

University of Westminster

Legal Practice Course (LPC) profile September 2010

Please note: The information contained in this profile is supplied by The University of Westminster; 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**

The University has a well established reputation in the delivery of undergraduate and postgraduate law courses having delivered law degrees since the 1970s and the Graduate Diploma (CPE) since the 1980s. The School of Law also enjoys an excellent reputation internationally for its Research (RAE 2008).

The School of Law has delivered an LPC on a full-time basis since the course was first introduced in 1993. Shortly thereafter it was also validated to run a part-time evening course. The LPC teaching team thus has approximately 15 years experience in the delivery of both full and time courses. Under the previous assessment regime, Westminster's LPC was awarded 6 Commendable Practices by the SRA's Assessors (October 2005), which was the highest grading an LPC provider could hold.

The LPC is delivered via the School of Law's Department of Professional Legal Studies which is located at 4-12 Little Titchfield Street, London W1W 7UW.

❖ **Types of LPC**

Stage 1 on a full-time basis (by day)

Stages 1 & 2 (combined) on a part-time basis (by evening)

Stage 2 elective courses on a part-time basis (delivered both by day and in the evening)

An Exempting Law Degree (over 4 years)

Flexible part-time LPC in partnership with the University of the West of England (UWE) and Central Law Training (CLT) (see below)

❖ **Key features of the different LPC courses**

Westminster's LPC

The University of Westminster seeks to provide a broad based Stage 1 (across both the full-time and part-time courses), aimed primarily at those wishing to practise in

High Street firms or small to medium size commercial practices. Accordingly, the breakdown of teaching across Stage 1 by way of 'unit' (each unit generally consisting of a 1 hour lecture and an interactive group session lasting 2 hrs 30 minutes) is as follows: Business Law & Practice – 24 units; Property Law & Practice – 16 units; Civil Litigation – 15 units; Criminal Litigation – 10 units; and Wills & Administration – 6 units.

Stage 1 lectures will be delivered by means of both 'live' weekly delivery and in some cases by pre-recorded delivery which can be accessed from home via the University's website. As explained below, emphasis will continue to be given to the personal nature of the student's experience while on the course by means of the 'live' lectures given to the whole cohort and the relatively small number of students attending any one group session.

Stage 1 on the full-time course will be delivered across 21 weeks from the beginning of September 2010 to the end of January 2011. Assessments will then be concluded during the course of February 2011 with Stage 2 electives (each one including 11 units), being delivered thereafter. Teaching of Stage 2 electives will continue until approximately the end of May 2011 with assessments being concluded by the end of June.

Full-time students can expect to attend on up to 4 full days a week during September 2010 (when the Foundation Course is delivered); thereafter, as a general rule, students can expect to be attending sessions 3 days a week (likely to be Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays), although attendance may be required on additional days, for example, where skills assessments or mock exams are being held.

Delivery of Stages 1 & 2 (combined) on the part-time course is spread across 2 years. A student starting Stage 1 in September 2010 will study Property, Litigation and Accounts (together with various course skills), with one Stage 2 elective studied towards the end of Year 1. The student will start Year 2 in September 2011 and complete Stage 1 studies in Business Law & Practice and Wills & Administration the following January. The student will finish Year 2 by studying two further Stage 2 electives.

As a general rule, part-time students can expect to attend on 2 evenings a week (i.e. 2 out of Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday), although attendance on 3 evenings may be required in some weeks. Students should also note that the particular evenings they are expected to attend will vary across the 2 years' duration of the course and that classes will start at 5.45pm and where a 'live' lecture is being delivery, will generally finish at 9pm.

Exempting Law Degree

The exempting degree represents an exciting new initiative for the Law School, which will bring together the best elements of the LPC and the LLB. Over the four years of the course, students will benefit from an integrated approach to their learning under which they will combine their study of skills, academic and vocational subjects. Practical modules therefore run throughout the spine of the course.

Indeed, all students will gain experience of real life disputes and transactions by undertaking a compulsory clinical module in Year 3 of the course. This will underpin and enliven their understanding of the law. It will therefore help students with the other modules that they study and provide the sort of practical experience that future employers are looking for.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by UWE/CLT

The University of the West of England is working in association with Central Law Training in offering UWE's highly regarded LPC at selected regional centres across the UK (including the University of Westminster), on a flexible part-time basis at affordable fees.

UWE & CLT's Legal Practice Course has been designed to allow for flexible study. It is delivered via Saturday and Sunday workshops and supported by a structured e-learning system. The course is designed for students who want to become a solicitor but are unable to attend a full-time LPC course because of work, family or other commitments. Students will receive careers advice and tutor support and will be able to choose from a wide range of Stage 2 electives.

The course will be provided by UWE and delivered by experienced LPC tutors at the following regional centres: University of Westminster, Coventry University; Manchester Metropolitan University and Southampton Solent University.

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

Westminster's LPC

We are pleased to note that students studying the LPC at Westminster have previously expressed the view that one of the most attractive features of our course is the fact that we teach to a relatively small number of students. It is felt that this has contributed to a 'more personal learning experience'. (See Maximum Numbers below.)

While the exact number of students attending lectures or group sessions will inevitably depend on the numbers recruited onto the course for September 2010, we would expect lectures to be attended by up to 80 persons (i.e. the maximum number we expect to recruit on the full-time course) with group sessions (both full-time and part-time) attended on average by approximately 16 students.

Exempting Law Degree

On the exempting degree, there should be no more than 20 students in a small group session and it is hoped that the groups will be smaller than this. Numbers in the lectures will vary according to the subject that is being taught. Predominantly, the small group sessions will be run specifically for exempting degree students which means that they will benefit from the sort of personal learning experience that is a strong feature of the LPC at Westminster.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

In order to obtain maximum benefit for students, workshops are limited to 8 students. Other study will be personal study via the online interactive learning system known as Blackboard

❖ Maximum number of students it will recruit onto each course

Westminster's LPC

Under the existing course provision, Westminster is validated to deliver its full-time course to up to 120 students and its part-time course to up to 128 students (i.e. up to 64 students in each of Year 1 and Year 2). (By way of illustration, for September 2009, we recruited 70 onto the full-time and 50 onto the part-time (Numbers enrolled as of 1/10/09).) Given our desire to maintain a close working relationship between tutors and individual students, it is very much our expectation that we will deliver the course to similar numbers in September 2010. *NB. The availability of Westminster's Stage 2 electives may be affected by the size of the cohort for any one year.*

Exempting Law Degree

The numbers on the exempting degree will be limited, at least in the short term, to 60 (TBC) students. This will allow us to give students plenty of individual attention.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

One hundred (100) at each of the regional centres (see above).

❖ Entry requirements

Westminster's LPC

Each student must satisfy the following requirements prior to commencing the LPC:

- A qualifying law degree (2.2 and above) or a GDL/CPE or similar qualification such as ILEX
- Applicants must have a sufficient command of English to successfully complete the course
- Enrolled as a student member of Solicitors Regulation Authority (deadline of the 1st August applies)
- Obtained by September 2010, a Certificate of Completion of the Academic Stage of Training from the Solicitors Regulation Authority

Exempting Law Degree

Three A levels (A2) at grades AAB; other Curriculum 2000 combinations will be considered on an individual basis; six GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and mathematics. Equivalent qualifications will also be considered. We take the whole application into consideration. We look for consistent academic records from GCSE onwards and carefully consider work experience, reference(s), personal statement and motivation to study.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

- A valid Law Degree (students holding a 3rd class Degree will be invited to talk to UWE's Course Director)
- Two references
- Be SRA compliant

❖ **Policy on Stages 1 and 2**

Westminster's LPC

We will of course give careful consideration to an application made by a student who initially opts to do Stage 1 only with us (full-time), but who subsequently wishes to remain at Westminster with a view to doing one or more Stage 2 electives.

Likewise, we will give careful consideration to any application made by a student who, having previously studied Stage 1 at another LPC provider, subsequently wishes to study one or more Stage 2 electives at Westminster.

Exempting Law Degree - Entry and Exit points

Students must enrol for the LL.B. (Solicitors Exempting) degree at the beginning of their first year at University. Because of the unusual and integrated nature of the programme, it is unlikely that students will be able to transfer into second or subsequent years. However, this may be possible if they have successfully completed whole years at institutions with a similarly structured degree, or where they have experience that is accepted as an adequate alternative to the Legal Ethics, Methods and Skills modules.

Students may leave the LL.B. (Solicitors Exempting) degree at the end of the first, second or third year at University. If they do so they may be eligible to transfer to other courses within the School or for an interim award depending on the number of credit points they have acquired.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

Students are able to enrol for Stage 1 or Stage 2 or both.

❖ **Academic qualification that will be awarded to successful students**

Westminster's LPC

Students who successfully complete both Stages 1 and 2 (in full) at Westminster will be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice. The University would consider applications for accreditation of prior learning in deciding whether to award the Diploma to a student who had completed Stage 2 but not Stage 1 with the University.

Exempting Law Degree

On the Exempting degree, students will receive an award which reflects the integrated nature of the course. On completion, students will therefore be awarded an LL.B. (Solicitors Exempting) with honours with a classification in respect of degree elements and a Practice Distinction or Merit, if appropriate, in respect of the Legal Practice Course elements.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

Successful students will be awarded UWE's post graduate Legal Practice Course Qualification

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

Westminster's LPC

Students are provided with a full set of course materials together with recommended textbooks (which may be OUP or CLP publications), at the start of the course.

Extensive use is made of PowerPoint in both lectures and group sessions while the student's learning experience is further enhanced by the provision of interactive Smartboards in the group session teaching rooms. Extensive use is made of Blackboard (which can be easily accessed via the University's website), on which tutors routinely post Session Handouts, Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) exercises and the pre-recorded Camtasia lectures. Students are also kept regularly informed of relevant LPC events/results etc. via Blackboard.

Students can also access the School's legal database allowing online access to resources such as Halsbury's Statutes, Westlaw and Lawtel.

Exempting Law Degree

With the exception of the textbooks – which are not provided - students will be able to take advantage of the same facilities that are available to LPC students.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

In addition to weekend workshops study will take place online. Students will be able to log onto Blackboard to access their study materials. Further, students will have access to their regional centre's library as well as access to UWE's library and their tutor.

❖ **Percentage of teaching staff who are qualified as solicitors or barristers**

Westminster's LPC

Each of the LPC tutors is either a qualified solicitor or barrister ie. 100% are professionally qualified in one capacity or another. In the case of the LPC Pro-Bono scheme/Clinical Elective, the relevant tutors also hold practising certificates. The student's experience is further enhanced as a result of some classes being delivered by experienced practitioners who teach in conjunction with the permanent members of the teaching team.

Exempting Law Degree

Tutors on the exempting degree will have the appropriate qualification for the module that they are teaching. On the vocational modules all tutors will either be solicitors or barristers. Tutors on the Clinical Education modules will also hold current practising certificates. Tutors on the academic modules will have qualifications that are relevant to the area of study.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

All staff are either solicitors or barristers i.e. 100% are professionally qualified in one capacity or another.

❖ **Percentage of teaching staff with higher level teaching qualification**

Westminster's LPC

While the majority of our LPC teaching team do not hold a higher level teaching qualification (PGCHE), we would observe that this proved no obstacle to our being awarded a Commendable Practice for both Teaching, Learning & The Curriculum and Assessments by the SRA assessors on the occasion of their last visit.

Exempting Law Degree

The majority of the vocational module tutors on the Exempting Degree will be existing LPC tutors and therefore the same comments made in relation to the LPC apply. All tutors will be experienced law lecturers.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

All staff are professionally qualified as solicitors or barristers and have experience as LPC tutors.

❖ **Teaching staff profile**

Westminster's LPC

A clear majority of Westminster's LPC teaching team has been in post for 5 years or more and thus possess a wealth of experience in designing and delivering the course to a high standard. (Under the previous SRA grading regime, Westminster's LPC held 6 Commendable Practices (the highest grade possible) for course features such as Teaching & Learning, Students and Their Support and Quality Assurance).

Further, a number of our tutors have experience as external examiners for other LPC providers, while some are engaged in research. Applicants should also note that the course manual for Property Law and Practice, "A Practical Approach to Conveyancing" (OUP) was written by two members of the property team, Professor Robert Abbey and Mark Richards. They are also the authors of "A Practical Approach to Commercial Conveyancing and Property". Graham Robson and David Roberts are the authors of "A Practical Approach to Housing Law" (Routledge).

Graham Robson has also been heavily involved in the development of legal skills' education both nationally and internationally. He is the chair of the National Client Interviewing Competition and a director of the National Negotiation Competition. He is on the executive organising committees of the International Client Counselling Competition and the International Negotiation Competition (see <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/schools/law/about-us/law-competitions>)

Exempting Law Degree

As the majority of the exempting degree vocational tutors will be existing LPC tutors the same comments made in relation to the LPC again apply. Tutors on the academic modules will primarily be LLB tutors many of whom have extensive teaching experience and are actively engaged in research of their relevant teaching areas.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

Please contact CLT (see below).

❖ Fees

Westminster's LPC

- (FT) Stage 1 & 2 (September to June). Fees: £9450
- (FT) Stage 1 (September to February). Fees: £7800
- (FT) Stage 2 Fees: (3 electives:£1800) (2 electives:£1200) (1 elective:£600)
- (PT) Stage 1 & 2 (2 academic years) Fees: £4725 per academic year
- (PT) Stage 1 & 2 (new flexible weekend study course 2 academic years) Fees: £2,950 per academic year

Fees and Discount(s)

FT Applicants: There is a £500 discount available for students with a 2:1 Law Degree (or better) or a Commendation (or better) at CPE/GDL level. A further discount of 5% is also given if the relevant course fee for Stage 1 (only) or Stages 1 & 2 (in full) is paid in full by 30 September 2010. **NB.** This discount applies after the £500 qualification discount if applicable.

PT Applicants: There is a £250 discount (per academic year) available for students with a 2:1 Law Degree (or better) or a Commendation (or better) at CPE/GDL level. A further discount of 5% is also given if the relevant course fee for Stage 1 (only) or Stages 1 & 2 (in full) is paid in full by 30 September 2010. **NB.** This discount applies after the £250 qualification discount if applicable and does **not** apply to the flexible learning LPC delivered by CLT/UWE.

NB. Part-time tuition fees are per annum and are likely to increase inline with inflation. Tuition fees are inclusive of all course materials and books. All applicants who accept an offer to study the LPC with the University of Westminster are required to pay a holding deposit of £110 which is over and above yearly tuition fees.

Exempting Law Degree

UK Home or EU students: £3,290 per academic year

ELQ students: £7,000 per academic year

Full-time overseas students: £10,125 per academic year

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

Year 1 - £2950

Year 2 - £2950

The fees can be paid in instalments. The fee is inclusive of all course manuals and materials.

❖ Pastoral support, including dedicated careers guidance staff

Westminster's LPC

Students are assigned to a member of the LPC teaching team who acts as the individual's personal tutor throughout the academic year. A number of formal points

of contact are scheduled throughout the year (for example, early on in the course, following the release of assessment results etc.), while students are further encouraged to seek one to one meetings with their personal tutor whenever necessary.

In addition to developing a good relationship with the personal tutor, it is our belief that across the academic year, students will in fact also develop a good relationship with members of the teaching team generally (including our dedicated LPC Administration team). Certainly, we are confident that there will always be someone there to advise you at short notice at times of need.

With regards to our LPC careers provision, workshops are arranged with the University's student employment advisor at an early stage during the course. Students are encouraged to focus on the need to contact prospective employers during the course and in doing so are supported by two members of the LPC teaching team who provide one to one advice concerning CVs and interview technique. A number of practitioner led careers talks are also usually held from time to time during the year.

Exempting Law Degree

As with the LPC, all students will be assigned to a personal tutor. The system will differ from that employed on the LPC, however, given that the two courses are quite different. In common with the LPC, however, there is an open door policy and students should always be able to find someone who can help them.

In terms of careers, employability is a major theme of the exempting degree and students will be given plenty of guidance during their years on the course.

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

Students will be assigned a pre-course Contact Tutor who will be able to advise students about personal and academic issues on a confidential basis or give careers advice.

On commencement of the course, students will meet their Supervising Principal (SP). SP's will give the support a senior lawyer might give a trainee solicitor in practice. SP's will meet regularly with students on a confidential basis to discuss their progress on the course, as well as meeting with the workshop group as a whole.

Supervising Principals will also help students through the process of applying for training contracts, backed up by specialist LPC tutors, who can help with applications aimed at specific sectors of the legal market

Further, there is a designated LPC Careers Officer, who works closely with the Career Development Unit in the university to provide a wealth of information and innovative exercises on the preparation of CV's, application forms and covering letters and interview skills.

Students will be invited to attend regular career 'events', as part of the weekend programme, led by visiting practitioners designed to help enhance their career prospects.

For further information, please contact the provider direct:

Westminster's LPC

Website: www.westminster.ac.uk/lpc
Email: lpcadmin@wmin.ac.uk (FT) – M.S.Kelly@wmin.ac.uk (PT)
Contact name: Miles Macleod and/or Marcia Kelly
Telephone: 0207-99-5017 (Mr. Macleod)
0207-911-5000 x2500 (Mrs. Kelly)

Exempting Law Degree

Website: www.wmin.ac.uk
Email: **P.Abrahams@westminster.ac.uk**
Contact Name: Pamela Abrams, Acting Exempting Law Degree Course Leader
Telephone: 0207- 911 5000 x2512

Flexible part-time LPC delivered by CLT/UWE

Address: The Legal Practice Team, CLT Wrens Court, 52-54 Victoria Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1SX DX: 708700 Sutton Coldfield

Website: <http://www.clt.co.uk/Legal-Practice-Course-LPC>

Email: LPC@centlaw.com

Contact name: Debbie Price

Telephone: 0121 362 7505