

Institution name: Thames Valley University

Legal Practice Course (LPC) profile September 2010

Please note: The information contained in this profile is supplied by Thames Valley 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

As a longstanding provider of academic and professional legal education TVU's Law School has extensive experience of delivering the Legal Practice Course, both full-time and part-time. Our LPC has been running since 1994 and aims to provide students with a high quality, cost effective and supportive learning experience which will allow them to acquire all the ingredients for professional success: a sound knowledge of law and procedure, a practical and structured approach to legal work, commercial awareness, professional discipline, time-management skills, and networking opportunities with the legal profession. Students will learn from practical application of law, procedure and regulation in cases based on real life scenarios.

Students who successfully complete the LPC will be able to upgrade their qualification to an LLM in Legal Practice by further part-time study and successful completion of a dissertation on a topic relevant to legal practice.

Our Law School is based in Ealing, a pleasant and vibrant suburb of west London, which has excellent rail, underground and bus links to central London and easy access out to Reading, Oxford and the south, west and north.

Types of LPC

We have introduced a new, flexible LPC, enabling students to choose the option which most suits their individual circumstances. Students can study the course as a combined course (stages 1 and 2) on either a full-time or part-time basis. Alternatively students can study stages 1 and 2 separately, either full-time or part-time. Part-time provision is on a day release basis. More details can be found at www.tvu.ac.uk.

Key features of the different LPC courses

The course aims to provide a general foundation for legal practice in order to give students a broad range of opportunities in the legal market place. Previous TVU LPC graduates can be found in many legal work environments: as solicitors and partners in private practice, in not for profit organisations, in legal departments within companies or Local Authorities, in the Crown Prosecution Service, Her Majesty's Court Service and the Government Legal Service. The curriculum and the choice of vocational electives are therefore designed to provide a broad base of experience.

The part-time route enables students to complete stages 1 and 2 in 18 months or two years, dependent on choice of vocational electives.

Teaching is by tutors who are all qualified solicitors with practice experience ranging from City to High Street practice.

We know very well the demands placed on students by the LPC. A great deal of emphasis is therefore given to supporting students as individuals and monitoring their progress, and a high degree of contact time with tutors and peers is arranged to facilitate this. The full-time course requires attendance at the university for up to 3 days per week and the part-time course is delivered one day a week in year one and one day and an evening in year two. Attendance is compulsory and monitored, to maximise progress and a successful outcome for students. Further study support is available via remote access to legal databases and course materials from PCs with internet connection.

The LPC maintains very close links with the Middlesex Law Society and local courts, on both a professional and social level. These provide students with opportunities to meet and network with members of the profession, including free attendance at legal practice update lectures and presentations, joint social events, and participation in the LPC student mentoring/work experience scheme. There is also an opportunity for students to participate in the Law School's Community Advice Programme, providing free legal advice to the local community.

Maximum number of students in the different types of teaching and learning sessions

Students will all be taught in interactive small group sessions in teaching groups of on average 20 students. Group sizes are frequently smaller in the vocational elective subjects.

Maximum number of students it will recruit onto each course

We are able to provide up to 60 full-time equivalent places. There will be a mixture of full-time and part-time students.

Entry requirements

To be eligible to join the course students must have completed the academic stage of legal education to the satisfaction of the SRA and commence the LPC within the next 7 years. Students will also need to be enrolled as a student member with the SRA.

Applicants should normally have one of the following:

- A qualifying law degree with at least second class honours; or
- A Common Professional Examination or Graduate Diploma in Law pass with an average of at least 50%.

Students may be accepted with lesser academic qualifications (subject always to meeting the SRA's requirements for the certificate of academic completion) - if they have strengths in other areas (eg legal work experience) or can satisfy us that there were extenuating circumstances which adversely affected their previous academic performance. There are other entry routes such as fellowship of the Institute of Legal Executives.

Policy on Stages 1 and 2

We offer flexible routes to completion of the LPC – students can enrol for stages 1 and 2 combined, or stage 1 or stage 2 only, part-time or full-time.

Students who have studied stage 1 with another provider will be accepted to study stage 2 provided that they can demonstrate successful prior completion of stage 1.

Academic qualification that will be awarded to successful students

Students who successfully complete stage 1 only will be awarded the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Legal Practice. Those who successfully complete stages 1 and 2 will be awarded the University's Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice. Those students from other providers who enrol for stage 2 only and are subsequently successful will be awarded the University's Postgraduate Diploma (with accreditation of their prior learning granting them exemptions from stage 1 at TVU) .

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

Students benefit from a large, well-equipped base room in which only LPC classes are timetabled. The room has restricted access and contains PCs networked to the Library and two printers. PCs allow access to Oyez legal forms, legal databases and resources, the University's virtual learning environment, the internet and other resources for use in and outside classes. PowerPoint and data projection facilities are also in place.

Students further benefit from a dedicated LPC Resource Room within the Law Library. This room is used solely by LPC students and staff. There are up to 30 reader places and 6 networked computers. Aside from the electronic resources accessible via the PCs, the room is stocked with many paper based resources such as practitioner texts and loose leafs covering the compulsory and elective subjects, Halsbury's Laws and Statutes, the Encyclopaedia of Forms and Precedents and many other resources. There are published guides to obtaining training contracts and subscriptions to the Law Society Gazette for students' use.

IT and legal research training sessions introduce LPC students to the electronic resources available to them. Networked legal resources include Lexis-Nexis Butterworths, All England Direct service, Current Legal Information, Employment Law Online, Halsbury's Laws Direct, Halsbury's Statutes Direct and WestLaw. Networked CD-ROMs include the Land Registry training module for LPC students.

The University subscribes to the BlackBoard electronic learning environment. Within this, there is an "LPC site", providing students with a list of all LPC modules and, within those, a list of folders for students to access, containing learning materials, handouts, practice exercises, PowerPoint presentations, feedback and useful web links.

There is also a section of the LPC BlackBoard site on which are posted matters of general interest, such as careers information, timetables, the student handbook, and useful websites. In addition, the careers department communicates details of training contracts and paralegal opportunities through the medium of BlackBoard.

All students have a TVU email address provided to them, which is used for University and Library briefings, as well as for LPC matters. Students receive specific training in the use of the email system and BlackBoard in the first few days of the course.

Percentage of teaching staff who are qualified as solicitors or barristers

100%. All LPC tutors are qualified solicitors.

Percentage of teaching staff with higher level teaching qualification

Three tutors (50%) have a post-graduate teaching certificate and one other tutor (17%) is a Member of the Higher Education Academy, which recognises professionalism in teaching and learning in Higher Education.

All tutors are required to attend internal training on teaching and learning as part of their staff development. All tutors participate in peer appraisals of their teaching and in the University's annual performance review scheme.

Teaching staff profile

All tutors are qualified solicitors and have been specifically approved by the SRA for their current tutoring responsibilities on the LPC and relevant practice experience. Each tutor also has additional responsibilities in relation to the delivery of the LPC.

Further details in relation to tutor roles on the LPC can be found in the course brochure and the LPC Student Handbook and tutor profiles are also available on the Law School website: http://www.tvu.ac.uk/law/Ealing_Law_School.jsp

All LPC tutors are required to keep up to date with developments in law and practice in their areas of expertise. Some undertake legal practice part-time. Others have engaged in other professional activities such as authorship of books and publications, delivery of other accredited legal professional training, and external examining for the LPC.

Fees 2010-11

UK/EU Students

Full-time LPC, Stages 1 and 2 combined	£8,200
Full-time LPC, Stage 1 only	£6,200
Full time LPC, Stage 2 only	£2,250

Part-time LPC Year 1 (2010-2011)

Part-time LPC, Stage 1 part 1	£3,100*
Part-time LPC, Stage 2 - per elective	£750*

Overseas Students

Full-time LPC Stages 1 and 2	£9,520**
**All overseas students qualify for a fee remission of £1000, reducing total fee to:	£8,520

An early payment discount of approximately 5% is available. Continuing TVU students normally benefit from a progression discount – this cannot be claimed in conjunction with any other discount.

Pastoral support, including dedicated careers guidance staff

Pastoral Support

We know the pressures that students face, both on the LPC and in trying to achieve their career ambitions, and we have consequently put in place effective mechanisms to support them. Our LPC has the top rating of “commendable practice” for student support.

Pastoral support is on three levels and is designed to provide individual, tailored support for students:

1. Personal Tutor System
2. Student Appraisal Scheme
3. University Support Services

Personal Tutor System.

Each LPC student is allocated a personal tutor. There will be some formal meetings with the personal tutor at the start of the course and as part of the student appraisal scheme. Personal tutors help induct the students into the nature and demands of the course and the facilities and services available for student support. They are the first point of contact if students have personal difficulties which affect their studies.

Student Appraisal Scheme

There is a formal student appraisal scheme whereby students meet their tutors for a discussion on their preparation, contribution and performance on the course, as evaluated by subject tutors. This is designed to support students by a process of affirmation if students are performing well, or to provide timely advice and support for those who are underperforming.

University Support Services

The University offers a full range of support services for students such as disability support, medical services, counselling, financial and housing services.

Careers Support

The University Careers and Employment Service, with Matrix accreditation, provides excellent careers support, including a series of legal careers seminars specifically designed for TVU’s LPC students:

1. Skills analysis and development
2. The legal job market
3. Drafting successful law CVs, applications, letters and interview techniques.

Students are given access to an online career management service. This site contains information, exercises and optional assignments related to the sessions offered. Students are also given a guide to law related websites and specialist legal recruitment agencies, to help them in their search for training contracts and legal work experience.

Our students receive further individual support in drafting CVs and applications, preparing for interviews and having mock interviews. The Careers Service continues to build up its contacts with solicitors' firms and many now approach the University when looking to recruit trainees and other legal personnel. Job advertisements and training contract opportunities are disseminated from the Careers Service and are posted electronically. Students who register with the Careers Service are also notified by email.

Building a good Law CV is vital and students are encouraged to participate in our student mentoring/work experience scheme and to tap into other work experience opportunities and practitioner events available from TVU or other organisations with which we have contacts.

The Careers Service continues to support LPC students for up to three years after they leave, including by email alerts of legal work and training contract opportunities. Our students speak very highly of the support they receive.

Contact details

For further information, please contact the provider direct:

Website: www.tvu.ac.uk

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