

University of Wolverhampton

Legal Practice Course (LPC) profile September 2009

Please note: The information contained in this profile is supplied by the University of Wolverhampton; 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 School of Legal Studies at the University of Wolverhampton offers a wide variety of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including the full-time LPC which has been offered since 1993 and the part-time LPC since 1996. Several aspects of the LPC provision were graded as "Commendable Practice" by the SRA Monitoring Visit in March 2007. Students completing the LPC can "carry forward" postgraduate credits gained on the LPC towards a LLM which they complete by studying a 20 credit taught module on Research Methods and a further 80 credits by means of either taught modules and a dissertation or dissertation only. The School is committed to the Legal Practice Course provision with an enthusiastic group of staff who are able to ensure that students are well supported during their studies.

Types of LPC

Stages 1 and 2 FT and PT (Evening)

Key features of the different LPC courses

The LPC is designed for general practice and equal emphasis is given to all core practice areas.

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

Whole group for large group sessions and usually a maximum of 12 to 15 for small group sessions.

Maximum number of students it will recruit onto each course

60 FT
30 PT in each year (30 FTE)

Entry requirements

Qualifying law degree or equivalent. The institution would expect prospective students to have at least a lower second class honours degree or equivalent.

Policy on Stages 1 and 2

Students who have studied stage 1 with another provider may be allowed onto Stage 2 subject to availability.

Academic qualification that will be awarded to successful students

Students who successfully complete Stage 1 only will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Legal Practice.

Students who successfully complete Stages 1 and 2 will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice.

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

The course is delivered from a suite of rooms within an office building in the Development Centre at Wolverhampton Science Park. The teaching rooms are light and airy and well ventilated. The ground floor comprises two tutor offices, the Course Director's office and the LPC Resources Room, as well as one video suite. On the first floor are two rooms suitable for small group sessions, a large room for up to 60 students and a second video room. The largest teaching room can be divided in half to provide two smaller rooms each adequate for teaching SGSs. Each teaching room has OHPs, whiteboards, DVD/video machines, computers and projectors. Two of the three teaching rooms have recording facilities as do the two video suites. There is some seating at the top of the stairs beside snack and drinks machines. There is a cafeteria and a franchise coffee outlet in the building next door. It is proposed, in the short term at least, to continue to use these facilities as we have done in the past to the satisfaction of the SRA.

We have in recent years replaced VCRs with DVD recorders to record student oral skills. At the beginning of the year each student is given a blank DVD which they use to record their formative oral skills assessments. We have two dedicated video suites and two classrooms also equipped with camera, DVD recorder and omnidirectional microphone for oral assessments/ practice. Students can use the video suites to practise their oral skills at a time to suit themselves. As well as OHPs, PCs and projectors in each of the teaching rooms we now also have a visualiser and a promethean screen in the largest teaching room.

We have 13 networked student PCs in the LPC Resources Room and a further six in the large teaching room all linked to the two laser printers in the Resources Room upon which the students may print out any material. The University of Wolverhampton has a policy of replacing all student PCs every three years.

We subscribe to a number of databases, including the full academic library available from Lexis Nexis Butterworths. All students receive an introduction to Lexis Nexis Butterworths' materials in the Foundation Week. In the first week of teaching they are introduced to the University's virtual learning environment ("WOLF") and the University's electronic resources. Students may access all these online resources remotely. The Resources Room is open only to LPC students. It also contains our book stock and a photocopier. All computers have access to the databases to which we subscribe.

The Foundation Week Student Questionnaire asks students about their IT ability and whether they feel they need further help. Students who need help are given a guide to

the University's IT training resources and asked to contact the IT and Skills Tutor if they need any further help. Tailored training sessions through the specialist IT staff at the Harrison Learning Centre (the University's main library on its City Campus) may be arranged typically dealing with: an introduction to PowerPoint, Intermediate Word and Electronic Journals.

Students are aware they can arrange one-to-one sessions with the Harrison Learning Centre staff should they wish to have assistance in how to use the main law library facilities or online databases. Students are also aware that they can contact the student representatives for Lexis Nexis Butterworths and Westlaw if they need help using those respective databases. The contact details of the representatives are posted in the LPC Resources Room.

The core practice areas and the vocational electives use WOLF in a variety of ways; ranging from the posting of revision type MCQs to more detailed ongoing negotiation exercises. Our virtual town of New Molton ("MOLT") has a branch office of Wulfruns Solicitors which is used to convey further instructions to students.

We have the benefit of a Course Administrator (80% of his time is allocated to administering the course) and a full-time Course Secretary. As well as having access to technical support from the University's central IT Services, we have on-site IT support from the private company which provides IT support to all tenants at the Science Park.

The LPC Resources Room is well stocked with sufficient numbers of up to date practitioner texts. There is excellent support from the University Law Librarian who, inter alia, keeps the LPC team up to date on new additions to databases and who orders new editions of essential texts for the Resources Room. In addition the LPC course has an annual budget of about £25,000 for books (much of which is used on updating of the loose leaf practitioner manuals). The students can use the main University library (Harrison Learning Centre) if they wish, but tend not to given the adequacy of the LPC Resource Room and on line materials. Students have not found it a difficulty being away from the main University campus (which is a ten minute walk).

All course materials and textbooks are included within the course fee. As well as a hard copy of all materials, all seen materials are also available electronically.

Percentage of teaching staff who are qualified as solicitors or barristers

90%

Percentage of teaching staff with higher level teaching qualification

50%

Teaching staff profile

The course team is a mixture of experienced practitioners and academics and practitioners newer to the profession and teaching. The mixture includes members of staff who sat the former Law Society Finals, different versions of the LPC at different institutions and two members of staff with experience as LPC external examiners and one member of staff as an SRA assessor.

Fees 2009/10

Stage 1 and 2	£7,380
Stage 1 only	£4,613
Stage 2 only	£1,000 per vocational elective or £2,767 if studying all three.

Pastoral support, including dedicated careers guidance staff

The Course Administrator offers support to all students both before they join the course, during the course and after it. Overseas students often require assistance in relation to registration with a local doctor, accommodation and banking.

The Course Secretary is the first point of contact if the students are unable to attend due to illness or other good reason.

The Course Tutor offers support and guidance to all students in addition to the support offered by personal tutors. Students are able to discuss any issues with the Course Tutor and will be counseled in relation to the required attendance and workload of the LPC.

The Assessments Tutor is available to all students in relation to queries about assessments including the level of performance required and also the consequences of failing an assessment.

The Course Director is also available to consider any issue which may be raised by a student.

The Skills and IT Tutor carries out an audit of students' IT abilities during the Foundation Course and if any student identifies a need for support in any IT area, extra group or one to one sessions are laid on.

We operate a genuine "open door" policy whereby students are encouraged to see any member of staff with academic or pastoral issues usually without the need to make a prior appointment. Appointments can, of course, be made also. Most pastoral issues which arise can be dealt with by the team but if a student has serious problems we will make them an appointment with one of the University's central support services (e.g. the Student Counseling Service, the Finance Department or the International Office) or with the Student Union if appropriate.

The Careers Tutor offers activity-based open workshops on specific careers topics, including drafting CVs and covering letters, discussions of the cultural differences between "High Street" and corporate firms and offering advice on any aspect of life in practice.

The students are also offered one-to-one sessions with the Careers Tutor to assist with all or any part of the process of identifying suitable firms, preparing CVs and/or covering letters and applications, and interview techniques.

The Careers Tutor maintains notice boards to publicise available posts and training contract vacancies.

All students are also encouraged to take advantage of the Mentoring Scheme offered exclusively for LPC students. The mentors are local solicitors, many of whom are

former Wolverhampton LPC students. The scheme allows the students to liaise with the practitioner and seek advice in relation to their CVs, application letters and the requirements of practice. The Mentoring Scheme also includes an international element with former international students offering guidance and contacts to existing international students.

All students, both full-time and part-time, are allocated a personal tutor. The personal tutor is a member of the LPC teaching team and is available to the student during normal office hours. The student may make an appointment to see the tutor at any mutually convenient time. The tutor allocated to the part-time students will teach one of the subjects that the student is taking in that academic year; this makes it easier for the tutor and tutee to arrange convenient appointment times.

During the full-time course there are five designated tutee weeks during which the students are required to make an appointment to see their personal tutor. During the part-time course there are three designated tutee weeks during each academic year. These weeks generally follow receipt of results from formative or summative assessments or take place during the Foundation stage of the course. The purpose of appointments is to enable staff to identify any problems as soon as possible and to offer additional support where necessary.

In addition to the designated personal tutee weeks, students are encouraged to see their respective personal tutors as soon as an issue arises, so that the appropriate support can be offered without delay.

Contact details

For further information, please contact the provider direct:

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