

## Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

<b>Basic Course Information</b>		
1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	Nottingham Law School/City
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	Graduate Diploma in Law Distance Learning
4.	Normal Duration:	2 years
5.	UCAS Code:	N/A

<b>6. Overview and general educational aims of the course</b>
<p>The Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) is a conversion course designed for any non-law graduate who intends to become a solicitor or barrister in the UK. It covers the seven core legal subjects of an undergraduate law degree (LLB) and has Qualifying Law Degree Status enabling you to progress to study the Legal Practice Course (LPC) for intending solicitors, or the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) for intending barristers.</p> <p>The Course can be seen as a fast-track version of the undergraduate law degree providing you with an opportunity to study law modules that are highly relevant to the modern world. You will acquire highly valued transferable legal skills that will build upon your graduate skills to develop and enhance your analytical, evaluative, reasoning, communication and problem-solving abilities. The Course provides the academic stage of legal training in a context that is practical and provides a link to the vocational stage of training, but also develops skills that are more generally attractive to a wide range of employers both within and outside the legal profession.</p> <p>You will also be expected to undertake relevant work experience during the Course of your studies and to reflect on how this experience has affected your future career development.</p> <p>The Course is regulated and approved by both the Solicitors Regulatory Authority and the Bar Standards Board.</p> <p>Special features of the Course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preparation for the professional working environment;</li><li>• Interactive and student-centred learning that emphasises the application of law and legal skills in realistic contexts;</li><li>• High pass rates;</li><li>• Access to a wide range of Law School and University support services, including excellent careers advice provision;</li><li>• Opportunities to progress your legal studies and expand international awareness through NLS Summer Schools based in European cities;</li><li>• Excellent employability (firms are very attracted to GDL students because of their prior learning, commitment and relevant legal knowledge and skills).</li></ul> <p>The Course has consistently been able to attract high calibre students from diverse career backgrounds who are highly motivated and intellectually curious. This, together with the tutor group structure, provides a</p>

stimulating and challenging learning environment, and encourages an atmosphere of peer support and collaboration.

The aims of the Course are:

1. To provide an academically rigorous programme of legal education designed to prepare the non-law graduate for entry onto the Vocational Stage of training.
2. To provide a sound foundation upon which the non-law graduate can develop the legal knowledge and competencies necessary for a career in legal practice.

The aims encompass a number of elements including knowledge, research, analysis, problem solving, communication, literacy, autonomous and lifelong learning and relevant work/work-like experience.

**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) demonstrate awareness and understanding of the compulsory areas of law represented by the seven core legal subjects, the English Legal System, and its inter-relationship with the Law of the European Union;
- 2) demonstrate an in-depth, coherent and detailed knowledge of selected topics, including the topic covered in the study of the additional area of law;
- 3) demonstrate the ability to apply legal knowledge to factual situations including application of relevant aspects of the legal system and processes;
- 4) demonstrate the ability to evaluate and critically assess the law, including an awareness of the law's concepts, context and its underlying policy.

**Skills, qualities and attributes**

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

- 5) demonstrate the ability to process large quantities of information rapidly and apply that information in solving individual problems. This includes the ability to: distil legal materials that are written in a technical and complex language; interpret facts and law (including case law and statute); apply the law to factual situations; and synthesise information and legal concepts;
- 6) demonstrate the ability to approach a problem logically, to analyse complex factual situations and evaluate a range of solutions. This includes the ability to: analyse facts and law (such as the identification of relevant, irrelevant and missing information and the framing questions for other lines of enquiry); make decisions in a complex and unpredictable context, make a reasoned choice between alternative

solutions and identify and evaluate a range of options; problem solve and offer predictive judgement or advice; 3)

- 7) demonstrate the ability to conduct independent legal research using a range of printed and electronic primary and secondary sources and literature including research of, and commentary upon, scholarly reviews and research articles and to extract essential information from those sources. This includes the ability to: extend directed study, initiate autonomous study, and plan and produce a research trail; 4)
- 8) demonstrate the capacity to transfer and apply knowledge and skills learned in one context to another. This includes the capacity to: analyse case law, interpret statutory wording, , identify, synthesise and apply the relevance of related subject topics and/or topics or processes from other linked subject areas;
- 9) demonstrate the capacity to assess your own and others' arguments. This includes the capacity to: make a critical judgement of the merits of particular arguments; assess the strengths and weaknesses of a position and construct arguments from fact and law to support different sides of a case;
- 10) assume responsibility for the continuing development of your independent learning. This includes the ability to: plan, undertake and manage study and tasks independently and to adapt to new or revised information, and to manage time and paper resources effectively;
- 11) reflect on the skills and professional attributes developed from the work experience undertaken as part of the research project module or Law in Practice and assess the impact such work experience has on your future career development.

## **8. Learning and teaching methods**

All modules are delivered through bespoke guidance materials that are designed to enable you to develop relevant knowledge and understanding, and act as a prompt to investigate relevant primary sources and to identify areas requiring further independent reading and research. In addition, there will usually be a whole group session at each study weekend that may take the form of a lecture to provide you with an overview of topics or be used for other forms of academic support such as assessment feedback or revision.

You will participate in four intensive study weekends where the main focus will be upon seminar work that is linked to the guidance texts and directed reading. These serve to clarify and confirm relevant knowledge and understanding and to enable key intellectual and professional skills to be practised and developed.

You will be supported in the development of your learning through practice assessments in each foundation module. These are designed to develop accuracy of knowledge and understanding, and the relevant skills required to meet the learning outcomes of the Course. Tutor feedback on all practice assessments enables you to target specific areas of substantive knowledge, understanding and relevant skills requiring improvement. Seminars provide you with an opportunity to test your knowledge and understanding and to develop your skills through student focussed debate

and discussion, problem-solving, reasoned application of the relevant law, and analysis, synthesis and evaluation of your own reading. Seminars require independent planning, research and reflection and facilitate the development of your oral communication skills. Tutor feedback provided in seminars provides a platform for your continued progress and improvement.

A range of e-learning activities are integrated within the programme of study and are designed to encourage interaction with learning and to provide opportunities to confirm understanding.

As the Course progresses, you are expected to demonstrate greater independence in your planning, preparation, research and reflection, to exhibit increased autonomy in your learning, and develop the ability to self-assess performance and respond incrementally to feedback provided. This is reflected in the design of the relevant seminar and assessment materials, culminating in the completion of an independent research project in an additional area of law.

#### **9. Assessment methods**

Assessments are designed to measure your achievement of the learning outcomes. Each assessment task is provided with clear assessment criteria that are consistent with both course and module aims and outcomes.

The Course is assessed through a combination of coursework activity that is scheduled at different stages of the course, and exams that take place at the end of each year of study. Assessments are scheduled to ensure an even workload is achievable, and at stages in the Course that allow you sufficient time to have accomplished the appropriate level of skills and learning to attempt the relevant assessment.

English Legal Method is scheduled at an early stage in the Course to meet regulatory requirements and is assessed at a lower level than the core subjects and research project that are assessed later in the Course.

There is a formative (practice) assessment in each foundation module. The formative assessments provide an opportunity to practise, clarify and confirm understanding, and develop key intellectual and professional skills, as well as allowing you to receive and reflect upon relevant tutor feedback.

The GDL is assessed at Level 6 (the same level as a final year undergraduate law course) with the exception of English Legal Method which is assessed at Level 5 (equivalent to a second-year undergraduate).

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

#### **10. Course structure and curriculum**

The course and structure are partially prescribed by the professional regulatory bodies, which require that seven core subjects, English Legal Method, and an additional area of law are included and assessed. However, the Course has been tailored to ensure that it is relevant to students who are interested in pursuing careers as solicitors or barristers, and to ensure that issues of student workload are taken into account.

All modules are delivered and assessed at the same level (Level 6), other English Legal Method (which is at Level 5).

The allocation of credit points is set out in the table below. The total number of credits for the GDL is 180. Each credit point represents 10 hours of student study time.

<b>Legal Subject</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Contract Law	20
Tort	20
Land Law	20
Trusts Law	20
Constitutional and Administrative Law	20
Criminal Law	20
European Union Law	20
English Legal Method	10
Research Project in an additional area of law and synoptic assessment <b>OR</b> Law in Practice	30

The curriculum is delivered in an integrated way to ensure that there is development of learning that reflects the graduate nature of the student cohort, and that transfer of learning takes place across subjects. In particular, the study of Constitutional and Administrative Law and European Union Law provide an opportunity to consider law with a wider international and political awareness, and human rights issues are raised pervasively in different subject areas.

Learning and practice of skills including case analysis and statutory interpretation, problem-solving, research and oral presentation, are also integrated into all subjects to allow progressive development and reinforcement of these skills.

The Course structure incorporates guidance sessions for assessment activities taking place during the Course, assessment feedback sessions to encourage you to engage with and learn from feedback, and revision guidance prior to the end of year exams.

**11. Admission to the course  
Entry requirements.**

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

<b>12. Support for learning</b>
<p>All students 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.</p> <p>Students are given access to a Student Handbook detailing relevant staff contacts, syllabus and assessment details, and teaching and learning methods. Learning materials in the form of guidance texts, support your learning and encourage engagement with learning materials. Study schedules are provided at the beginning of each year of study: these include all seminar materials and directed reading and allow you to plan your study time effectively.</p> <p>All course information and materials, including library resources, are provided electronically on the Nottingham Trent University Online Workspace (NOW), and this is also used to provide regular updates relating to both the Course and developments in the law.</p> <p>Seminars provide on-going face-to-face feedback from academic tutors during the course of study. With the permission of students, seminars are recorded and made available on the NOW to allow consolidation of learning outside of the study weekends and a backup in the event of unavoidable absence. Academic support is provided by subject tutors, and pastoral support by the Course Leaders.</p>
<b>13. Graduate destinations/employability</b>
<p>The GDL has its own specialist careers service and has dedicated links to the University's extensive legal careers service. A number of the teaching staff are also 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. 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.</p> <p>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 Centre that provides further volunteering opportunities. Students are encouraged and supported in seeking voluntary opportunities in locations near their home.</p>
<b>14. Course standards and quality</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An Interim Course Report and the Course Development Plan are submitted annually to the Course Committee. The latter comprises both staff and student representatives. In addition, an Annual Report is submitted to the regulator(s). Together, these reports provide information and data relating to the on-going monitoring and</li></ul>

<p>review of both module and feedback from students together with external examiner reports, module leader reports and admissions and progression statistics in order to identify and promote good practice and to inform relevant action points.</p> <p>The Interim Course Report and the Course Development Plan are submitted for consideration and approval to the School Academic Standards and Quality Committee and is used to inform Law School strategy and policy.</p> <p>The University requires all courses to carry out a Periodic Course Review every three years, as the mechanism by which course teams reflect on the validity, currency, and the academic quality of the provision. It is a face-to-face discussion with staff, external stakeholders (such as placement providers, employers and external examiners) and current students. The outcome of the review is a three-year Course Development Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is on-going consultation with students regarding module and course developments at each study weekend and through Course Committees. Student feedback is also obtained through an end of year questionnaire.</li> <li>• Regular review meetings take place to ensure that teaching and assessment materials and methods remain up to date and relevant to the learning outcomes of the Course.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The Course is accredited by both the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board with Qualifying Law Degree status.</li> </ul>								
<p>15. <b>Assessment regulations</b> 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:</p>								
<p>The assessment regulations are made available in the Student Handbook at the beginning of the Course.</p>								
<p>16. <b>Additional information</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Collaborative partner(s):</td> <td><b>None</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements:</td> <td><b>Law</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course recognised by:</td> <td><b>Solicitors Regulation Authority and Bar Standard Board</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date this course specification approved:</td> <td><b>February 2018</b></td> </tr> </table>	Collaborative partner(s):	<b>None</b>	Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements:	<b>Law</b>	Course recognised by:	<b>Solicitors Regulation Authority and Bar Standard Board</b>	Date this course specification approved:	<b>February 2018</b>
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<p>Any additional information: Applications for the Distance Learning course should be made directly to the University. Information and contact details can be accessed at <a href="http://www.ntu.ac.uk/nls">www.ntu.ac.uk/nls</a></p> <p>It is a Course requirement that students have access to the internet and are IT literate.</p>								