



## 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	<b>Programme Title</b>	Law
2	<b>Programme Code</b>	LAWT117 (Full-time), LAW119 (Part-time)
3	<b>JACS Code</b>	M200
4	<b>Level of Study</b>	Postgraduate
5a	<b>Final Qualification</b>	MA (Law)
5b	<b>Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications</b>	Masters (M)
6a	<b>Intermediate Qualification(s)</b>	Not applicable
6b	<b>Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications</b>	Honours
7	<b>Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)</b>	Not applicable
8	<b>Faculty</b>	Social Sciences
9	<b>Department</b>	Law
10	<b>Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme</b>	None
11	<b>Mode(s) of Attendance</b>	Full-time or Part-time
12	<b>Duration of the Programme</b>	2 years or 3 years
13	<b>Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body</b>	Not applicable
14	<b>Date of production/revision</b>	February 2024

### 15. Background to the programme and subject area

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).

This Masters-level programme is specifically designed for graduates who already hold a first degree in other disciplines who now wish to study law. It is an intensive non-modular programme and is offered on a full-time basis over two years, or on a part-time basis over three years.

Students who wish to qualify as solicitors or barristers must study certain foundation legal subjects prescribed by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and by the Bar Standards Board of England and Wales – the professional bodies responsible for administering the solicitors' and barristers' professions. Sheffield's MA programme allows graduates who already hold a first degree in a subject other than law to obtain a Master's-level degree. At the same time, being taught over two/three years the programme provides students with the opportunity to study the professional law foundation subjects in more depth and also to study some optional law subjects, thus enabling students to study both more widely and more deeply.

However, whilst the MA programme may be particularly attractive to students intending to enter the practising legal professions, it will be of wider interest. The critical and analytical skills required by a lawyer are valuable in many other contexts. In common with Sheffield's other law degree programmes, the MA programme seeks to place law in its social, economic, political, historical, and philosophical context. Thus, not only does the degree aim to provide students with a knowledge of legal rules but also it helps them develop a critical understanding of the operation of those rules in society. The programme is therefore suitable not only for students who intend to seek entry into the legal professions but also for students intending to seek careers in many other areas.

Traditionally UK law degree programmes have concentrated on the study of domestic law. However, domestic law is

increasingly subject to influences from abroad, including not only the EU but also the wider international community. The focus of the programme is on domestic law but it seeks to reflect the growing internationalisation of domestic law by studying domestic law in its wider European and international context.

The compulsory law foundation subjects of the programme are taught through a series of graduate level seminars, tutorials or workshops, attendance at which is compulsory, which seek to give students not only a knowledge of the core legal principles, but a critical understanding of current developments in thinking in the relevant subjects. However, because the programme is taught alongside the School's undergraduate programmes, if their timetable allows, MA students may attend the corresponding undergraduate lectures in these subjects if they wish to do so. Students then have the freedom to select optional units of particular interest to them, and to explore one area in particular depth through the completion of a 12,000 word supervised dissertation. Students are encouraged to develop a critical awareness of developments in law and, through completion of the dissertation, to develop research skills appropriate to a Master's level qualification. Students are expected to demonstrate a strong ability to find the answers to legal questions outside the teaching arena.

Further information is available at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/law/>

## 16. Programme aims

The programme aims to:-

- 1) To provide a broad but critical understanding of law in general (especially a critical appreciation of the place of law in society), and the leading institutional and doctrinal features of domestic law in particular.
- 2) To inculcate the highest standards of legal scholarship in matters of precision, clarity, integrity, and imagination.
- 3) To inculcate a range of generic skills, particularly: the acquisition, use, and evaluation of primary and secondary source material; communication; and problem-solving.
- 4) To inculcate the distinctive skills associated with legal research and writing, legal argument and legal reasoning, and legal analysis and critique.
- 5) Generally to provide a framework within which students may proceed from a foundational stage to a largely optional regime within which they can pursue a scheme of study which fits their particular interests. Specifically:
  - (a) to enable those students who wish to satisfy the professional exemption requirements to do so, whilst, at the same time, permitting such students to pursue a scheme of study which is responsive to their particular interests; and;
  - (b) to enable those students who do not only wish to satisfy the professional exemption requirements to pursue a scheme which is responsive to their interests.

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

### Knowledge and understanding:

<b>K1</b>	Of key legal concepts and of the principles and doctrines which underpin the core areas of domestic law, including public law, the law of property, the law of obligations, criminal law, the law of the EU, and of current issues and/or thinking in some or all of those areas.
<b>K2</b>	Of the substantive legal rules and doctrines applicable to a range of areas of law.
<b>K3</b>	Of the social, political, economic, cultural and historical forces which shape and have shaped the development of legal rules, and of the place of law in society.
<b>K4</b>	Of the international influences shaping the development of the modern law and the place of domestic law in the European and international context.
<b>K5</b>	Of the principal sources of law and of the means by which laws are made.
<b>K6</b>	Of the institutions through which the law is administered and of the personnel responsible for its administration and who practise law.
<b>K7</b>	Of appropriate legal research techniques.

<b>Skills and other attributes:</b>	
<b>S1</b>	Undertake legal research using relevant primary and secondary legal sources, and using paper and electronic materials.
<b>S2</b>	Analyse and interpret primary domestic, European and international legal source materials, including statutes, statutory instruments, decided cases and international treaties.
<b>S3</b>	Evaluate and critically analyse current legal research and scholarship.
<b>S4</b>	Solve problems by analysing complex fact situations to identify the legal issues raised and applying legal rules and principles to them.
<b>S5</b>	Utilise legal materials to construct arguments on points of law.
<b>S6</b>	Critically analyse and evaluate legal and other arguments and, where appropriate, compare and choose between competing arguments.
<b>S7</b>	Communicate effectively orally and in writing, using language accurately and effectively.
<b>S8</b>	Make appropriate use of information technology including for communication and research.
<b>S9</b>	Work effectively without direction; organise work and manage time effectively.

### 18. Teaching, learning and assessment

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

The knowledge base (**K1 – K7**) is developed primarily through preparation for, attendance at and participation in seminar, tutorial or workshop classes, preparation of coursework and directed reading. Students are permitted but not required to attend undergraduate lectures in related subjects where a corresponding undergraduate unit exists.

**Lectures** and **course materials** provide an overview framework of the area of study and of the key issues and arguments and provide a basis for development of the knowledge base through.

**Directed and self-directed reading** of primary and secondary source materials, building on the framework provided by lectures, in preparation for.

**Seminars, tutorials or workshops** provide an opportunity to test knowledge and critical understanding of key substantive areas and clarify any areas of uncertainty.

Skills are developed through a combination of methods but principally through seminars, tutorials or workshops and through written coursework.

**Lawyering skills (S1, 2, 4, 5 and 6)** and **skills of critical analysis (S3)** are primarily developed through **seminars, tutorials or workshops**, where students practise problem solving and undertake exercises in critical analysis of legal materials.

Skills **S1 - 6** and **written communication skills (S7)** are further developed by **coursework** requiring students to provide written answers to either legal problem questions (hypothetical fact situations raising legal issues requiring application of legal rules to the facts) or essay questions (requiring critical analysis of arguments and propositions). All students are required to produce at least one piece of written coursework in each unit.

**Research skills (S1)** are developed through preparation for seminars, **tutorials or workshops** and through coursework. These skills are then further developed by the requirement that, in the second year of the programme, under the supervision of a member of staff, students complete a dissertation of not more than 12,000 words containing an original piece of research on a legal topic of the student's choice.

**Oral communication skills (S7)** are developed through participation in seminars, tutorials or workshops.

- **IT skills (S8)** are developed generally through research for and preparation for seminars, **tutorials or workshops** and coursework, and in particular in the preparation of the dissertation.

General personal skills of **personal organisation** and **time management (S9)** are not formally taught but are developed through self-directed study, preparation for seminars, **tutorials or workshops** and preparation of coursework.

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

A range of assessment methods is used across the curriculum. The principal methods used are examinations (which may be wholly or partly seen or wholly unseen, and in which students may be permitted the use of a range of materials) and assessed coursework, normally in the form of a 3,000 word essay or solution to a problem. A combination of examination and coursework may be used in some units.

**Knowledge and understanding** of the law is tested primarily by examination, especially by unseen examination questions. The use of materials in examinations, including open book examinations, places greater emphasis on understanding than on knowledge and memory.

**Problem solving** skills are tested by problem questions in examinations and assessed coursework.

Skills of **critical analysis** are tested by essay questions in assessed coursework and examinations.

**Research skills** are assessed by assessed coursework and by seen examination questions and by the **dissertation** project.

**Written communication** skills are tested generally through coursework and examination and especially through the programme dissertation.

- **Research skills, written communication skills** and **skills of critical legal analysis** are further assessed by the programme dissertation.
- **Oral communication** and skills of **personal organisation** and **time management** are not formally assessed, but the latter are indirectly assessed in the preparation especially of assessed coursework and the programme dissertation and also in examinations.

## 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 the staff of the School of Law

## 20. Programme structure and regulations

### Full-time

In the first year of the programme students follow a prescribed programme of study designed to introduce them to the study of law and law making and to the substantive law foundation subjects. Students therefore study *Understanding Law and Legal Systems, Contract Law, Law of Crime, Constitutional Law of the UK and the EU, Administrative Law* and *Law of Torts*. There is also a compulsory non-credit bearing course on legal research and writing skills which students must attend and they are also required to submit an essay. There will be no pass or fail of this written work.

In the second year of the programme students complete their study of the professional law foundation subjects by studying *Law of Property* and *Equity & Trusts*. Students may then complete their programme of taught study by studying three units from the range of undergraduate optional units offered by the School of Law.

Students complete their programme of study by producing, under the supervision of a member of staff, and submitting a dissertation of 12,000 words' length based on independent research into a legal topic of the student's choice.

### Part-time

In the first year of the programme students follow a prescribed programme of study designed to introduce them to the study of law and law making and to the substantive law foundation subjects. Students therefore study *Understanding Law and Legal Systems, Contract Law, Law of Crime, and Law of Torts*. There is also a compulsory non-credit bearing course on legal research and writing skills which students must attend and they are also required to submit an essay. There will be no pass or fail of this written work.

In the second year of the programme students build on their knowledge of professional law foundation subjects by studying *Constitutional Law of the UK and the EU, Administrative Law, Law of Property* and *Equity & Trusts*.

In the final year students then complete their programme of taught study by studying three units from the range of undergraduate optional units offered by the School of Law.

Students complete their programme of study by producing, under the supervision of a member of staff, and submitting a dissertation of 12,000 words' length based on independent research into a legal topic of the student's choice.

Completion of the compulsory elements of the programme is necessary to ensure that the degree satisfies the requirements for 'Foundations of Legal Knowledge' purposes.

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 [www.shef.ac.uk/calendar](http://www.shef.ac.uk/calendar)

## **21. Student development over the course of study**

Students entering the programme are expected already to possess the general intellectual, personal and study skills normally expected of a graduate. In the first year of the programme students are introduced to the particular intellectual skills ("lawyering skills") expected of a lawyer and are introduced to the fundamental sources of law and the legal systems in England and Wales (*Understanding Law and Legal Systems*) and to the core strands of domestic public and private law. Throughout Year 1 students are expected to begin to develop skills of problem solving and critical legal analysis. Substantive knowledge is developed progressively through the year, units studied in semester 2 building on those studied in semester 1.

In the second year (second and third years for part-time study) of the programme students continue and complete their study of core areas of substantive law and widen their legal study by studying a range of optional subjects. Units studied during Year 2 build on the knowledge acquired during Year 1 and, as with Year 1, there is a clear linkage between the topics taught with semester 2 building upon semester 1.

In the third year of the part-time degree, students continue to develop legal skills of problem solving and critical legal analysis by practising those skills learnt with regard to a series of optional subjects. This allows students to tailor the study of law to those areas that they would like to specialise in. Finally, students develop general and legal research skills appropriate to a Masters level qualification by preparing and submitting the dissertation.

## **22. Criteria for admission to the programme**

Upper-Second class degree or the international equivalent. This can be in any discipline.

Students' whose first language is not English (and have not studied at degree level in English before) are required to obtain a qualification in English, currently IELTS 7.0 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component.

## **23. Additional information**

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](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid).