

PART I: - PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	LLM in Legal Practice
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Certificate in Legal Practice (SRA LPC Stage 1 transcript) Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice (SRA LPC Stages 1 & 2 transcripts – the LPC)
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Westminster Law School (Little Titchfield Street)
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Martin J. Skirrow
Course URL:	
Mode and length of study:	1 year [FT] 2 years [PT]
University of Westminster course code:	
JACS code:	
UCAS code:	
QAA subject benchmarking group:	
Professional body accreditation:	Solicitors' Regulation Authority (SRA)
Date of course validation/review:	May 2015
Date of programme specification:	May 2015

❖ ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

In determining whether or not to offer a place on the LLM in Legal Practice, the University of Westminster will take into account the following:

- the strength of the applicant's academic development (in particular,

Westminster Law School will normally require a minimum of a 2.2 LLB or GDL equivalent);

- the applicant's commitment to the course and to becoming a solicitor;
 - the potential for obtaining a training contract;
 - the aim of achieving a balanced intake in accordance with the University of Westminster equality of opportunity policy; and
 - student connections with the University of Westminster through attendance on other courses, the obtaining of a training contract in the area, or other local connections.

The identification of an LPC student's potential to succeed on the course will be aided by some or all of the following elements in their application form:

- Overall standard of current academic qualification;
- Overall standard of historic academic qualifications;
- Overall standard of written English;
- Quality of written academic/employer's reference; and
- Relevance of recent/current work experience.

Student applicants must have completed the academic stage of training. The Course Director and the dedicated LPC Administrator will deal with the day-to-day management of the admission process; and will maintain a statistical record of the background of students by age, gender, educational background and ethnic origin.

A committee made up of the Head of the Law School and the Head of the School's Professional Programme will review decisions relating to students who have not been successful in their initial application for a place on the LPC and who seek reconsideration of that decision. The school participates in the LPC Central Applications Board arrangement for the full time course but like all other providers of part time courses deals with part time applications direct from and with possible students. The University has an equal opportunities policy that applies to admissions to the LPC. It appears elsewhere in this document.

When making offers on the LPC, the University of Westminster considers both full-time applications sent from the Central Applications Board (CAB) and part-time applications sent directly to the institution.

Subject to the availability of places on both of our study modes, late applications from students to join the course will be considered under the criteria identified above providing that a significant amount of time has not passed in the teaching period in any one stage of the LPC course rendering a new student to be at an academic disadvantage at the point of entry. That is to say, the Director of the LPC must make a reasonable judgment as to which point in the course it would be academically unfair to admit a prospective student onto either stage of the course.

Student progression within the LLM in Legal Practice (180 credits) to the 20 credits Social Research Methods: Principles and Practice module [code tbc] and the 40 credits Dissertation in Legal Practice module [code tbc] shall normally require completion of Stage 1 of the Legal Practice Course (90 credits) and shall be determined by the relevant University Exam Board.

Policies on accepting students to study on only Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the course (as applicable) and on the accreditation of prior learning - Students who wish to attempt Stage 1 only of the LPC with Westminster may be admitted onto the LLM in Legal Practice provided they satisfy the admissions criteria (above) and may 'exit' following completion of the appropriate assessments with a Postgraduate Certificate in Legal Practice. Students who apply to undertake an individual Stage 2 elective (or electives) shall be enrolled onto such elective or electives only at the Course Director's reasonable discretion bearing in mind the admissions criteria (above) and the applicant's existing Stage 1 profile.

❖ **THE AIMS AND ETHOS OF THE LLM in LEGAL PRACTICE**

1. Stages 1 & 2 of the Legal Practice Course

Students enrolling onto Westminster's LLM in Legal Practice will throughout the first half of the course be attempting Stage 1 of the Legal Practice Course. As you may be aware, the LPC is the well-established vocational stage of legal education and training. The LPC forms a bridge between a law degree (LLB) or Graduate Diploma (CPE) and becoming a solicitor, normally via a Training Contract.

Students must complete both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the course in order to satisfy the requirements of the SRA's Training Regulations. The general aims and objectives of the LPC remain as before: (1) to prepare students for work-based learning; and (2) to provide a general foundation for legal practice.

In essence, **Stage 1** of the LPC comprises:

- The Core Practice Areas – Business Law and Practice, Property Law and Practice and Litigation (Civil and Criminal)
- Wills & Administration of Estates
- Taxation
- Professional Conduct & Regulation
- The Course Skills – Practical Legal Research (PLR), Writing, Drafting, Interviewing & Advising (I&A) and Advocacy

The particular aims and objectives of Stage 1 of the course are set out in the LPC Outcomes as published by the Solicitors' Regulation Authority. Copies of the Learning Outcomes may be found in the LPC Resources Room. See also www.sra.org.uk/students/lpc.page.

Stage 2 of the LPC consists of three distinct vocational electives. Accordingly, on completion of Stage 2, students will have begun to develop the knowledge and understanding expected of a newly-qualified solicitor in three distinct areas of practice. The three vocational electives can be undertaken at the same LPC provider at which the students studied Stage 1 or at one or more different providers.

Stage 2 elective subjects are selected by you during Stage 1 of the course as your intended specialisms. All of these topics are considered in more detail further on in this handbook. (See Course Structure below.)

In summary, the aims of the course are to prepare you for general practice and provide you with a general foundation for subsequent practice.

So, by the end of the course **you** should (under appropriate supervision) be able to:

1. research and apply knowledge of the law and legal practice accurately and effectively
2. identify the client's objectives and different means of achieving those objectives and be aware of
 - the financial, commercial and personal priorities and constraints to be taken into account
 - the costs, benefits and risks involved in transactions or courses of action
3. perform the tasks required to advance transactions or matters
4. understand where the rules of professional conduct may impact and be able to apply them in context
5. demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of:
 - Professional Conduct and Regulation
 - the core practice areas of Business Law and Practice, Property Law and Practice, Litigation and the areas of Wills & Administration of Estates and Taxation
 - the course skills of Practical Legal Research, Writing, Drafting, Interviewing and Advising, and Advocacy. You should also be able to transfer skills learnt in one context to another;
6. demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and skills in the three areas covered by your choice of electives, and
7. reflect on your learning and identify your learning needs.

Our Legal Practice Course seeks to achieve these aims by means of:

- a curriculum covering the areas of knowledge in the Core Practice Areas, Professional Conduct and Regulation, Taxation and Wills & Administration of Estates as provided in the SRA's Learning Outcomes (**Knowledge**);
- the integration of the course Skills throughout the Stage 1 subject areas and within the three Stage 2 vocational elective subjects (**Skills**);
- a teaching methodology combining the direct input and application of substantive and procedural law via a combination of 'live' and pre-recorded lectures and small group activities to task-based exercises so as to simulate as closely as possible the tasks which Trainees are expected to perform in the office (**Teaching**);
- the provision of a broad range of specialist elective courses that reflect the needs of the legal profession and desire of students to pursue a career in private and/or commercial practice (**Electives**);

- an assessment system that accurately and fairly measures student abilities and performance, via a combination of examinations and skills assessments (**Assessments**);
- an effective mechanism for evaluating the delivery of the course (**Course Evaluation**);
- strong links between those engaged in the delivery of the course and practitioners. (**Professional**).

2. LLM in Legal Practice - Social Research Methodology and Legal Practice Dissertation modules

Subject to satisfactory performance in Stage 1 of the LPC (see the Assessment Regulations) and payment of the 'top-up' fee, students will have the opportunity to *progress* to the 'research' and 'dissertation' modules in order to graduate with an LLM in Legal Practice. The addition of the research and dissertation modules to the LPC Stages 1 and 2 core subjects and skills consolidates the overall aims of the LLM in Legal Practice which are to enable students to:

- build upon existing research skills as taught and assessed as part of Stage 1 of the LPC;
- obtain a foundation in postgraduate research methodology and research skills;
- carry out postgraduate research into a topic informed by their Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 LPC experience and explore its relevance to legal practice;
- develop powers of analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation within the framework of the topic chosen for research;
- develop and extend knowledge and critical appreciation of legal practice; and
- produce a postgraduate dissertation in their chosen area of legal practice.

Knowledge and Understanding

By the end of the course, a student will have developed a dissertation proposal through a tailored research methods programme and produced a postgraduate dissertation which demonstrates:

- Deep and systematic understanding of knowledge of their chosen area of legal practice;
- Critical awareness and understanding of a range of research methodologies and the ability to apply appropriate research techniques in their own work;
- Systematic knowledge and understanding of the ethical, social, economic or political context of their chosen topic of study;
- Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- The ability to undertake a high level of independent research;
- The ability to evaluate critically current research at the forefront of their chosen area of legal practice and where appropriate, to propose new methodologies;
- The ability to learn independently and autonomously.

Specific Skills

The development of the ability to self-direct is critical and students will be able to demonstrate that they can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at the appropriate level and can demonstrate self-direction and originality in problem solving.

Students will also be able to demonstrate:

- The ability to analyse and critically assess current knowledge and custom in legal practice;
- The ability to plan, produce and write-up a research dissertation focusing upon a topic founded upon the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Legal Practice Course subjects;
- The ability to undertake a high level of independent research;
- A clear understanding of legal referencing, legal argument and presentation;
- An awareness of the range of specialist resources available for study of the chosen area of legal practice.

Students should therefore be engaged with the developments within the law which have a continuing impact on professional practice and their career development. The opportunity to complete a Masters in Law will enhance their employability by showing their ability to independently analyse, research and communicate at a high level.

3. Course Ethos - The Professional Nature of Practice

It is important to remember that upon enrolment onto the LLM in Legal Practice (incorporating Stage 1 and 2 of the Legal Practice Course), you are entering the second stage of training – the vocational stage - with a view to qualifying as a solicitor. The very essence of legal practice is professionalism in all aspects of work and in dealings with clients and fellow solicitors and thus rather than treating you as an undergraduate student, our intention is to treat you as a fellow professional – in other words, as we might treat a trainee solicitor in a firm where we are a partner of that firm. We will therefore refer to you by your first name and will seek to involve you in all course activities in much the same way as we would in a law firm. You are expected to ask us questions about your learning both inside and outside the classroom. If you do not understand something please ask. You would be expected to do so in practice and so the process must begin here.

However, as a result of this approach in return we expect you to conduct your studies with us as a fellow professional. It is a policy of professional reliability. While you can rely upon us to provide the environment in which to learn and qualify, in return, we rely on you to work in a professional manner by preparing for class diligently, completing assignments for submission on time and by attending all your classes. This policy is a theme that runs throughout this handbook and will therefore crop up again as you read through this booklet. A Student Code of Conduct has been issued and is included later on in this handbook.

The University of Westminster and the Faculty of Social Science & Humanities (SSH) attracts students from all over the world to work, learn and live together and this enriches the experience of all, students and staff. The University believes that understanding of different cultures, beliefs and approaches to analysing and addressing issues is crucial. Whilst you will undoubtedly benefit from the experiences you have here, you should also be aware of

your responsibilities to others. We want everyone within the University community to feel welcome and benefit fully from their time here. The University is very proud of the diverse mix of its student body and staff. Understanding and respecting the views of others is one of its core values. We hope that you will contribute actively to the University community during your time here.

When undertaking your studies here, there may be occasions when you feel under pressure. You may also encounter beliefs and concerns that are very different from your own. Please be assured that the University of Westminster is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for teaching and research and that you should always feel that you will be respected here. However, please always remember that as a member of the University you belong to a community and that you should always take care to treat all students, members of staff, visitors and the physical environment within the community with the care and respect you would expect to receive yourself.

Please note that on enrolling, you will be bound by the University's Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study policy. The University requires all its students to respect diversity within our learning and teaching communities, to support and promote equality of opportunity, and to challenge and strive to eliminate unfair or unlawful discrimination (The Equality Act 2010).

❖ **EMPLOYMENT**

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.

The aims of the Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice (120 credits – the Legal Practice Course) are to: (1) prepare students for work-based learning; and (2) provide a general foundation for practice. Successful students will have reached a significant stage in the framework of their training towards becoming a solicitor; 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 solicitor. The course will also provide the professional ethos 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. Students should therefore be engaged with the developments within the law which have a continuing impact on professional practice and their career development. The opportunity to complete an LLM in

Legal Practice (180 credits) will enhance their employability by showing their ability to analyse, research and communicate at a high level.

❖ **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

At the end of the 120 credits Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice (Stages 1 and 2 of the LPC), successful students should be able, under appropriate supervision, to:

- research and apply knowledge of the law and legal practice accurately and effectively;
- identify the client's objectives and different means of achieving those objectives and be aware of the financial, commercial and personal priorities and constraints to be taken into account the costs, benefits and risks involved in transactions or courses of action;
- perform the tasks required to advance transactions or matters;
- understand the key ethical requirements contained in the SRA Principles of Regulation and Code of Conduct, understand where these may impact and be able to apply them in context;
- demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of:
 - Professional Conduct and Regulation
 - the core practice areas of Business Law and Practice, Property Law and Practice, Litigation and the areas of Wills & Administration of Estates and Taxation
 - the course skills of Practical Legal Research, Writing, Drafting, Interviewing and Advising and Advocacy;

students should also be able to transfer skills learnt in one context to another;

- demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in the three areas covered by their choice of electives, and
- reflect on their learning and identify their learning needs.

On completion of Stage 2, students will have begun to develop the knowledge and understanding expected of a newly-qualified solicitor in three distinct areas of practice.

At the end of an individual Stage 2 elective, successful students, under appropriate supervision, should be able in the context of the area(s) of law and practice studied on the elective to:

- demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and employ the applicable skills in the elective's area(s) of law and practice;

- use the legal knowledge, skills, procedures and behaviours appropriate to each client and each transaction or matter;
- identify the overall nature of the transaction, then plan and progress that transaction or matter through a series of steps and decisions including, where appropriate, drafting documentation;
- identify the client's goals and alternative means of achieving those goals, and deal appropriately with client care;
- investigate and identify the relevant facts, research and identify the relevant legal issues, and advise the client on the legal consequences;
- recognise conduct issues and act within the Code of Conduct;
- identify the client's reasonable expectations as to quality and timeliness of service.

Upon completion of the 180 credits LLM in Legal Practice, a student will have developed a dissertation proposal through a tailored research methods programme and produced a postgraduate dissertation which demonstrates:

- Deep and systematic understanding of knowledge of their chosen area of legal practice;
- Critical awareness and understanding of a range of research methodologies and the ability to apply appropriate research techniques in their own work;
- Systematic knowledge and understanding of the ethical, social, economic or political context of their chosen topic of study;
- Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- The ability to undertake a high level of independent research;
- The ability to evaluate critically current research at the forefront of their chosen area of legal practice and where appropriate, to propose new methodologies;
- The ability to learn independently and autonomously.

❖ **TEACHING & LEARNING**

The principal focus of the overall teaching & learning strategy for the LPC elements is the simulation of actual legal practice within the Group Session (face to face teaching) with its emphasis on the 'professional nature of legal practice'. Student learning outside of the teaching environment (private study) is guided by means of the detailed session plans which state the preparation that is expected in advance of the GS if the student is to participate effectively and the steps that must be taken by means of post-session consolidation.

GSs are initially informed by the lecture, which may be delivered either 'live' or pre-recorded (known as *Panopto*) via Blackboard. In the light of student feedback, the team remains committed to delivering a number of its lectures 'live' although to some extent, the precise balance between 'live' and Panopto recordings will vary depending on the practice area and particular subject. On the whole, across Stages 1 and 2 of the LPC, the team would normally expect a student to receive approximately 50% of the lectures 'live'. Where the lecture is delivered 'live', the team seeks to ensure that it is not simply a didactic process and thus

students should expect to be questioned by the tutor. Further, the tutor will routinely invite questions from the cohort in order to promote the learning experience of the wider group.

Thereafter, pre-GS preparation will routinely include directed reading (principally to the relevant practitioner oriented manual provided as part of the course materials); and the practitioner oriented tasks the session is to simulate ('seen' exercises). It may also include Computer Assisted Learning (CAL): and/or Practical Legal Research; and/or the preparation of practitioner documentation such as a letter or contractual provision.

The objective of LPC teaching (face to face) is to simulate as far as possible the tasks that a trainee solicitor would routinely encounter in the particular practice area (transactional learning). Effective student participation (student centred learning) in the Group Sessions (which are usually 2.5 hours in duration), is ensured by means of the deployment of both advance ('seen') exercises and 'unseen' exercises; and may include the review of pre-GS CAL, interview and negotiation role-plays and of other course skills such as writing and drafting. Students may also be called upon to refer directly to relevant legislation, rules of professional conduct and/or practice directions provided as part of the course materials which should be brought to the GS as appropriate. At all times, students should expect to be subject to rigorous questioning by the tutor to ensure satisfactory progress towards attainment of the objectives of the GS and, where not, challenged accordingly. Given the significance attached to the GS within the overall T&L strategy, individual attendance is routinely recorded so that, where appropriate, the student can be challenged by the Course Director and/or personal tutor.

Post GS consolidation is promoted by means of 'student notes' prepared by the tutor responsible for the session (accessible via Blackboard); but may also include CAL and/or Self-Assessment Short Answer Questions and (following reference to extracts from documents within the GS), the provision of full-length practitioner documentation for further review. Panopto lectures viewed before the GS may also be reviewed subsequently – as may recordings of the 'live' lectures themselves. Students may be re-directed to the reading in advance of the GS which may be more fully comprehended post the face to face contact with the tutor within the GS.

In the event of further queries, students are encouraged to take responsibility for learning and attainment of the GS objectives by contacting the tutor directly with specific questions the answers to which may be shared with the wider group/cohort.

Finally, the team attaches particular importance to the participation by the student in the formative (mock) assessment for the practice area. Wherever possible these are attempted under exam conditions so as to enable the student to gain maximum insight into 'open-book' practitioner oriented exams with their emphasis on application and accuracy. Individual written feedback is provided on formative assessments, which is likely to prove invaluable in seeing improved performance in the subsequent summative assessment. With the oral skills, the formative is recorded so the student has the opportunity of future review or, in the case of advocacy, peer review in the GS.

Finally, where a student has a resit, in addition to the individual written feedback, the student will have the opportunity of one to one oral feedback from the first marker which experience shows may lead to a dramatic improvement in the level of performance.

❖ ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the Stage 1 core subjects and Stage 2 electives is an open-book, transactional assessment. It will normally be of 3 hours duration, in compliance with the SRA requirements. The rationale for the open-book assessment is that it accords with the realities of practice for a trainee solicitor, permitting detail to be checked, yet requiring through the time constraints a ready knowledge of the law. The examination will be based on a realistic scenario that a trainee solicitor might face in the relevant 'seat' in practice and require the student to respond to problems a client would commonly encounter. Students will be required to demonstrate their comprehension of the relevant law, practice and procedure and to show their ability to marshal relevant facts and apply the law accurately to a particular client's needs and provide accurate and practical advice. The assessment may require students to demonstrate their professional skills such as writing and drafting and to identify any issues of ethical conduct which might impinge on their advice. MCQs will also be employed within written assessments to ensure coverage of the syllabus.

Due to the shorter nature of the syllabus in the case of Professional Conduct & Regulation (PCR) or in the case of Business Law & Practice (BLP) the longer nature, the unseen written assessment may be of 2 hours 30 minutes duration (PCR) or 4 hours duration (Business). (BLP is assessed across one 3 hour examination and one 1 hour assessment (10 MCQs).) The Solicitors' Accounts module is assessed across one assessment lasting 2 hrs 30 minutes in duration in which students may use a clean copy of the Solicitors Accounts Rules but no other materials ie. closed-book.

Taxation will be assessed primarily in the context of Business and Wills & Administration but may also be assessed in the context of Property.

Different forms of assessment will be employed with regards to the course skills appropriate to the skill in question. For example, for the oral skills, students conduct 'live' interviews of actual clients engaged for the role play (Interviewing) and, for the purpose of the Advocacy skill are further required to deliver a 'live' court application before one of the tutors and submit to questioning. Practical Legal Research (PLR) and Writing are undertaken 'at home' and are assessed following the submission by the student of a memorandum which is the end-product of a research task as might be expected in practice. Although students submit one piece of work for such purpose, the research skill is dis-aggregated from the writing skill so that a student may be graded as Competent in Research but not in Writing or in Writing but not in Research. The technical skill of Drafting is assessed by means of a 3 hour unseen written examination (open-book) (combined with the one 1 hour BLP assessment (MCQs) above) and consists of various 'tasks' for which students may refer to precedent documentation as would be expected in practice.

The additional modules to which students must 'progress' if they are to graduate with the LLM in Legal Practice enable students to build upon their Stage 1 LPC experience and to develop knowledge, concepts and theories in an area of legal practice that they may have encountered during Stage 1 or will encounter during one of the Stage 2 electives and which are assessed as follows.

Following attendance at the tutor led seminars, the 20 credits Social Research Methods: Principles & Practice module requires the formulation of a research question of relevance to legal practice to be addressed in the dissertation and accompanying methodology as approved by the module leaders/Dissertation Supervisor. The 40 credits Legal Practice Dissertation module requires the submission of a dissertation of approximately 8,000 words

{ie. within 10% either side of 8,000 words} excluding footnotes and appendices and which must be word processed and presented in bound form. Three copies of the bound Dissertation must be submitted. In normal circumstances students will not be required to submit to a viva voce, although the right to conduct one is reserved for appropriate circumstances. Assessment is entirely based on submission of this dissertation and a student must attain a mark of 50% in order to pass the dissertation.

❖ **COURSE STRUCTURE**

1. Stages 1 and 2 of the Legal Practice Course

1.1 Stage 1

1.1.1 Core Practice Areas

The core practice areas are: (1) Business Law & Practice; (2) Property Law and Practice; and (3) Litigation.

On completion of Stage 1, a successful student, under appropriate supervision, should be able to progress basic transactions or matters in the context of:

- the core practice areas of Business Law and Practice, Litigation and Property Law and Practice including elements added by Westminster to a core practice area which are in addition to the minimum requirements specified for the core practice area;

In particular, students should be able, in relation to transactions and matters which they undertake, to:

- use the legal knowledge, skills, procedures and behaviours appropriate to each client and each transaction matter
- identify the client's goals and alternative means of achieving those goals, and deal appropriately with client care
- investigate and identify the relevant facts, research and identify the relevant legal issues, and advise the client on the legal consequences
- identify the overall nature of the transaction or matter, then plan and progress that transaction or matter through a series of steps and decisions including, where appropriate, drafting documentation
- recognise and act within the rules of professional conduct
- identify the client's reasonable expectations as to quality and timeliness of service.

1.1.2 Wills & Administration of Estates

On completion of Stage 1, students should have a general overview of the content, format and validity of wills, obtaining grants of representation and administration of an estate and should be familiar with the purpose and general structure of the relevant documents and should be able to:

- use the legal knowledge, skills, procedures and behaviours appropriate to the client
- identify the client's goals and alternative means of achieving those goals, and deal appropriately with client care
- recognise and act within the rules of professional conduct
- identify the client's reasonable expectations as to quality and timeliness of service.

1.1.3 Taxation

On completion of Stage 1, students should have a sufficient grasp of tax law to enable them to understand the impact of taxation on the areas covered by the course and should be able to:

- use the legal knowledge, skills, procedures and behaviours appropriate to the client;
- recognise and act within the rules of professional conduct;
- identify the client's reasonable expectations as to quality and timeliness of service.

1.1.4 Professional Conduct and Regulation

By the end of Stage 1 students should be able to identify and act in accordance with the core duties of professional conduct and professional ethics which are relevant to the LPC. More particularly, students should:

- be familiar with the Solicitors' Code of Conduct affecting the work likely to be encountered by trainees (**Professional Conduct**);
- understand the organisation, regulation and ethics of the profession including the requirements of practice such as practising certificates and indemnity insurance (**The Profession**);
- be familiar with the Money Laundering legislation (including the international context) and be able to recognise circumstances encountered in the course of practice where suspicion of money laundering should be reported in accordance with the legislation (**Money Laundering**);
- understand the purpose and scope of financial services regulation when relevant financial services issues arise and be able to apply financial services provisions to the types of work covered by the course (**Financial Services**);

- have a basic understanding of the Solicitors' Accounts Rules, including the requirement to maintain separate office and client ledgers and bank accounts and powers of the SRA to secure compliance with the Solicitors' Accounts Rules and should be able to prepare a simple statement for clients on completion of a matter (**Solicitors' Accounts**).

1.1.5 Course Skills

The course skills are: (1) Practical Legal Research; (2) Writing; (3) Drafting; (4) Interviewing & Advising; and (5) Advocacy.

On completion of Stage 1, a successful student should have a basic competence in the course skills and be able to use them effectively under supervision and should:

- demonstrate an understanding of the principles and criteria that underpin good performance in these skills
- be familiar with methods of communication and able to choose and tailor the communication form and style to suit the purpose of the communication and needs of different recipients
- be able to communicate orally and in writing and draft and amend documents in a form, style and tone appropriate for the recipients and the context
- demonstrate attention to detail
- be aware of the practical, commercial and personal considerations which should be taken into account
- deal appropriately with relevant professional conduct issues
- demonstrate sensitivity to issues of culture, diversity and disability in communication with clients, colleagues and others
- be able to use the skills in combination where appropriate.

Students will be introduced to the basic principles of Taxation, Professional Conduct and Regulation and the Course Skills during the Foundation Course (see below). Taxation, Professional Conduct and Regulation and the Course Skills are all taught, developed and assessed within the context of the legal tasks and transactions defined in the Core Subjects and Elective areas.

You will be provided with a detailed syllabus for each of the Core Subject and Elective areas by the subject leaders concerned, together with extensive teaching materials.

1.2 Stage 2 electives

The University of Westminster is validated to offer the following electives as part of its Stage 2 LPC:

Private Client

Clinical Elective
Employment
Family
Housing
Immigration
International Family Law
PI & Clinical Negligence

Commercial

Commercial Law
Commercial Litigation
Commercial Property
Entertainment & Media
Internet & Social Media
Private Acquisitions

NB. Students are reminded that they are free to choose to do all, some or none of their Stage 2 electives at the same provider at which they did Stage 1.

NB. STAGE 2 ELECTIVES - IMPORTANT- PLEASE READ

Students who have accepted an offer from Westminster to study Stage 1 and Stage 2 (in full) of the LPC, must choose three elective subjects from the above lists to study as electives. While Westminster has been validated by the SRA to offer the above electives, it is important to remember that:

- Any given elective will only run where sufficient numbers of students have selected the elective in question in sufficient numbers (*usually at least 10 per elective*), in order to ensure its viability.
- Further, some combinations may not be possible due to timetabling or staffing constraints.
- In the light of FT and PT numbers electing to do any given elective, it might also be necessary for the Course Director to timetable an elective to run solely in the evening and not during the day. (In other words, FT students attend classes during the evening with PT and FT students being taught together.)

Accordingly, it is possible that you might not be able to do all three of your 'first choice' electives at Westminster. Remember, however, that under the current version of the LPC, you are free to do one or more of your Stage 2 electives at other validated providers.

1.3 Research and Dissertation modules

1.3.1 Social Research Methods: Principles and Practice

The module aims to provide students with an introduction to research design and literature review to enable them to formulate a research problem based on legal practice and carry out an investigation into the relevant and available material on this problem. Thereafter, it explores the use of three main research methods to enable students to decide upon the most appropriate method for their dissertation. Finally, it aims to introduce students to document analysis and interpretation and research ethics.

NB. Progression to the Social Research Methods module is subject to confirmation by the University's Exam Board and payment of the 'top-up' fee.

The module consists of five 'seminars' as follows:

- Methods of Inquiry in research. Introduction to research design. How to formulate a research problem. Planning the research and carrying out a literature review.
- Comparative research methods.
- Quantitative research methods.
- Qualitative research methods
- Document analysis of legal documents. Textual analysis and interpretation. Writing and research ethics.

In order to subsequently progress to the Dissertation in Legal Practice module (below), having attended the five seminars, students must submit a Research Question and accompanying Methodology to the Dissertation Supervisor assigned to them by the module leader in the light of the chosen practice area. (Maximum 1000 words for each element.) The Research Question and Methodology will normally be submitted prior to the assessment of Stage 2 elective examinations (See Appendix V). The approval of the Dissertation Supervisor (or approval subject to conditions) will normally be given within the following 2 weeks.

1.3.2 Dissertation module

The student and the Dissertation Supervisor will meet for a minimum of ten hours, ideally at regular intervals although contact may also take place via e-mail etc. The role of the Dissertation Supervisor is: to provide guidance on the direction of study; to comment upon the students' methods and approach; and to comment on the content of the developing work and the final presentation. Nevertheless, final responsibility for the dissertation remains with the student who will be expected to engage in extensive independent study

The Dissertation allows extended study in a negotiated area of the student's choice. Under the guidance of the Dissertation Supervisor, students will be able to build upon their research to develop knowledge, concepts and theories which will be explored in a dissertation of approximately 8,000 words {ie. within 10% either side of 8,000 words} excluding footnotes and appendices. The Dissertation must be word processed and presented in bound form. In normal circumstances students will not be required to submit to a viva voce, although the right to conduct one is reserved for appropriate circumstances. Assessment is entirely based on submission of this dissertation and a student must attain a mark of 50% in order to pass the dissertation.

1.4 Course Structure (modules and credits)

The Course Structure (modules and credits) pertaining to the award of either the Postgraduate Certificate in Legal Practice, the Postgraduate Certificate in Legal Practice or the LLM in Legal Practice is set out in Appendix II.

1.5 Pre-requisite knowledge

It is recognised that students joining the LLM in Legal Practice will have completed the academic stage of training at different times, through different modes of study and at different institutions. Although each will have completed the prescribed core

areas they may have done so at different times and to different degrees. A graduate of a part-time degree may, for example, have completed some of the core areas up to five years before joining the Legal Practice Course, while a CPE or Graduate Diploma in Law student may have completed them in the previous year.

The SRA has indicated that before starting a Legal Practice Course students will be expected to have a basic knowledge of the seven Foundations of Legal Knowledge as identified in its Joint Announcement No.1.

In particular, students will be expected to have a basic knowledge and understanding of the following:

- the principal EU institutions, sources and interpretation of Community law, the relationship between Community law and National law, and relevant human rights conventions and legislation
- formation of contracts, formalities of written contracts, general principles concerning implied terms, misrepresentation, discharge and remedies for breach of contract
- the nature of legal estates and interests, equitable interests, easements, covenants, mortgages, joint ownership, registered and unregistered land (including the registration of charges)
- the nature of fiduciary relationships and the duties of fiduciaries; the powers and duties of trustees
- the basic structure of the civil and criminal courts
- the elements of common offences and causes of action (contractual and tortious), issues affecting who should be the appropriate parties to litigation (e.g. vicarious liability) and common defences to proceedings.

Students will also need to have developed oral and written communication skills, interpersonal skills and the skills of legal analysis and research to a level that will enable them successfully to embark upon the course.

Accordingly, you must ensure that your pre-requisite knowledge is up to date and Appendix I sets out a list of what is expected. No pre-requisite knowledge will be provided in the Foundation Course.

We have designed the following programme to assist you in making sure your knowledge is up to date and appropriate for the LPC.

1. Work through the short booklet entitled: "The Guide for Those Enrolling on the Legal Practice Course – What I am Expected to Know Before I Start" which you will have been sent prior to coming on the course.
2. Attempt the Self-Assessment Questions contained in Appendix I for each area of

1 The Joint Statement sets out the conditions for undergraduate law degrees recognised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board as satisfying the academic stage of training

knowledge.

3. Then, to the extent that you feel that this is necessary, depending upon your ability to successfully attempt the Self-Assessment Questions, complete the directed pre-reading identified in Appendix I.

2. Full-Time Course Structure

2.1 Overview

Westminster offers the LPC on both a full time and part time basis. The course content and method of assessment are exactly the same for both modes but the structures are different. **Attached in Appendix V you will find the Annual Timetable* for Stages 1 and 2 of the full-time course (2015/2016)** which indicates:

- the weeks when you will be studying and those weeks for assessment and revision, face-to-face contact time for each week of studying; and
- a provisional guide to your programme of formative and summative assessments.

A detailed class timetable and an assessment timetable will be provided on the 3rd Floor notice board and copies of which you will be able to obtain from the LPC Administrator in the LPC Resources Room.

* Subject to adjustment

The full time course is divided into Stage 1 and Stage 2.

- | | | |
|------|---------|---|
| (i) | Stage 1 | The Foundation Course (see below) followed by the Core Subject areas of Business Law & Practice, Property Law and Practice and Litigation; together with Wills & Administration of Estates, Taxation and Professional Conduct and Regulation and the Course Skills. |
| (ii) | Stage 2 | three (3) Elective Subjects |

2.2 Stage 1 - the Foundation Course

The Foundation Course occupies the **first two weeks** of the course. It is intended to introduce you to Stage 1 of the Legal Practice Course and particularly:

- (i) the Core Subject areas;
- (ii) the Course Skills;
- (iii) the method of assessment of the skills;
- (iv) underlying principles of Taxation and Accounts needed for the remainder of Stage 1;
- (v) the general nature of the LPC teaching and learning experience; and
- (vi) the IT Resources and use of IT within the course.

This introductory programme will provide a place within which you can identify your own approach to a particular skill. Many of you will have already been involved in

some form of interview and undertaken legal writing. Many of you will have argued your 'case' or presented an argument on behalf of another. You will be inducted into elements of which you have little or no experience and build upon your prior experience in the Foundation Course. You will learn basic skills which will be further developed in the Core Subject areas together with Wills & Administration of Estates. ***For further information about the Foundation Course please refer to the Foundation Course Handbook which you will receive on enrolment.***

IMPORTANT- PLEASE READ - A copy of the timetable for the Foundation Course will be contained in the Foundation Course Guide/Handbook. Subject to the anticipated number of students enrolling, ***it is likely that you will be allocated to one of four Small Groups*** (I-IV) - of approximately 16 students per group - at the start of the course.

You will need to be ***in the Law School for up to four days a week*** during this intensive ***two week Foundation Course period, commencing on Monday 7th September 2015*** and indeed thereafter through to the end of Week 6.

2.2.1 Stage 1 - the Core Subjects, the Course Skills, Wills & Administration, Taxation and Professional Conduct

Subject to the numbers enrolling on the full-time course for September 2015, students should expect initially to be put into one of ***four (4) Small Groups*** (Groups A-D) for the Small Group Sessions in Business Law & Practice, Property Law & Practice, Litigation, Solicitors' Accounts and Wills & Administration taught in Stage 1.

In the light of the overall numbers of FT students starting the LPC in September 2015, it is possible that the Course Director might subsequently consolidate the number of groups during the early part of Stage 1 (ie. by end September 2015).

The weekly timetable for each group will show slight variations from week to week and thus **IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT** that you check the weekly timetable which will be provided to you on or after enrolment. ***As stated above, during September 2015 it is likely that you will need to attend the University for up to four days a week.*** From October 2015 and thereafter, however, your typical attendance for the remainder of Stage 1 will be as follows:

<i>Monday</i>	<i>10.30am – 4.30pm</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>10.30am – 3pm or 4pm</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Private study</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>10.30am – 4.30pm</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>Private study (albeit note that attendance on a number of Fridays throughout Stage 1 may be required)</i>

By the end of Stage 1, students will have completed their studies in each of the Core Subject areas, Wills & Administration of Estates, Taxation and Professional Conduct and Regulation.

2.3 Stage 2 - the three Elective subjects

Stage 2 of the full-time LPC at the University of Westminster commences towards the end of February 2016 ie. after students have sat outstanding assessments in Stage 1 assessments. By way of reminder, a student who has opted to do Stage 1 only of the LPC at Westminster is not obliged to attempt any Stage 2 electives at Westminster albeit they may choose to do so.

An eleven week period of study will be provided during the months of March to (the beginning of) June 2016 for the elective subjects. For a student studying all three of their Stage 2 electives at Westminster, you will study all three elective subjects concurrently and will be examined in all three electives together at the end of the elective period.

Again, it is important that we remind you (especially for students opting in advance to do both Stage 1 and 2 of the LPC at Westminster), that your choice of elective subjects may be constrained due to timetabling issues or because the elective is not viable due to an insufficient number of your fellow students wanting to do it. Accordingly, it is possible that you might not be able to do all three of your 'first choice' electives.

For students already studying Stage 1 of the course, elective subject leaders will make a brief presentation to all students during the Autumn term focussing on elective content (with suggested combinations of electives appropriate to different areas of law and practice) - aka as a 'beauty parade'. We will also post up-to-date elective flyers on Blackboard so that you will be able to consider this issue at an early stage during the course. We are obviously committed to providing you with all of the information required so that you have the opportunity to make informed choices. We ask that you give us firm indications as to your elective choices during December 2015. While we would very much hope that, once elective teaching has started, you would remain content with your elective choices inevitably, in some cases, students will wish to make 'last minute' changes. We do not object to students asking us to change electives – but it is important we make clear now that any such request will be dealt with on a case by case basis and we cannot guarantee to agree to such requests given the possible impact on the timetable and the existing elective group.

It is not possible to provide you with the elective timetable until you have made your choice of elective areas. The elective timetable will usually be issued 2-3 weeks before the elective teaching starts ie. during February 2016.

Please note that it is quite likely that elective subjects will be taught on different days of the week to those that you are used to attending on for the compulsory areas. In particular, some elective areas may run on a Friday and others may be taught in the late afternoon. ***It may be the case that an elective will be offered for teaching together with the part time course and will be timed to run in the evening starting, for example, at 5.30pm.*** For example, this has previously been the case for the Housing, Private Acquisitions and Entertainment & Media electives and has proved popular with both full time and part time students alike. These timetable changes may be necessary given the range of electives on offer.

For some subjects it may be necessary to divide students into two or more groups for the teaching of the group sessions. These groups will be allocated by the Course Director. It will not be possible to change groups once the allocations have been made.

2.4 Research and Dissertation modules

As noted above, the Social Research Methods (Principles & Practice) module will be taught primarily through the forum of five seminars which will be delivered alongside the teaching of the Stage 2 electives - although attendance is subject to approval of the April 2016 Exam Board and which will, therefore, not be scheduled until after the April 2016 Exam Board.

Upon successful completion of the Social Research Methods module (approximately middle-end June 2016), students will be able to begin work on their dissertation with a view to submission before the designated submission points in accordance with the University's published postgraduate calendar. A student whose progression to the Social Research Methods and Dissertation modules is confirmed by the University's April 2016 Exam Board must submit the dissertation by no later than: (i) 15 September 2016; or (ii) if later, by the published date for postgraduate submissions in accordance with the University's calendar [January 2017].

2.5 Full Time Annual Timetable

For details of the Annual Timetable *including provisional weeks for formative and summative assessments* refer to Appendix V.

❖ ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

The LLM in Legal Practice and its intermediate awards (Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice) 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: Modular Framework for Postgraduate Courses and relevant sections of the current Handbook of Academic Regulations, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

Award

To qualify for the award of LLM in Legal Practice a student must have:

- obtained a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7;
- attempted modules worth no more than 240 credits; and

Note: A first attempt of any module will count as an attempt, and a re-attempt of any module that a student has failed will count as a further, separate attempt. Re-assessment following referral at the first sit will not count as a further separate attempt.

- satisfied the requirements contained within any course specific regulations for the relevant Course Scheme. **See Regulation 16 of the LLM in Legal Practice Regulations (Appendix III) for full details.**

The University may award:

- a Masters' Degree with Commendation to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at Level 7.
- a Masters' Degree with Distinction to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at Level 7.

To qualify for the 'exit' award of Postgraduate Certificate in Legal Practice a student must have:

- completed all elements of Stage 1 of the Legal Practice Course.

See Regulation 13 of the LLM in Legal Practice Regulations (Appendix III) for full details.

To qualify for the 'exit' award of Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice a student must have:

- completed all elements of Stages 1 & 2 of the Legal Practice Course.

See Regulation 14 of the LLM in Legal Practice Regulations (Appendix III) for full details.

❖ LLM in LEGAL PRACTICE COURSE REGULATIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Introduction

Set out below in this section of the handbook is a statement of the assessments that you will have to pass to achieve the Diploma in Legal Practice and some explanation of the different procedures involved in the assessment process. This represents notes for guidance only. **In all matters concerning assessment the Assessment Regulations prevail. The Assessment Regulations are set out in Appendix III to this handbook.**

We expect you to conduct your studies with us as a fellow professional. You can rely upon us to provide the environment in which to learn be fairly assessed and hopefully qualify. While in return we rely on you to work in a professional manner by preparing for class diligently, completing all assignments on time and by attending all your classes. Given the number of assessments, the regulations are necessarily complex but nevertheless you are advised to read through them and familiarise yourself with their operation. If you do not understand how the regulations work then you should speak to your personal tutor at the earliest possible opportunity.

Great care is taken to ensure that the programme of assessments is spread throughout the year and in assessment weeks so that it does not interfere with

teaching. However, if you are referred in a coursework assessment (eg. the PLR & Writing assessment), then inevitably you will find that this clashes with teaching and perhaps other assessments.

In addition, rigour and fairness are ensured by the use of an anonymous double marking system which is supervised by external examiners who approve all assessments, marking schemes and results.

Frequently Asked Questions on the LPC Assessments: -

Is this the correct course to do as part of my qualification s a solicitor?

Yes it is. You have to show, in a number of different assessments, that you have met the SRA's learning outcomes for the LPC course. Those areas are the core practice areas of BLP, PLP and Litigation as well as three vocational electives which you may choose. In addition there are the course skills, Professional Conduct & Regulation (PCR), Taxation and Wills & the Administration of Estates.

That's a lot of areas, can I study them one at a time?

No. There are two stages to the LPC. Stage 2 is the Vocational Electives. Everything else is studied in Stage 1. Stage 2 can be studied at a different institution or even at more than one institution. Stage 1 must be studied at the same institution.

Why do I have to study everything but the electives at the same institution?

Mainly, because the SRA says so. However things such as the skills and professional conduct issues are only properly studied in context. It is not enough to study them in isolation. You have to show that you can use the skill in the core practice areas of a solicitor's working life.

Do I have to complete Stage 1 before I start Stage 2?

You have to complete the study of the Stage 1 areas but you do not have to pass the assessments for Stage 1 first.

Can I come back to Stage 2 whenever I feel like it then?

It is not quite so open-ended. You must pass both Stage 1 and Stage 2 within five years of the date when you first sat an assessment in Stage 1.

I don't want to wait five years though. I want this over and done in a year. Is that possible?

Yes of course. You would only need five years if you were ill or you delayed the start of Stage 2 for some reason.

OK, does that mean that I can take the exams whenever I want to, as long

as I get everything done in five years?

No. You must follow the assessment timings set out in the University's regulations, in relation to first sits. (There is more flexibility for referrals and final sits.) So for example you will be expected to sit all the core assessments in the assessment period immediately following the teaching of these subjects. The only exception is if you have mitigating circumstances and are allowed to defer the sitting of one or more assessments. If you fail to take an assessment when the University expects you to, that will be a fail and a referral in that assessment.

What are mitigating circumstances?

That is a whole subject area in itself. Before I say anything more about them I want you to read Regulation 12 in the Assessment Regulations in this handbook.

If you insist, but they look a little long and complicated. I'll look at them if something unexpected happens to me.

That is usually the worst time to look at them so you should read them now. There are strict time limits and if you get them wrong because you didn't read them, then you bear the consequences of that.

Ok, so something simpler...what is the pass mark?

50%

What are the assessments like?

Clearly they are rather varied as the subject matter is fairly diverse. You will have oral exams in skills like advocacy and then you will have time-constrained assessments in exam conditions.

How do the oral assessments work?

You will be filmed in a role play situation. In advocacy you will be making an application to a district judge in a criminal litigation case and with interviewing and advising you will be dealing with a client in the area of Wills and Administration of Estates.

Is there any assessed coursework?

Not really. The one assessment which is assessed by a piece of written work which you can complete at home, is the PLR and Writing exercise. That is a very specific type of coursework though and we will explain to you what you have to produce.

Are PLR and Writing one combined assessment then?

They are only combined in the sense that they are released together and are based on the same material. You will be marked on separate criteria for the two skills. If you only fail one of the skills, you will have to redo a similar task but you will be only re-assessed on the failed skill.

Which subjects do I have a written exam in?

The three core subjects, the three electives, professional conduct and solicitors' accounts. That is eight (8) written exams in total, although two of the cores have two papers.

Why are there two papers?

Well for Litigation it is simple – you have one in Criminal and one in Civil Litigation.

Do I have to pass both Criminal and Civil?

No, you can fail one but you have to pass Litigation overall. You can never resit just one of the papers. You always have to take the two of them at the same time. So, passing one and failing the other won't help you, unless you get an average over 50%.

What about BLP and PLP?

PLP is just one paper. There are two papers in the subject area of BLP. The first paper is the main BLP paper worth 85%. The second paper has BLP MCQs worth 15% and it also is the drafting exam. You will be asked to amend, draft and advise on documentation and clauses from the areas covered in the BLP course.

So, is it like litigation and I just have to pass both papers overall?

No, there are separate marks for BLP and for Drafting. And we will evaluate those marks separately. So it is possible to pass BLP but fail in drafting or vice versa. If that happens, you will only have to resit the part which you failed.

So there are 3 core practice areas or is it 4?

Three – Litigation counts as one although it has two quite different parts.

And how many skills?

Five – Advocacy; Practical Legal Research; Interviewing & Advising; Drafting; Writing.

And the pass mark for these skills is 50%?

No, it is not mathematical as such – you will be graded as competent (C) or not yet competent (NC) in the skill. If the internal markers think that your performance in the skill is *only just* competent, you might initially receive a BC (Borderline Competent) grade to alert you to the fact that your work was of a 'borderline' standard and that it will be sent to the relevant external examiner for consideration. Ultimately, however, for the purposes of your LPC transcript (see below), where you are initially given a BC, your grade will subsequently either be recorded as C or NC.

Which area is the Research in?

The Research can be in any one of the three core areas.

Is there a written test in Wills, in addition to the Interviewing & Advising assessment?

No. The skill and the substantive law are tested together.

Can I pass Interviewing & Advising but fail Wills?

No the two things are completely integrated. If you pass the assessment, you pass both areas. And likewise, if you fail the assessment, you fail both areas.

What about Accounts?

There is an exam in Solicitors' Accounts and you will be given a percentage mark for this. This assessment will be based in the Litigation or PLP context. You will also look at business accounts in BLP but they will not be assessed separately.

And is Professional Conduct also just one exam?

Almost, although there is a twist. There is one Professional Conduct exam and you will be given a percentage mark for that exam which is your mark for Professional Conduct. However 5% of your assessment for each of the three core areas will be about professional conduct but these marks will be part of the core area. This 5% does not affect your mark for Professional Conduct, only the mark for the core area.

Is that everything?

No we haven't mentioned Taxation. It is one of your learning outcomes but it will be assessed as an integral part of BLP. Fifteen per cent (15%) of your BLP assessment will be about Taxation. Taxation will also feature in the assessment of Interviewing and Advising in the context of Wills.

Do I get a mark or a competency grade for Taxation?

Neither, but it will be recorded that we assessed you in taxation in the relevant areas.

Recorded? Where?

We will give you a transcript of your results. The transcript for Stage 1 will have percentage marks for BLP, PLP, Litigation, Professional Conduct and Solicitors' Accounts. It will show your competency in the five skills and it will state that Wills was assessed in Interviewing and Advising and that Taxation was assessed in BLP and Wills. For Stage 2, you will have the percentage marks for the three electives you have studied. For most students, who complete both stages in the one academic year, they will have a transcript comprising both stages.

Will the transcript show anything else?

The other important information the transcript reveals to a potential employer is if you passed things at the first attempt. So it will give the date of your first assessment and in relation to each assessment the date you passed that assessment and which

attempt it was.

How many attempts do I have at an assessment?

You have three attempts at any one assessment on the LPC following enrolment and study on a course.

Is there any difference between Stage 1 and Stage 2, in terms of attempts?

You have three attempts at an assessment in both Stages but there is a different consequence for a third failure in an elective at Stage 2. You can still attempt the same elective or another elective altogether, but in either case you would have to re-enrol on that course and study the elective again. In relation to Stage 1, the consequences of a third failure in any one assessment are more profound. If you fail any Stage 1 assessment three times, then you have to re-study and be re-assessed on all of Stage 1.

So I can fail all of Stage 1, if I fail, for example, Solicitors' Accounts and only Solicitors' Accounts three times.

Yes - and you would have to enrol on a Stage 1 course and study that stage again and retake all the assessments, including any which you passed the first time around.

Go on then be user-friendly and give me a list of all the assessments.

Advocacy (in Criminal)
Practical Legal Research & Writing (in a Core)
Interviewing & Advising and Wills including Taxation
Drafting (in BLP)
Professional Conduct
Solicitors' Accounts
Litigation – Criminal and Civil inc. 5% Professional Conduct
BLP inc. 15% Taxation and 5% Professional Conduct
PLP inc. 5% Professional Conduct
[Stage 2] Electives x 3

Is a transcript of my results all I get at the end of the LPC?

It is all that the SRA require and everyone who studies for the LPC will have a transcript like this. In addition the University will award you with a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice. There will be awards of distinction and commendation for students who meet the regulations for these. This is something which the University has chosen to award to anyone studying here. The transcript remains the principal indication of performance on the course for an employer.

How do I get a Distinction?

The average of all your percentage marks for the exams including Professional Conduct and Solicitors Accounts must be 70 or more. You must be competent in all the other areas and you must pass everything at the first attempt.

What about a Commendation?

It is the same as for above but you only have to get 60% rather than 70%. In addition, you are allowed to have been referred in one assessment at some stage.

How will I remember all these assessments?

You will be given an Assessment timetable shortly after the start of the course. You must check it for the date of all assessments. If you fail something you may have to attempt it again in the same year. It is your responsibility to collect and submit all your assessments on time. The administrators will not chase you or remind you. *If you forget an assessment and do not sit or submit it, it will be treated as a fail.*

OK, so let me see if I understand Reg 12. If I cannot take an assessment when the timetable says, I have to apply for mitigating circumstances or it will be classed as a fail and I will be referred in the assessment, won't I?

Yes and you must submit the evidence about your mitigating circumstances within 3 working days. Most applications which fail, fail because of a procedural matter.

And I cannot sit an exam and then apply for mitigating circumstances after the event?

That's correct unless something truly exceptional happens.

What if I am unsure whether an illness or a life event is going to affect my performance? Can I apply in advance so that I know my sitting will be deferred?

No, that is not possible. You will have to make a decision about your own state of mind. However if you discover in an exam that you have misjudged your condition and that you are not performing as you should, you can tell the invigilator and decide to abandon the assessment. You will then still have to compile evidence to support your assertion that your performance was affected. In most cases this means you must obtain medical evidence.

Who takes the decisions about Mitigating Circumstances?

This is taken by a specially constituted University board. The members of the board are independent from the tutors who teach on the course. The board's decisions are also open to review by the external examiners at the Examination board.

If I am deferred in an assessment because of mitigating circumstances, when do I take the assessment?

You must do it at the next available opportunity. This may mean that you have to take the assessment before other people on your course who sat it and failed. You should check all the timetables for the full-time and part-time courses. **Note that if you had mitigating circumstances for Litigation or PLP in February, there is another sit for these exams in April.**

Do the same rules apply for the PLR & Writing exercise?

Yes. Although, you will also have to show how any circumstance affected you throughout the period between the release and the submission date. And you must choose between submitting the work or applying for mitigating circumstances. We do not mark any coursework submitted when an application for mitigating circumstances has already been made. Conversely, if you submit the coursework first, then we will not consider your application for extenuating circumstances.

What if I can still do the assessment but my illness or other circumstances mean I need more time?

You are allowed up to 3 days extra for the research exercise. You must submit the work together with the application for mitigating circumstances for late submission. However your application will still need to meet with approval of the board or the late submission will be treated as a fail. Wherever possible you should therefore aim to submit your work on time.

And is the same true for an exam?

This is important if you have dyslexia or you have a disability. Depending on your condition the University will allow you more time to complete the assessment or it will allow you to take the assessment under special conditions which help to address your condition. However the University has to be aware of the situation in advance of the assessment. Therefore you should contact the Disability or Dyslexia Service immediately if you have not already done so.

What are open book assessments like?

This means you will be able to take specified books and notes into the examination room. If you wish to take in a book which has not been specified by the course leader (for example a different LPC manual to the one used on the course), you must request permission from the module leader and they have absolute discretion in relation to granting or refusing such requests. For some assessments you will also be given some information in advance of the day itself. Please note that it is a very common mistake to try and predict questions from the advance materials and refine your revision accordingly. This is a mistake. The advance materials are not there to allow you to predict questions in advance.

Sounds like I don't really need to learn anything as I go along then.

That is not advisable. In the exams you will be expected to have a core of knowledge that is immediately at your disposal. You will not have much time to keep on double-checking points in your books and you will have to use the books very judiciously. Some students have said they learnt that lesson all too painfully in their first open book exam – don't let it happen to you. You can waste time checking something just because you can. You will also be expected to apply your knowledge, for example to give advice to a client. It is not the sort of exam where writing down everything you know about a subject will be satisfactory.

What is an Assessment Offence?

There are many possible offences. They include the obvious such as copying work or allowing someone to copy your work. Collaborating with someone else in the preparation of an assessment is also an offence unless you are specifically asked to do so for the purposes of the assessment. In particular, Research is not to be undertaken as a group task. It is perfectly possible for collaborating students to lead each other up the wrong garden path and collaboration is all the more noticeable when several students reach the same strange conclusion. In a time-constrained assessment, offences include communicating with another student and taking unauthorised material, including electronically stored information, into the examination room. Some students forget that plagiarising published material is an offence and included in that category is copying out the LPC manual without attribution in the exam. (Copying it out with attribution is unlikely to be a good answer to any LPC question in any event.) Please see Appendix IV for University guidance on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity.

What are the consequences of an offence being discovered?

This will depend on the nature of the offence but it will be subject to the University's disciplinary procedures and a disciplinary hearing will be held. *In addition proven offences will have to be disclosed to The Solicitors' Regulation Authority who will decide if the offence has a bearing upon the character and suitability of the student to become a solicitor. The Solicitors' Regulation Authority takes a very serious view of such matters and may deny entry into the profession.*

How are scripts marked?

Scripts are marked anonymously according to an answer scheme approved in advance by an external examiner. Markers meet after an initial sample marking to discuss any areas not foreseen in the scheme and to decide on a consistent approach. The script is then second marked. All fail and borderline candidates and a sample of other scripts are forwarded to the external examiner. Ultimately, the external examiner has the final say on the grades to be awarded.

How do I find out my results?

Feedback sheets containing a grade and necessary comments will be available from the administration staff in the LPC Resource Room. In addition results may be posted on the intranet. All students who have failed will be offered an appointment to discuss their paper with the first marker. You need your feedback sheet to know who this is.

What should I do with the feedback sheets?

It is your responsibility to keep a record of your results. You should keep those sheets in a safe place as confirmation of your result.

So far you have only mentioned a Diploma, how do I get an LLM?

In order to be awarded an LLM you will also have to complete and pass the Research Modules, ultimately submitting a dissertation.

When do I do that?

This takes place at the same time as the Stage 2 elective study. However, you will only be able to start on the Research Modules if you have successfully passed Stage 1 of the LPC.

Why can't I start the research modules, if I can start Stage 2 even though I failed something in Stage 1?

Well remembered. You have been paying attention. The main motivation for studying the course is admission to the profession. If you are carrying forward resits, then you greatly increase the chances of failing a Stage 2 subject and not having completed the LPC when you apply for training contracts. So we will expect you to have shown in your results, that you are able to cope with the intensity of the work at Stage 1 before taking on an LLM dissertation as well as the Stage 2 electives.

When do I have to submit the dissertation?

You may submit the dissertation in September or the following January. The precise dates are published in the University's calendar. But note if you have not submitted it in September you will not be able to graduate that year. You will of course be entitled to your Transcript in relation to the LPC modules.

Can I not graduate with a Diploma and then later graduate with a Masters?

No, you can only graduate with one academic award from this course. If you have embarked, on the Research Modules, the Examination Board in July will not award the Diploma. If you want to abandon the submission of the dissertation and graduate with the diploma, then you will have to notify the Examination Board. If you do this, then you will not be able to subsequently to submit the dissertation with a view to obtaining the LLM.

If I don't do as well in the dissertation as my other modules, can it affect my grade?

Yes it can. The mark in the dissertation will be taken into consideration for the award of the LLM with a distinction or commendation and you would have to maintain an average of over 70 or 60%.

Whom can I talk to if I have a problem with my results/assessments?

Most issues on a particular assessment should be discussed with the first marker of that paper. If your issue is not just about the mark for a paper, you may talk informally to Miles Macleod, your personal tutor or to David Stewart, who is the Assessments Officer. However if your query is of a strategic nature you will be asked to put the matter in writing. If for example you miss an assessment it will not be acceptable to say that "X told me not to do this one." Only written confirmation will be sufficient to be used as evidence of advice on interpreting timetables or regulations. It is your responsibility to ensure that you take the correct assessment. If you wish to have advice on a difficult point it is therefore in your interest to make the request in writing. E-mail is of course the easiest method.

❖ REFERENCE POINTS FOR THE COURSE

Internally

This course has been designed to match the University's mission to provide education for professional life and to take account of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and employability; and the Law School Plan 2014

Externally

The Learning Outcomes of the course, as detailed earlier, have been formulated in accordance with the QAA Masters' Degree Characteristics.

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Masters-Degrees-Characteristics.pdf>

❖ PROFESSIONAL BODY ACCREDITATION

The LLM in Legal Practice incorporates Stage 1 and 2 of the Legal Practice Course as validated by the Solicitors' Regulation Authority. As noted, subject to satisfactory completion of the relevant assessments, students are free to 'exit' the LLM in Legal Practice with either the 90 credits Postgraduate Certificate in Legal Practice or the 120 credits Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice. For further information concerning the Legal Practice Course, students are referred to <http://www.sra.org.uk/students/lpc.page>.

❖ QUALITY MANAGEMENT & ENHANCEMENT

Course management

Day to day management of the LLM in Legal Practice is conducted by the Course Director with the assistance of the designated LPC Assessments Officer and the dedicated LPC Resources Room Supervisor. The Course Director and Assessments Officer work closely with the various module leaders to ensure that for both the FT and PT modes of study, the course is delivered in an efficient and professional manner and that 'parity of experience' is secured. The Social Research Methods and Dissertation in Legal Practice modules which must be completed if the student is to graduate with the LLM in Legal Practice will be led by a designated tutor possessing a strong background in practitioner oriented research and who will offer guidance to the designated Dissertation tutors as required.

Course approval, monitoring and review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel (and in the case of Stages 1 and 2 of the LPC by the SRA), in May 2015. The panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from other validated LPC providers 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 & 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 in order to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

All LLM in Legal Practice students are invited to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the Course Leader and individual module leaders on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The results of student feedback on individual modules and non-subject specific aspects of course provision (eg. pastoral, help in choosing Stage 2 electives and administration) are: (i) posted on Blackboard for transparency; and (ii) routinely discussed at LPC student committee meetings and recorded accordingly. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey, which elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience. It remains an expectation of the SRA that the external examiners meet with students in order to elicit views as to the professional nature of the course etc. with the externals' reports being submitted to the SRA in due course as part of its Annual Monitoring requirements.

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: *please contact Miles Macleod (LPC Resources Room Supervisor) on lpcadmin@wmin.ac.uk [0207-911-5017]. See also <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/professional-and-short/law/legal-practice-course-lpc>*