

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	LLM in Legal Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice (SRA LPC Stages 1 & 2 transcripts – the LPC) The LLM and Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice are Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
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
Teaching 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
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	1 year [FT] 2 years [PT]
QAA subject benchmarking group(s) :	
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	Solicitors' Regulation Authority (SRA) http://www.sra.org.uk/students/lpc.page .
Date of course validation/review:	May 2015
Date of programme specification approval:	May 2015, updated November 2017
Course Leader:	Martin J. Skirrow
Course URL:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate
Westminster Course Code:	PMLAW07F (Full-time) PMLAW07P (Part-time)
JACS code:	M250/M100
UKPASS code:	P024793

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

Students can apply for either the Postgraduate Diploma (stage 1 and 2) or the LLM Legal Practice.

westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

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**).

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

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.

2. 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, i.e. 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:

- 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 for 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

Stage 1 of the Legal Practice Course				
Stage	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
Stage 1	Business Law and Practice (Taxation)	Core	20	10
Stage 1	Property Law and Practice	Core	20	10
Stage 1	Litigation (Civil and Criminal)	Core	20	10
Stage 1	Wills and Administration	Core	4	2
Stage 1	Professional Conduct and Regulation	Core	5	2.5
Stage 1	Practice Legal Research Skills	Core	4	2
Stage 1	Drafting Skill	Core	4	2
Stage 1	Writing Skill	Core	4	2
Stage 1	Advocacy Skill	Core	4	2
Stage 1	Solicitors Accounts	Core	5	2.5
Interim award of Postgraduate Certificate 90 credits				

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

PROFESSIONAL BODY ACCREDITATION AND AWARDS

The LLM in Legal Practice incorporates Stage 1 and 2 of the Legal Practice Course as validated by the Solicitors' Regulation Authority. Students can only be awarded one of the awards by the University of Westminster namely either the PG Diploma or LLM. The interim award of Postgraduate Certificate is available to students who choose to 'exit' subject to satisfactory completion of the relevant assessment and academic regulations, including the requirement to pass 90 credits.

For further information concerning the Legal Practice Course, students are referred to <http://www.sra.org.uk/students/lpc.page>.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

HOW WILL YOU BE SUPPORTED IN YOUR STUDIES?

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.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. 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

LEARNING SUPPORT

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students¹ 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

¹ Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

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>

Please note: This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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