study activity in preparation for the culminating class meeting of the cycle, a two hour SGS focusing on student participation and considering student-led issues.

WGS1→ISA→WGS2→ISA→SGS→repeated for next topic

Teaching and learning is supported by print & a/v material produced in-house and from commercial publishers. Materials may be available in hard-copy, on Blackboard and/or online and include content sufficient for ISAs and for extension study. Formative assessment tasks may be incorporated into the pattern of delivery, either in class or online, including in the form of short self-test facilities [with feedback at times including that of peers].

Independent learning involves reading and undertaking study tasks assigned by the tutor often in the form of e-tivities requiring the student to engage in an activity and reflect and report on their experience. E-tivities will generally be conducted using the Moodle VLE facility.

7.3 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

In addition to attending large group sessions and small group sessions, **study at degree level involves a considerable amount of self-managed learning.**

This is a vital component of study on any degree programme. Some of this time should be used to undertake the relevant reading from your text books, after having re-read your lecture notes – that is, the notes you have taken during lectures and reviewed and written up for yourself afterwards. It is also essential that you prepare for the small group sessions, by reading the material indicated and by **writing up** ideas for the answers to the seminar questions. Small group sessions are interactive classes; this means that you must prepare for them. They are not simply an opportunity for you to acquire a set of notes. You will have done your note taking as part of your preparation for the session so that you will be able to answer questions and join in the discussion without constantly referring to those notes as if you were a bad actor who has forgotten the words. The discussion will provide you with the opportunity to consolidate your understanding of the topic generally and to clarify your understanding of any points that you have found difficult.

The importance of note-taking while preparing for small group sessions is three-fold:

- It is an important skill which can be acquired and developed only through practice
- It makes you decide for yourself what are the main points of the material and how they can be summarised, which is, in turn, part of the learning process
- The notes you take will be an invaluable aid to revision and preparation for assessments

Good performance in assessments requires knowledge that goes beyond that provided in classes and in essential reading.

7.4 Employability

The knowledge, transferable and research-orientated skills acquired in this module will facilitate employability in the legal profession, law related and other graduate level careers.

8. THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Download a copy of the teaching timetable from the 3ls Moodle site. **Please note that the regular programme of weekly large group sessions for this module (ie after the Foundation Programme, for which you have been supplied with specific materials) start in Semester One Week 3, the week beginning Monday 9 October, and the regular weekly small group sessions after the Foundation Programme, start in Semester One Week 4 (the week beginning Monday 16 October).**

9. STUDENT EVALUATION

Last year the vast majority of students taking the module rated its overall quality and that of its Moodle site as good or very good. More comprehensive information from the module evaluation questionnaires is available from the LLB Moodle site.

10. LEARNING RESOURCES

10.1 Core Materials

You are expected to read further following lectures and in preparation for seminars, using as a minimum the prescribed textbooks. You will be able to download from the 3ls Moodle site on a week-by-week basis the Powerpoint slides which accompany the lectures, but ***these do NOT represent a complete set of notes. You need to make additional notes during the lectures and continue to make notes from further reading.***

Small group session materials for Week 4 onwards will be provided in a separate booklet and can also be downloaded from the e-learning modules of the 3ls BB site. The materials for the large group sessions during weeks 1-2 and the small group sessions during weeks 1-3 are in the Foundation Programme Materials with which you have been supplied separately.

10.1 Core Materials

A Gillespie, The English Legal System (7th edn, OUP, Oxford, 2019)
E Finch and S Fafinski, Legal Skills (7th edn, OUP, Oxford, 2019)

10.2 Optional Materials

S Askey and I McLeod, *Studying Law* (4th edn, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2014)
S Bailey, N Taylor, J Ching, Smith, Bailey and Gunn on 'The Modern English Legal System' (5th edn, Sweet & Maxwell, London, 2007)
S Cottrell, *Critical Thinking Skills* (3rd edn, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2017)
S Cottrell, *The Study Skills, Handbook* (5th edn, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2019)
C Elliott and F Quinn, *English Legal System* (19th edn, Pearson, Harlow, 2018)
J Holland and J Webb, *Learning Legal Rules* (10th edn, OUP, Oxford, 2019)
R Huxley-Binns and J Martin, *Unlocking the English Legal System* (5th edn, Hodder, Abingdon, 2017)
R Huxley-Binns, L Riley and C Turner, *Unlocking Legal Learning* (2nd edn, Hodder, Abingdon, 2008)
N McBride, *Letters to a Law Student* (4th edn, Pearson, Harlow, 2017)
W McKay, H Charlton, G Barsoum, *Legal English* (2nd edn, Pearson, Harlow, 2011)
G Slapper and D Kelly, *The English Legal System* (18th edn, Routledge, Abingdon, 2017)
J Snape and G Watt, *How to Moot* (2nd edn, OUP, Oxford, 2010)
C Stychin and L Mulcahy, *Legal Methods and Systems* (4th edn, Sweet and Maxwell, London, 2010)
S Wilson, R Mitchell, T Storey, *English Legal System* (3rd edn, OUP, Oxford, 2018)
M Zander, *Cases and Materials on The English Legal System* (10th edn, CUP, Cambridge, 2007)
M Zander, *The Law-Making Process* (7th edn, CUP, Cambridge, 2015)

Other resources will be made available on the 3Is Moodle site.