Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

1. Awards Institution: Nottingham Trent University
2. School/Campus: Law/City
3. Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: LLM Legal Practice Course (full-time)
4. Normal Duration: 1 year
5. UCAS Code:

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The Law School has an established reputation for the teaching and delivery of its academic and vocational legal courses. This course has been developed to build upon the School’s expertise by offering a route to gain a qualification that satisfies the requirements of the Solicitors Regulation Authority ("SRA") for a Legal Practice Course ("LPC") and, at the same time, provides an opportunity for students to gain a Masters qualification in law.

Students who enrol on the course will have a degree in law (or equivalent), and the course will offer students the opportunity to study the Skills, Compulsory Practice Areas and Electives prescribed by the SRA together with a market leading module in Professional Legal Practice that seeks to develop awareness of the practical and commercial factors that face the legal profession and provide a bridge to practice. As the course is at Masters level, the course is designed to build upon the knowledge and understanding of the law and skills that students have developed during their undergraduate legal studies and students will be expected to conduct independent study and research culminating in the production of a dissertation on law and legal practice or a project for the Professional Legal Practice module.

The aims of the LLM Legal Practice Course at Nottingham Law School are informed by the LPC course aims to prepare students for work-based learning, and to provide a general foundation for practice but, as is appropriate for the level of the award, go above and beyond these aims. The aims of LLM Legal Practice Course are therefore to:

- prepare you for practice by learning how to solve clients' legal problems and to adopt attitudes which encourage professionalism.
- provide a course that builds on your graduate legal knowledge and skills by:
  - integrating substantive law and procedures;
  - further developing core legal and professional skills in a transferable context;
  - inculcating a professional, commercial and ethical approach to practice;
- developing a problem-solving approach to your studies, and ultimately to your practice as a solicitor.

- develop your skills as an independent learner so that you have the ability to access and manipulate legal resources to an advanced level, and can plan and manage your workload effectively;
- develop a high level of knowledge and practical and commercial insight into the area of professional practice;
- provide you with knowledge and skills that are highly relevant to a career in professional legal practice and/or to progression to further academic study or a career in academia.

These aims are informed by the LPC course aims to prepare students for work-based learning, and to provide a general foundation for practice.

7. **Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

**Knowledge and understanding**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. recognise, appreciate the impact of, and apply in context the key ethical requirements of the SRA principles of Regulation and Code of Conduct;

2. demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the areas of Wills and Administration of Estates and Taxation

3. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principles and criteria that underpin good performance in the skills of Practical Legal Research, Writing, Drafting, Interviewing and Advising, and Advocacy;

4. demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding and a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the law and procedures relating to professional legal practice;

5. demonstrate advanced scholarship in the areas of law studied and the ability to critically analyse and evaluate law and legal practice and current research related to it;

6. apply knowledge of law and legal practice accurately, effectively and strategically within practical and commercial contexts in the field of professional legal practice;

7. evaluate and critique methodologies and, where appropriate, propose new hypotheses.

**Skills, qualities and attributes**
By the end of the course you should be able to:

- perform the skills and tasks required to advance professional legal transactions by planning, researching and applying knowledge of the law and legal practice;
- determine a client's objectives and demonstrate self-direction and creativity in planning complex transactions and achieving objectives and an awareness of the financial, commercial and personal priorities and constraints to be taken into account;
- communicate conclusions clearly to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- analyse the costs, benefits and risks involved in transactions or courses of action;
- reflect on knowledge and understanding to develop skills through continued learning and practice.

8. **Teaching and learning methods**

When you enrol on the course you will be given an Ipad (or equivalent), and this will be a key piece of equipment for your teaching and learning experience.

For the first stage of the course (Stage 1) the teaching and learning of the Core Practice Areas (CPAs) will take place in workshops of two hours duration that are specifically designed to simulate the experience of the professional workplace. You will prepare for these workshops by undertaking some directed reading and engaging with vodcasts (interactive recordings in a range of multi-media format) or attending live lectures. Your learning experience will be dynamic and interactive and will involve practising many of the professional skills elements of the course at the same time as you develop and acquire the necessary knowledge and understanding of the areas of law and practice. Typically, a workshop may involve you watching video clips, taking client instructions, carrying out “live” research using your Ipad and practising writing, drafting and other professional skills.

Alongside the practise of professional legal skills within the workshops you will be provided with bespoke skills sessions that will support you in learning and developing the necessary skills and give you the opportunities to practice them.

In the second stage of the course (Stage 2), you will study three elective subjects and carry out the majority of the work for the Dissertation or Professional Legal Practice module. The electives will also be taught through a combination of vodcasts, live lectures and workshops of one hour duration. Throughout your study of the elective subjects you will continue to practise and develop your professional legal skills.
You will be provided with an introduction to the Dissertation or Professional Legal Practice module, together with vodcasts on research techniques and methodologies, and guidance and supervision by an allocated tutor.

9. **Assessment methods**

The Course is assessed at the level of a Masters award, but the compulsory skills, Professional Conduct & Regulation, Solicitors’ Accounts and Wills & Administration are assessed at level 6 (the level of the final year of an undergraduate degree).

The CPA and Elective assessments are assessed by way of supervised assessments and are set in the context of legal transactions in order to allow you to demonstrate the depth, realism and coverage required for a vocational course at this level.

Skills are assessed in the first stage of the course and separately from the CPAs. The assessments involve the practice of the skill and reflect the nature of the particular skill.

As required by the SRA you will also have separate supervised assessments in Professional Conduct & Regulation, Solicitors’ Accounts, and Wills & Administration.

You will be given the opportunity to practice for all assessments through the programme of formative assessment and feedback included within the course. Formative assessment will include mock assessments, review and feedback on written work, and online consolidation and self-assessment activities.

The dissertation module will be assessed by way of a research based written assignment of 7,500 words. Students may choose the topic of research which should be informed by an aspect of law and legal practice. The chosen title will be subject to approval by the Course Leader.

As an alternative to the dissertation, you may undertake a Professional Legal Practice module which will be assessed by way of a project of 5,000 words informed by the teaching and learning that has taken place within the workshops for the module.

The award is graded, so that you may be awarded a Pass, Commendation or Distinction.

10. **Course structure and curriculum**

The curriculum and structure of the course are partially prescribed by the SRA, as the course’s external validating body.

You will study the course over one academic year that is divided into two stages. Stage 1 runs from September to February and includes the teaching and assessment of the three CPAs, compulsory skills, Wills and Administration of Estates, Solicitors Accounts and Professional Conduct and
Stage 2 runs from February to June and includes the teaching and assessment of the three Vocational Electives.

The course is structured to offer the option of morning or afternoon teaching sessions so that you have the opportunity to “earn and learn”, carry out relevant work experience or undertake work in the Law School’s Legal Clinic.

The course is carefully structured to ensure that you have a manageable and achievable workload, and specifically incorporates discrete periods for consolidation of learning and for revision. The course is also designed to ensure that in weeks where you are expected to undertake independent learning sessions these are instead of and not in addition to the normal taught sessions, so that your workload is unaffected.

Stage 1

The course begins with a short foundation programme in Professional Conduct and Regulation, Research, Business Accounts and Taxation together with an introduction to the Dissertation and Professional Legal Practice modules. This is immediately followed by the delivery of the CPAs.

Teaching and learning within the CPAs will build on knowledge and skills that you have acquired during your undergraduate academic legal studies, and will integrate the LPC skills and the pervasive topics introduced in the foundation programme to ensure that you are continually practising and developing your professional legal knowledge and skills.

All Stage 1 modules are assessed at the end of the relevant teaching block. During Stage 1, you will elect whether you wish to undertake the Professional Legal Practice module or Dissertation module, and supervision and deadlines are in place to support your work planning for this module.

Stage 2

During this stage you will study a total of three Vocational Electives to be chosen from the list of Elective modules available. The course and curriculum are designed to ensure a progressive approach to the acquisition of both knowledge and skills. There is an increased emphasis, in particular, on the development of independent research skills both within the teaching and learning of your chosen Electives and in your studies for the Dissertation or Professional Legal Practice module.

The Elective modules will be assessed at the end of the teaching block, and you will be expected to submit the assessment for the Dissertation or Professional Legal Practice module at the end of Stage 2 teaching if you wish to graduate with the full LLM award at the final examination board in July. If you are unable to complete the assessment within this period you will have further opportunities to submit but will not be eligible for an award until you have either completed this assessment or elected not to do so.
If you elect not to complete the assessment for the Dissertation or Professional Legal Practice module you will be eligible for the alternative award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice. If no election is made, but you fail to complete the assessment within 9 months of the end of your course you will automatically be given the alternative award of a Postgraduate Diploma. The end of the course will be determined in relation to the date of the final examination board in July.

All students who have successfully completed the LPC Stage 1 and Stage 2 modules will receive the transcript that is required by the SRA to allow progression to the next stage of your legal training.

The CPA and Elective modules are delivered and assessed at the same level, but have different credit values to reflect the difference in learning hours dedicated to the CPAs and Electives respectively, as required by the SRA. The Skills, Professional Conduct & Regulation, Solicitors’ Accounts, and Wills & Administration are delivered and assessed at level 6 (equivalent to the final year of undergraduate study). This is to reflect the fact that teaching and learning of these modules is delivered over a shorter teaching block and that it cannot be assumed that all students have had previous practice in all of the Skills. However, Skills and identification and practise of issues relating to Professional Conduct & Regulation are integrated within the teaching and learning of the CPAs and the Electives and it is expected that students will, therefore, continue to develop Skills and their learning and practise in Professional Conduct & Regulation beyond the level achieved at the point of assessment in Stage 1 of the course.

The allocation of credit points is set out in the table below. The total number of credits for the LLM award is 180, and complies with the notional learning hours of study prescribed by the SRA.

The completed LLM requires the attainment of 180 credit points at level 7 (Masters level) but an alternative award of a Postgraduate Diploma upon completion of 140 credits can be made if students elect not to complete the assessment for the Dissertation or Law in Practice module.

Students who have been awarded the Graduate Diploma in Law will either be awarded the LLM in Legal Practice upon completion of all modules including the Dissertation or Professional Legal Practice module or the Graduate LLB and a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice if they elect not to complete this additional module.

Students who elect not to complete the Dissertation or Professional Legal Practice module will have the option, upon payment of a further fee, to enrol on the LLM Legal Practice (DL) which is a course that allows you to top-up the Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice to an LLM award at a later date by distance learning.
The SRA envisages that some students may choose only to complete Stage 1 of the course, and may either decide to complete Stage 2 at a later date or with another LPC provider. Students electing this route will be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education provided they have successfully completed modules totalling 60 credits from Stage 1, and will be provided with a transcript for SRA purposes.

There will also be a possibility of a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education for students who successfully complete 120 credits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Law &amp; Practice (including Taxation and Business Accounts)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil and Criminal Litigation</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Law</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective one</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective two</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective three</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wills &amp; Administration of Estates</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Conduct and Regulation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitors Accounts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing &amp; Advising</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Total credits</strong></td>
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<td><strong>140</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research dissertation/Law in Practice</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total credits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>180</strong></td>
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### 11. Admission to the course

#### General criteria

The principal criteria for admission are:

- A Qualifying Law Degree (minimum 2:2); or GDL/CPE with an undergraduate degree (normally a good honours degree); or Institution of Legal Executives qualification
- Demonstration of a commitment to a career in the law

Applicants would be expected to demonstrate their commitment to a legal career in their personal statement, and relevant work experience and/or Accredited Prior Learning would be relevant indicators.

#### Accreditation of Prior Learning

Students who have completed Stage 1 of a Legal Practice Course at another
institutions will be considered for admission to Stage 2 on production of a transcript indicating satisfactory completion of all Stage 1 modules.

**International students**

The same admission requirements apply to international students plus, where appropriate a 6.5 IELTS or its equivalent.

12. **Support for learning**

You will participate in an introductory programme designed to facilitate initial orientation, and induction to the course, familiarisation with relevant sources of both academic and pastoral support and awareness of University support services.

A Course Handbook is made available electronically via the Course Learning Room on the Nottingham Trent University Online Workspace (NOW). The Course Handbook details relevant staff contacts, syllabus and assessment details, and teaching and learning methods.

Your learning will be supported through the various preparatory and teaching materials made available to you in the form of directed reading, lecture materials, vodcasts, and workshop materials.

All course information and materials, including library resources can be accessed electronically on NOW, and NOW is also used to provide updates relating to both the Course and developments in the law.

Lectures are recorded in various media to allow you to access and view or listen to these remotely.

Workshops provide ongoing face to face feedback from academic tutors during the course of study. Academic and pastoral support is provided by subject tutors, a dedicated personal tutor, and the Course Leaders.

The personal tutor monitors and reviews both pastoral welfare and academic performance through termly meetings, and student progress reports. An open door policy is in place to encourage you to contact your personal tutor where support is required.

There are many opportunities for you to undertake practice assessments and to receive feedback in order to improve future performance.

The University provides a range of student support services including Financial Support Services, Accommodation, Counselling, Disability Support, International Student Support, Mature Student Support, Language Support, Chaplains and Religious/Cultural Advisers and access to affiliated health centres. Further details can be found via the University website.

13. **Graduate destinations / employability**

The course is specifically designed to satisfy the requirements of the SRA for the vocational stage of training for solicitors, but as an LLM it will also
provide you with advanced knowledge and skills that will be beneficial to a range of careers at graduate and post-graduate level.

The course has its own specialist careers service and has dedicated links to the University’s extensive legal careers service. All of the teaching staff are qualified lawyers who are able to offer personal advice. A comprehensive careers programme has been developed to provide advice on employment opportunities, application and interview technique. Individual interviews with careers advisors are also available to students. There are opportunities to participate in a mentoring scheme between students and trainee solicitors with local law firms. The Law School has excellent links with practising lawyers in both branches of the legal profession, and benefits greatly from the relationships with the profession that it has developed over many years in offering professional legal training.

NLS offers a wide range of pro bono activities that are open to all students within the Law School. These include voluntary opportunities with Streetlaw, NACRO, the Family Welfare Association, Citizens Advice Bureau and Victim Support. The Law School also has its own Legal Advice Clinic that provides further volunteering opportunities.

14. Course standards and quality

A Course Standards and Quality Report (CSQR) is submitted annually to the Course Committee. The latter comprises both staff and student representatives. In addition a separate, more extensive, Annual Report is submitted to the SRA. Together these reports provide information and data relating to the on-going monitoring and review of both module and course feedback from students together with external examiner reports, module leader reports and admission and progression statistics in order to identify and promote good practice and to inform relevant action points.

- The CSQR is submitted for consideration and approval to the School Academic Standards and Quality Committee and is used to inform Law School strategy and policy.

- There is on-going consultation with students regarding module and course developments through regular Course Committees. Student feedback is obtained through questionnaires at the end of each Stage of the course.

- Regular review meetings take place for each module to ensure that teaching and assessment materials and methods remain up to date and relevant to the learning outcomes of the Course.

- External examiners are regularly consulted regarding intended Course developments and full feedback is provided to them in respect of any recommendations contained in their annual reports.

- The Course is validated by the SRA.
15. **Assessment regulations**  
This course is subject to the University’s Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

Derogations from the University’s Common Assessment Regulations are set out in the Assessment Regulations for the Course.

The main areas for divergence are:

- There are no provisions for compensation;
- Some minor modifications of the University “fit to sit” policy have been made;
- There has been some adaptation of the policy for the Notification of Exceptional Circumstances;
- There is a separate process for deferral of assessments

16. **Additional Information**  
Collaborative partner(s): Kaplan Law School  
Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements: Yes  
Course recognised by: Solicitors’ Regulation Authority  
Date implemented: September 2014