



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Law
2	Programme Code	LAWT83 (Full-time) and LAWT84 (Part-time)
3	JACS Code	M200
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5a	Final Qualification	LLM
5b	Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications	7
6a	Intermediate Qualification(s)	Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma
6b	Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications	7
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Social Sciences
9	Department	Law
10	Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme	None
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time or Part-time
12	Duration of the Programme	1 year or 2 years
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	February 2024

15. Background to the programme and subject area

This degree is a multifaceted programme that permits the development of intellectual, practical and transferable skills. A postgraduate qualification in Law is of increasing importance to employers. Students who study successfully for an LLM are more likely to be able to secure employment in law firms, in industry and with government departments and with other national and international public bodies. The School of Law has a strong record of graduate employment and, as well as becoming practising lawyers, graduates have entered diverse professions such as banking and commerce, marketing and advertising, teaching (including University lecturing) and research. Many international graduates have found enhanced employment prospects both in the UK and in their country of origin. Teaching is informed by the research activities of the staff. The School of Law at Sheffield is one of the largest in the country.

The School of Law at Sheffield is one of the largest in the country and has a strong and long-standing reputation for excellence in both teaching and research. In the most recent Research Excellence Framework (2021), 91 per cent of the School's research was rated as world-leading or internationally excellent. The School's research outputs were rated 2nd nationally by quality (58 percent achieved the highest possible score).

The staff in the School has expertise in all areas of Corporate and Commercial Law and International Law.

Further information is available at the departmental web site: www.shef.ac.uk/law.

16. Programme aims

The programme aims to:

- develop student understanding of aspects of national, and international legal doctrine, as appropriate to the field in question.
- develop student understanding of the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of aspects of national, and international law, as appropriate to the field in question. In particular, by offering students research-led teaching delivered by staff who will often also have practical experience in the field in question.
- provide an environment where students from different legal cultures can interact and, by studying together, learn from each other.
- inculcate the highest standards of legal scholarship: precision, clarity, integrity and imagination.
- develop a range of generic abilities, particularly: the acquisition, use, and evaluation of primary and secondary source material; communication and presentation skills; problem-solving and teamwork.
- encourage the distinctive skills associated with legal research and writing, legal argument and reasoning, and legal analysis and critique. In particular, to enable students to pursue a course of directed independent research.
- enable students to maximise their potential in all aspects of their course.
- assess students over a range of knowledge, understanding and skills, and to identify and support academic excellence.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
K1	Sound knowledge of the basic substantive legal principles of the fields of law studied.
K2	Sound knowledge of theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of the fields of law studied.
K3	Sound knowledge and critical understanding of the structures and usage of legal materials.
K4	Sound knowledge and critical understanding of the mechanics of judicial reasoning.
K5	Sound knowledge of parliamentary law-making.
K6	Sound knowledge and practical and critical understanding of the methodologies used to analyse the law.
K7	Sound knowledge and critical understanding of the relationship between society and the law.

Skills and other attributes:	
S1	A high level of competence in the productive skills of essay writing and problem solving and the ability to analyse the law critically.
S2	Skills in acquiring, using, and critically evaluating information about the law within a socio-legal setting gained from a variety of sources, including teachers, journal articles, monographs, textbooks and works of reference, newspapers, and electronic sources.
S3	Familiarity with the essential primary and secondary source material appropriate to the programme of study, alongside a regard for the impartial analysis of values expressed therein.
S4	The ability to carry out individual study and research, and to participate in group activities such as seminars.
S5	Familiarity with bibliographic and research skills, including such IT skills as word-processing, e-mail and use of the internet.
S6	Further transferable skills, valuable for employment, including information gathering, the development of individual resourcefulness, analytical thinking, the ability to identify problems and ways of resolving them, the critical appreciation of source material, the ability to construct and sustain logical argument on the basis of such material, and the ability to present such argument clearly in both oral and written forms.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

Seminars, workshops or tutorials, which may be either staff-led or student-led, are at the heart of the programme. They are designed to reinforce information imparted through independent study by allowing students to work through, analyse, understand and respond to that information. In all cases the aim is to expose students to as much original legal material as possible. Seminars, workshops or tutorials thus contribute both to the achievement of knowledge and understanding (K1-K7) and to the development of key skills (S1, S2, S3, S4, S6).

Independent study is essential to the successful completion of the programme. New students are introduced to study skills through information in the online Student Handbook, through material presented during the LLM induction day, through feedback on formative assessment tasks (particularly in Semester 1) as well as through LAW685 Legal Research and Writing Skills, which is compulsory for all students. The amount of independent study broadly expected for each module is clearly set out in the course information, although it is recognised that this will vary from student to student. A focus on independent study prepares students for their written assessments and also for the dissertation of 10,000-12,000 words, which all students are required to produce. The dissertation is supervised by a member of staff specialising in the field in question, but nevertheless requires a great deal of independent study and research from the student. Independent study and the dissertation in particular thus contribute to the development of all the programme learning outcomes, but is especially important in refining skills S1-S6.

Students will use the **online learning environment (Blackboard)** to access learning materials encountered in lectures, workshops, tutorials or seminars, subject to the School of Law's policy.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Regular formative assessment is used, particularly during Semester 1, to monitor the student's progression through the programme and to pick up and rectify areas of potential weakness. Oral presentations test organisational and communication skills.

For the majority of modules summative assessment will be via research essay. For most modules a research essay is the best means of testing both subject knowledge and research skills whilst encouraging autonomy in student learning. In some modules, however, alternative modes of assessment are deployed. In particular, there are a small number of modules that assess in part by means of oral presentation (either in the form of a moot or client interview) and there is a second small group of modules that assess by means of the preparation of a written paper that mirrors those developed by lawyers in practice (either in the form of a skeleton argument for legal proceedings or a submission to a public enquiry). These modules will give the students an opportunity to develop different transferable skills whilst still requiring them to engage in legal research. In the case of the modules that assess by means of oral presentation arrangements will be made to film the students so as to enable external examiners to review the appropriateness of the marks awarded.

Summative assessment also requires the completion of a dissertation designed to test both research and writing skills and the students' ability to analyse and challenge the law.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

[Subject Benchmark Statements](#)

[Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

[University Strategic Plan](#)

[Vision and Strategic Plan – Education](#)

The research interests of departmental staff and the research strategy of the School of Law.

20. Programme structure and regulations

Compulsory Components

Semester 1: Compulsory non-credit bearing module on *Legal Research and Writing Skills* which students must complete; they are required to submit an essay for feedback, but this assessment is purely formative: no pass/fail mark will be awarded.

Semester 2: 10,000-12,000 word dissertation worth 60 credits (*Dissertation (The LLM in Law)*).

Optional Modules

Students will take units to the value of 120 credits to be divided evenly between semesters 1 and 2.

Part-time students

Students studying the degree part-time will complete over two years. They will take LAW685 Legal Research and Writing Skills in semester 1, year 1 and they will undertake 30 credits in semester 1 and 30 credits in semester 2 during both year 1 and year 2. They will take the dissertation worth 60 credits in semester 2, year 2. They will have the same degree of choice as the full-time students. They will also receive the same support through the degree and will be assigned a personal tutor in both years. Dissertation supervisors will be mindful of the need to schedule supervision meetings at times that take account of the other commitments of part-time students.

The specialised pathways

The LLM degree contains two specialised pathways, namely, the LLM in Law (Corporate and Commercial Law) and the LLM in Law (International Law and Global Justice).

In order to be eligible for the award of the LLM degree with a designated specialised pathway a student must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 90 credits from the list of approved units set out in the Programme Regulations. In addition, the student must write their dissertation on a topic that in the opinion of the Head of School (or her or his delegate) contributes to developing expertise within the relevant pathway. The practical arrangements will be that all students will initially enrol in the LLM in Law simpliciter. Students will be contacted to ask whether they wish to transfer into one of the specialised pathways. All LLM students will receive an email asking them whether they wish to transfer, but all personal tutors will also be instructed to meet with their students to discuss transferring to one of the specialised pathways. Personal tutors will also play a key role in ensuring that all students understand the eligibility rules and choose their modules accordingly. Eligibility for the specialised pathways will also form one of the points of focus during student induction. In exceptional cases students may be eligible for more than one pathway (this will be a rare occurrence because the choice of dissertation topic will normally be such as to limit the student to a single pathway). In such cases students will be required to elect the pathway, if any, that they prefer.

Student Choice

Student choice is central to the programme. The wide range of optional units coupled with the ability to write a dissertation in an area of individual interest are designed to encourage students to construct a degree programme that suits their interests, skills and career aspirations. Students studying towards one of the designated pathways can nevertheless choose units up to the value of 30 credits from other areas of interest within the School.

Coherence

Coherence is achieved through non-credit bearing Legal Research and Writing Skills course and the common experience of the dissertation, including the dissertation workshops and 'meet your supervisor' sessions. After acquiring basic knowledge and skills from the optional subjects the dissertation element of the degree will allow the student to build upon their substantive knowledge and improve their research and writing skills. Within the designated pathways an even higher degree of coherence is achieved through the selection of modules that complement one another both as regards areas of substantive legal knowledge and fields of practical application.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar>

21. Student development over the course of study

The degree is structured in such a way as to gradually place an increasing emphasis on autonomy and student directed learning. At the start of the degree the non-credit bearing module on legal research and writing skills will help ensure that all students, including those from very different legal traditions, have the basic research and writing skills to complete the degree successfully. Convenors of Semester 1 modules are encouraged to approach their teaching and set formative assessment tasks in a manner that will further help ensure that all students master the basic skills necessary to achieve at taught postgraduate level. Convenors of Semester 2 are encouraged to approach their teaching and set formative assessment tasks that will help students prepare for the dissertation, which serves as the capstone of the degree. The dissertation will be taken in a subject of the student's choice. They will be expected to design a research question, identify an appropriate methodology and complete an extended piece of writing under the guidance of a supervisor. On successful completion of the programme a student will have demonstrated capacity in self-directed learning and in-depth legal research.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

An upper second-class honours degree in Law or in a subject with a significant legal component. A level of spoken and written English – (IELTS average level 6.5, with no less than 6 in any one component).

Detailed information regarding admission available at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

23. Additional information

For further information students are directed to the School of Law's web pages at www.shef.ac.uk/law. These contain full information on courses and provide access to student handbooks.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.