

Staffordshire University

Legal Practice Course (LPC) profile September 2012

Please note: The information contained in this profile is supplied by Staffordshire University; it is the provider's responsibility to keep this information up-to-date.

Introduction from the SRA

The SRA's requirements allow providers considerable freedom to design and focus their courses to meet the needs of particular student cohorts and particular types of legal practice. Providers have a corresponding responsibility to provide clear and useful information to those making choices about where to study and which particular course to follow. To enable potential students to make informed choices, the SRA requires all providers to supply a standard set of information about their provision.

General information

Staffordshire University was one of the first providers to offer the LPC from September 1993 and are proud to be one of the highest rated courses nationally, having previously been awarded the "Excellent" rating by The Solicitors Regulation Authority under the former grading system, and the highest grades of "Commendable Practice" for all six assessed areas under the new grading system.

Types of LPC

Stages 1 and 2 full-time
Stages 1 and 2 part-time day
Stages 1 and 2 part-time evening

Key features of the different LPC courses

Our students access a wide range of practice types. We have therefore always ensured that the design of the course prepares students who wish to enter "high street" practice as well as the larger "city" firms.

Having provided a robust and broad-based curriculum since 1993, which is well regarded by all types of firms, we are confident that to continue with this approach is appropriate.

We offer a broad range of Vocational Electives, both commercial and non-commercial in nature which enables students to focus on areas which they find particularly interesting and which prepare them for experience in the type of practice they have chosen.

Maximum number of students it will recruit onto each course

Full-time

2012/2013 150 students

Part-time Day Year 1 Evening Year 1

2012/2013 25 students 25 students

Entry requirements

For admission to the course, we require students to satisfy us that they have complied with all aspects of the Solicitors Regulation Authority training requirements. They also have to have enrolled as a student member of the Law Society. We do not require students to have attained any specific class of degree and look at each student individually on their own merits.

Policy on Stages 1 and 2

Subject to a student satisfying SRA requirements, we will accept applications to study with us on:

1. Stage 1 and Stage 2 or
2. Stage 1 only or
3. Stage 1 and some or all of the required Vocational Electives in Stage 2 or
4. Some or all of the required Vocational Electives in Stage 2.

Students who are transferring from another provider will not usually be accepted later than 2 weeks from the start of our Stage 1 course and not later than 1 week from the start of our Stage 2 course. Prior to accepting any student who wishes to transfer, we would need to consider the syllabi they have studied before transfer in order to be satisfied that they would be able to cope with the demands and syllabi of our course. We would however look at each student on an individual basis.

Academic qualification that will be awarded to successful students

Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice

Learning resources available to support the course, including library and IT provision

The modern Law School building was designed specifically with LPC students' needs in mind. The Law Library is physically located at the heart of the building and this provides easy access to texts for LPC students when they are working in the practice offices, located off the edge of the library.

The Law Library contains a book-stock of approximately 10,000 titles and most of the English report series are held in addition to selected European and Commonwealth material. There are subscriptions to specialist reporting series where appropriate.

The library has a large stock of periodicals of which many are accessible electronically.

Great emphasis is given to the use of IT and licence agreements which allow wide UK and overseas access to a number of electronic resources meaning that all databases supporting the LPC are available on and off campus. PLC online is one of the major resources used throughout the course.

The physical resources in the library include:

- Study in a central area
- Around 50 PCs, accessible from the Practice Offices and on the mezzanine level

- Other IT facilities are available across campus
- A laptop, IT and AV equipment (available for loan)

Access to the Law Library

During the academic year the Law Library is open as follows:

- Monday to Friday 8.45am to 10.00pm
- Friday 8.45am to 5.00pm
- Saturday and Sunday 1.00pm to 6.00pm
- Vacation opening: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Hours are designed to be appropriate for all student needs and are complemented by Off Campus support.

Additional support for students and staff is provided by an electronic help desk and by e-mail response to enquiries. This service is very popular, particularly with part-time students. There is also a frequently updated set of web pages which link to some of the most relevant legal sites in the world. A range of study support guides are available both electronically and in paper format.

IT provision

The five practice offices, used exclusively by LPC students, are located on the perimeter of the Law Library and are each equipped with 6 state-of-the-art PCs and a laser printer enabling us to incorporate IT into the course during workshop sessions where appropriate.

In each practice office there are full data projector facilities, interactive whiteboards, Starboard and Visualisers which are used in all workshop sessions. These are excellent teaching tools and are utilised by all teaching staff in many workshops where appropriate.

All lecture theatres utilised for the course are also fully equipped with data projector facilities and hearing loop systems.

Percentage of teaching staff who are qualified as solicitors or barristers

100% of teaching staff are qualified as solicitors or barristers

Percentage of teaching staff with higher level teaching qualification

30%

Teaching staff profile

Below you will find a brief description of those of our lecturing staff who have an input onto the LPC:-

Nicola Cole is a graduate of Nottingham University and a Solicitor. She has extensive experience both in private practice and large commercial undertakings. She is joint subject leader for Business Law & Practice and the Corporate and Commercial elective. Nicola also runs the interviewing competitions.

Lucy Crompton is a graduate of Bristol University and a Solicitor. She is the subject leader for Property Law & Practice and Family Law and teaches Solicitors' Accounts. Lucy also has a keen interest in the development of elearning and is the IT Co-ordinator for the LPC.

Susan Cunningham-Hill is a graduate of Keele University and a Solicitor. She has many years experience both in local practice and as a law teacher. She teaches Civil Litigation and Advanced Litigation and Dispute Resolution. Susan is the co-author with Karen Elder of the LPC Civil Litigation Handbook (Oxford University Press)

Catherine Edwards is a graduate of De Montfort and Southampton Universities and a Solicitor. She is a Deputy Award manager for the LPC and is also one of the careers tutors for the LPC. Her subject expertise is in Property Law & Practice, Family and Employment Law.

Karen Elder is a Solicitor and Accredited Mediator. Karen teaches Civil Litigation and Advanced Litigation & Dispute Resolution. She is also responsible for running the mentoring scheme and assisting with the Street Law project and is the co-author with Susan Cunningham-Hill of the LPC Civil Litigation Handbook (Oxford University Press)

Helen Fox is a graduate of Manchester University and a Solicitor. She is the LPC Award Manager and has many years' experience in practice both locally and in London. She has been the joint subject leader for Business Law & Practice for many years, and is subject leader for Business Accounts, Wills and Administration of Estates and continues to teach as part of the team in these areas as well as the Private Client elective

Elizabeth Gillow is a graduate of London University and is a Solicitor. She joined the team in September, 2006. She practised at Wragge & Co. and Eversheds in Birmingham, specialising in employment law. Her experience also encompasses general business law. She is the author of a number of legal books including EU and International Employment Law and Harassment at Work, both published by Jordans, and has written a number of articles for legal journals. Elizabeth teaches Business and Employment Law.

Martin Hannibal is a graduate of Trent Polytechnic and a Barrister. He teaches Criminal Litigation and Advanced Criminal Litigation. He has wide experience of legal practice and lecturing on academic and vocational programmes also providing training for the Crown Prosecution Service. He is the lead co-ordinator of the Street Law project. Martin is the co-author with Lisa Mountford of the LPC Criminal Litigation Handbook (Oxford University Press) and the Law of Criminal and Civil Evidence (Longmans).

Lisa Mountford is a graduate of Nottingham University and a Solicitor. She has significant experience of practice and sits as a magistrate. She teaches Criminal Litigation, Advocacy and Advanced Criminal Litigation and also provides training for the Crown Prosecution Service. Lisa is the co-author with Martin Hannibal of the LPC Criminal Litigation Handbook (Oxford University Press) and the Law of Criminal and Civil Evidence (Longmans).

Alison Pope is a graduate of Bristol (English and History), Aberystwyth (Diploma in Librarianship) and Staffordshire (Law) Universities and is a Chartered Librarian. She is senior subject and Learning Support Librarian also holding an ILTM. Additionally, Alison is a senior lecturer and a University Learning and Teaching Fellow, heading up a

cross-University project focusing on information literacy and its integration into the University curriculum. Alison teaches Practical Legal Research on the course.

Frances Seabridge is a graduate of Exeter University and a Solicitor. She teaches Business Law & Practice, Commercial Law and is subject leader for the Corporate and Commercial elective and joint subject leader with Rob Thornton of the Private Client elective. Frances is also a designated LPC careers tutor.

Robert Thornton was, until recently, a partner in a local firm of solicitors with many years' experience in the fields of Property Law and Practice, Family Law, Probate and Immigration Law, maintaining a consultancy arrangement with that firm. He is the Deputy Award manager for the LPC with responsibility for the part-time day programme. He teaches Property Law & Practice, also teaching and being subject leader for Commercial Property and joint subject leader of the Private Client elective. Rob is the Diversity and Social Group co-ordinator and also runs the negotiating competitions.

Susan Wigglesworth is a graduate of this University and a Solicitor. She has taught in both schools and higher education for many years. She teaches and is joint subject leader for Business Law & Practice and the Corporate and Commercial elective. Sue is the Professional Conduct and Regulation Co-ordinator for the course and also runs the interviewing competitions.

Fees

£9,200

Pastoral support, including dedicated careers guidance staff

Personal tutors

A pro-active personal tutorial system, with clearly defined personal tutor roles and designated formal meetings with tutees throughout the course, provides for regular contact. All personal tutors teach their personal tutees each week in small group sessions. In addition to our "open door" policy and commitment to respond to student emails within 48 hours, we ensure that personal tutor meetings are formally scheduled at appropriate times during the year so that students have the opportunity to discuss concerns as they arise.

Careers

Overall responsibility for careers issues lies with the two Careers tutors for the course. Over and above this, all tutors have received training in careers support and a member of the University Careers Centre has special responsibility for the Law provision.

Our main careers initiatives are:

Mentoring - This is one of our most important and successful initiatives. Students are attached to a practitioner for the duration of their time on the LPC. Mentors meet with students regularly throughout the year offering opportunities for shadowing, an exchange of ideas as well as careers advice and support.

Careers workshops and lectures - In conjunction with the University Careers we offer a programme of workshops, including titles such as "Creative Job-hunting and enhancing your CV", "Adapting your skills to the training contract" and "What are employers looking for in recruitment."

Additional interactive careers workshops are also being offered to supplement the guest speaker and University Careers Centre sessions which have always been offered to our students.

Weekly careers 'drop in' sessions with the careers tutors are scheduled each week. This is in addition to the usual facility that students can book sessions by appointment if they wish.

Guest speakers - Throughout the course there is a comprehensive and wide-ranging programme of guest speakers and additional careers lectures from the University Careers Centre. Representatives from firms provide lectures on CV drafting, covering letters, interview techniques and general advice in self-assessment and job-hunting. They also present examples of "good" interviews and "bad" interviews and workshops focusing on individual CVs and queries.

University Careers Centre

Students have access through the centre to the Destination software, a programme which encourages students to work through a series of materials providing tips, guidance and the full ambit of careers guidance including interviews, curriculum vitae, covering letters and advice when students do not succeed in a job application.

Online Careers Programme

The programme links to the Destination software mentioned above and provides more specifically legally orientated materials for students to access to assist with their construction of CV's and covering letters as well as providing advice on interviewing techniques.

Tutor Careers Packs - With the assistance of the University Careers Centre we have compiled Tutor Careers Packs containing a wealth of information for tutors when advising on careers issues. Among other matters, the pack contains details on finding vacancies, making applications, example CVs and numerous web site addresses. All staff have now been trained in careers advice.

Students' Careers Booklets - Students are provided with careers booklets giving general advice on areas such as CV writing and Interview practice.

Register of Potential Trainees - We maintain a register, keeping on file the CVs of all students who are still searching for a training contract at the conclusion of the course so that when firms approach us with regard to vacancies, we are able to make contact with students on the register. We also continue to offer careers support to any students without training contracts at the conclusion of the course.

Blackboard Careers Section - Blackboard contains a section devoted to careers issues. Our careers tutors maintain a strong Blackboard presence for the LPC with copies of the careers materials provided during careers presentations, materials on constructing CVs and interviews, and copies of the Careers Handbook. The site also contains details and contacts of any job opportunities s legal practices increasingly approach us as their first port of call when considering taking a trainee (s).

Membership of the Local JLD - We pay for students to have membership of the local Junior Lawyers Division should they wish to join. The Group liaises with the School in the co-ordination of JLD meetings and social events, providing opportunities for students to meet with local trainees and young solicitors.

Competitions - In order to give students the opportunity to develop more confidence and success in key legal skills, students are encouraged to enter the various national competitions such as interviewing, negotiating and mooting.

A number of students competed this year (2011 – 12) with the national finals taking place in February at which we are well represented in both competitions. The University teams for these skills have achieved high levels of success over the years, winning national and international competitions.

Contact details

For further information, please contact the provider direct:

Website: www.staffs.ac.uk
Email: j.gingell@staffs.ac.uk
Contact name: Julie Gingell
Telephone: 01782 294452