

Programme Specification

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE)
Name and level of intermediate awards:	
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Westminster Law School (Little Tichfield Street)
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Derek Lavery
Course URL:	www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/overview-pg?coursecode=D09FUGDL
Mode and length of study:	1 year [FT] 2 years [PT]
University of Westminster course code:	GCPEPRM
JACS code:	M100
UKPASS code:	
QAA subject benchmarking group:	Law
Professional body accreditation:	Joint Academic Stage Board (JASB) (Solicitors Regulation Authority and Bar Standards Board)
Date of course validation/review:	Feb 2017
Date of programme specification:	2016/17

Admissions requirements

The Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) is an intense, condensed programme of study - specifically designed for graduates or students who have acquired career experience or academic/vocational qualifications that the Solicitors Regulations Authority (SRA) considers equivalent to an undergraduate degree. Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the JASB applicants must:

- hold a law degree from a UK university; or
- hold a law degree from a university in the Republic of Ireland; or
- hold a degree in a subject other than law from a UK university or university in the Republic of Ireland; or
- be an overseas graduate who has studied for a minimum of three years full time; or
- be a mature student who can demonstrate at least 10 years of experience at middle-management level; or
- hold an academic or vocational qualification(s) that the SRA considers equivalent to a degree.

In addition, applicants should also have:

- an English Language competency judged sufficient to undertake advanced level study, equivalent to an IELTS score of at least 6.5;
- an academic reference; and
- evidence that an applicant has well considered reasons for choosing the course and the legal profession as a career as well as evidence that the applicant has undertaken for example, a work placement or a mini pupillage.

Applicants who hold non-standard qualifications (noted in d, e, and f above) will no longer be required to obtain a certificate of academic standing from the SRA before enrolling on the Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE). The University will carry out a verification check with NARIC to ensure the non-standard qualification meets the minimum requirements for admission to the course. Further information is available at www.sra.org.uk.

Aims of the course

The Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) aims to provide a knowledge and understanding of basic legal principles, their application to the formulation and resolution of legal problems, and an enquiring, logical and critical approach to legal analysis. It builds upon the academic and professional expertise previously acquired by graduate students and develops the relevant skills needed to demonstrate competence in legal practice. The course complies with Schedule 2 of the JASB Joint Statement and covers:

The seven Foundations of Legal Knowledge Subjects

- Public Law (*incl. Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and Human Rights*)
- Law of the European Union
- Criminal Law
- Obligations (*incl. Contract, Restitution and Tort*)
- Property Law
- Equity and the Law of Trusts
- the English Legal System; and
- one other area of law.

The course aims to:

- provide an academically rigorous programme of legal education designed to prepare the non-law graduate for entry onto the vocational stage of training;
- provide a sound foundation upon which the non-law graduate can develop the legal knowledge and competencies necessary for a career in legal practice;
- enable the acquisition of a sound knowledge of those areas of law which are generally considered to be fundamental to any study of law (ie the seven foundation of legal knowledge subjects) and of at least one additional area;
- ensure the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the English Legal System and process;
- ensure an appreciation of the relationship between national and community law;
- enable the non-law graduate to analyse legal problems and provide a range of solutions to them using primary materials;
- enable the non-law graduate to transfer and apply both knowledge and skills learned in one legal context to another;
- develop in the non-law graduate a capacity for critical assessment of the law; and
- develop in the non-law graduate the ability to use and recognise the potential of IT in the context of the law and legal study.

Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, ie employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

Knowledge and understanding

On completion of the course, the successful student will be able to:

- demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the areas of law studied, of the legal process and the inter-relationship between different areas of law in a national and European context;
- identify, find and use a range of sources of legal information, including IT, to assist in legal study and to extract the essential points from that information;
- analyse legal information and apply it to the solution of problems;
- communicate legal information efficiently and effectively both orally and in writing;
- assume responsibility for the continuing development of his/her own legal education and competence;

Specific skills

- the ability to process large quantities of information rapidly and to apply that information in solving individual problems;
- the ability to approach a problem logically, to analyse complex factual situations and evaluate a range of solutions;
- the ability to listen effectively
- the ability to use language accurately and to communicate information efficiently and effectively both orally and in the writing;
- the ability to conduct legal research using primary and secondary sources, with particular emphasis upon primary resources (both hardcopy and electronic) and to extract essential information from those sources;
- the capacity to work co-operatively and constructively in a team as well as competitively;
- the capacity to transfer and apply knowledge and skills learned in one context to another;
- the capacity for students to assess their own and other arguments; and
- the ability to assume responsibility for their own independent learning.

Key transferable skills

All the skills set out above are relevant to and may be transferred to employment as a lawyer, and to other contexts.

Learning, teaching and assessment methods

Learning and Teaching

For the seven foundation subjects, teaching is by a combination of lectures and tutorials. Each subject is taught over twenty-one or twenty-two teaching weeks; full time students receive two hours of lectures per subject per teaching week, and part-time students receive one hour of lectures per subject per teaching week. As part of the lecture programme in each subject, part-time students are instructed to undertake several hours of reading and other independent study as directed by subject tutors.

The aim of the lectures is to stimulate the interest of the students in each of the subject areas and to provide a sound foundation of knowledge. Lectures help students to focus on the more complex and demanding issues within each topic which they may have difficulty in understanding from their own reading. At the same time, lectures can begin to develop a critical assessment of the relevant jurisprudence and an awareness of the political and social context in which the law is evolving.

Tutorials are one hour in duration. All students, (full and part time) attend one tutorial per fortnight in each foundation subject, and will attend ten tutorials plus a revision tutorial per subject during the twenty-two teaching weeks. Students are assigned to a tutorial group for the duration of the academic year, each group being no more than fifteen students.

The aim of tutorials is to consolidate the material covered in the lecture course and to give students practice in analysing legal problems and in applying the relevant law to offer solutions to those problems. The tutorials give students the opportunity to develop the skills of research, analysis and problem-solving in relation to a range of factual and legal situations. Students are also encouraged to develop their oral communication skills, and to take advantage of the tutorial setting to improve their ability to work as a member of a team.

In addition to lectures and tutorials, students learn and progress through discussions with and feedback from academic tutors, and guided and independent study.

English Legal System is taught to full time and first year part-time students as an intensive course during the two-week induction/student orientation programme. Teaching is by way of a series of lectures interspersed with individual exercises and group work. Part-time students receive an abridged programme of lectures delivered over two evenings of their induction/student orientation programme, but this is supplemented by lecture material in the form of a comprehensive handbook.

Assessment

Assessment is undertaken using a combination of written examinations and coursework. The use of a combination of assessments, as well as being a requirement of the JASB, offers students the opportunity to demonstrate that they have acquired a range of abilities and skills.

The method used for assessing English Legal System is an unseen written examination of one and a half hours duration for full time and part-time students. The ELS paper gives equal weighting to a series of short answer questions and multiple choice questions, and take place at the end of the induction period. If a student does not pass the ELS exam at the third attempt (by the end of the first term), he or she must withdraw from the course.

Assessment in each of the seven foundation subjects is by way of an unseen three-hour written examination. These examinations are held on separate days within the University's published period for examinations and referral examinations. Each subject paper contains a mix of essay questions and problem questions, the latter based on hypothetical factual situations so that students can show they have the ability to approach problems logically, to analyse complex factual information, and to apply their legal knowledge in identifying the key legal issues and developing solutions to the problem posed by the facts of the question.

Further information on rationale, weighting and assessment criteria can be found within the Assessment Regulations in this Handbook, and in the module proformas for each of the seven foundation subjects.

Students must present four pieces of coursework at different stages of the course. Dates for publication of coursework titles and hand in deadlines for each piece of coursework are given in the Academic Year Planners and Assessment Schedule.

Coursework is designed so that students have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have developed understanding and basic competence in certain legal skills. Students undertake

supervised written coursework in the form of two separate papers, one to test students' ability to analyse case law, and the other concerning interpretation of legislation.

Other coursework takes the form of two essays which allow students to demonstrate their ability to conduct legal research using a variety of sources, that they can use the information from these sources, and that they can communicate this information and their conclusions effectively in a piece of legal writing. The fourth coursework is the Project in an Additional Area of Law, in which students draw on their experience and feedback from earlier coursework to produce a 4000-4500 word essay on a topic chosen from set list. This coursework is used to meet the JASB's requirement that the students study "another area of law" as well as the seven foundation subjects.

Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year.

Credit Level 6				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
LGDL600	English Legal System	Core	0	0
LGDL601	Criminal Law	Core	15	7.5
LGDL602	Equity and Trusts	Core	15	7.5
LGDL603	The Law of the European Union	Core	15	7.5
LGDL604	Contract Law	Core	15	7.5
LGDL605	Law of Tort	Core	15	7.5
LGDL606	Land Law	Core	15	7.5
LGDL607	Public Law	Core	15	7.5
LGDL608	Project in additional area of Law	Core	7.5	3.75
LGDL609	Case & Statutory Analysis	Core	7.5	3.75
LGDL610	Legal Writing I Coursework	Core	7.5	3.75
LGDL611	Legal Writing II Coursework	Core	7.5	3.75
Award of Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) available				

Academic regulations

The Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called Essential Westminster, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster. The following regulations should be read in conjunction with Section 18: Framework for Postgraduate Taught Courses and relevant sections of the current Handbook of Academic Regulations, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

Award

In order to qualify for the award of Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) a student must have: obtained at least 120 credits including:

- a minimum of 30 credits at Level 4 or higher; and
- a minimum of 90 credits at Level 6 or higher; and
- satisfied the requirements contained within the course specific regulations for the course and professional body requirements

The University **will** award:

a **Graduate Diploma with commendation** to a student who has:

- passed all elements of assessment at the first attempt, without any module compensation; and
- obtained an overall average of at least 60%

a **Graduate Diploma with distinction** to a student who has:

- passed all elements of assessment at the first attempt, without any module compensation; and
- obtained an overall average of at least 70%

The University **may** award:

a **Graduate Diploma with commendation** to a student who has:

- passed all elements of assessment at the first attempt, without any module compensation; and
- obtained an overall average of at least 58%; and
- obtained an overall average of at least 60% in at least 50% of the modules counting towards the final award; and
- the Examination Board considers that it is not inappropriate to award a commendation.

a **Graduate Diploma with distinction** to a student who has:

- passed all elements of assessment at the first attempt, without any module compensation; and
- obtained an overall average of at least 67%; and
- obtained an overall average of at least 70% in at least 50% of the modules counting towards the final award; and
- the Examination Board considers that it is not inappropriate to award a distinction.

Course Specific Regulations

Assessment

The pass mark for each element of assessment is 40% and in addition, each element of assessment carries a qualifying mark of 40%. This means students must pass all elements of assessment in order to meet award requirements.

Students are permitted **three attempts only** at any assessment. If a student passes all modules but one, and fails their third attempt to pass the remaining module, they will, as a requisite of the professional body (JASB), be excluded from the course.

Time limitations

The full-time Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) is a one-year course and should normally be completed in one year. However the maximum period of registration is normally three years, from the date of enrolment.

The part-time Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) is a two-year course and should normally be completed within two years. However the maximum period of registration is normally four years, from the date of enrolment.

Exemptions

Students may apply for Accreditation of Previous Certificated Learning (APCL) for a maximum of two core modules (30 credits) and ELS (0 credits). Students may register for individual modules and receive a transcript on completion but they are not eligible for the award.

Support for students

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the Faculty Registry. Students will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at their Faculty. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books).

Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students.

Student Affairs provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The Student Affairs Hub is located at 101 New Cavendish Street, Cavendish House (1st Floor), with an additional office located at the Harrow Campus. More information can be found at: westminster.ac.uk/study/new-students/when-you-arrive

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University. For further information please visit uwsu.com

Reference points for the course

Internally

The course programme has been designed to reflect the University's mission to provide education for professional life and to comply with its policies on skills development and employability. The structure of the Programme also meets the University's requirements with respect to modular frameworks and academic regulations.

Particular reference should be made to:

University Teaching and Learning Policy Statements;
University Quality Assurance Handbook and Modular Frameworks;
Handbook of Academic Regulations (2011);
University of Westminster's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Strategy (2011);
University Quality and Assurance Handbook (2010);
University Skills Policy Statement (2011);
Graduate Skills Handbook (2010); and the
School of Law Business Plan

Externally

Particular reference should be made to:

Bar Standards Board and Solicitors Regulation Authority Joint Statement on Training requirements of the Joint Academic Stage Board (JASB); and
QAA Benchmark statements in relation to content of law degrees.

Professional body accreditation

The Common Professional Examination Course (CPE) has become an established and recognised route into both branches of the legal profession, which is attractive to both students and the profession. The Joint Academic Stage Board (JASB) is responsible for the initial validation, revalidation, ongoing monitoring and periodic review of all the CPE courses. The JASB has an important role in ensuring that all CPE courses fulfil the aims of the Academic Stage of Training in legal education and that students undertaking a CPE course are properly equipped to proceed onto the Vocational Stage of Training and ultimately to become effective legal practitioners. The JASB is the representative committee of the two professional bodies that validates courses leading to the CPE at approved Institutions, and is administered by the [Bar Standards Board \(BSB\)](#) and the [Solicitors Regulation Authority \(SRA\)](#) on a rotating basis. The JASB is constituted from representatives of both branches of the profession and academics who are involved in the delivery of the academic and vocational stages of training, who are independent of the professional bodies.

Quality management and enhancement

Course management

The Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) is one of the courses provided by the School of Law. The department also offers the Legal Practice Course (LPC).

Derek Lavery is the Course Director for the Graduate Diploma in Law (CPE) course.

Course approval, monitoring and review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2002. The panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic course review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

The course is monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the Faculty action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

Student involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course committee.

All students are invited to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey, which elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

Students meet with review panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from course committees is part of the Faculty's' quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course:

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Website: www.westminster.ac.uk