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course factfile

Legal Practice Course 2010-2012

Part Time Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice

Introduction

Liverpool John Moores University is once again offering its two year, part time Legal Practice Course from September 2010, leading to the potential award of the LJMU Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice.

Your questions answered...

1.0 What is the Legal Practice Course?

The Legal Practice Course has run since 1992 and the format of the course has been regularly reviewed by The Law Society, and more recently by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority. The LPC course will follow the format outlined below from September 2010. It is the qualifying, vocational course for all Solicitors.

The LPC has been designed to meet the requirements and needs of the Legal Profession of the Twenty First Century. The LPC aims to produce a highly skilled, commercially aware and effective Trainee Solicitor, who is prepared for the rigours and demands of a Training Contract.

2.0 Which subjects are studied on the course?

The course consists of two stages:

Stage 1 and Stage 2.

To complete the Legal Practice Course a student must complete both Stage 1 and Stage 2.

Stage 1

Consists of compulsory subjects made up of:

Core practice areas, Course Skills, Professional Conduct and Regulation Wills and Administration of Estates Taxation.

The Core practice areas are Business Law and Practice, Litigation (Civil and Criminal) and Property Law and Practice. The Course Skills are:

Advocacy
Drafting
Interviewing and Advising
Practical Legal Research
Writing

Stage 2

Students must pass examinations in three vocational elective subjects. At LJMU we offer a choice of eight subjects. One/two elective(s) is studied in Year 1 and one/two in Year 2.

2.1 Year 1

Core Practice Areas: Business Law and Practice (Sept to February)
Course Skills: Practical Legal research, Drafting, Interviewing & Advising Professional Conduct & Regulation, Taxation and Wills and administration of Estates

Vocational Elective Subjects (March to

June)

One or two elective(s) from a choice of eight subjects:

- Advanced Criminal Litigation
- Advanced Personal Injury
- Client in the Community
- Commercial Property
- Employment law
- Family Law
- General Commercial law
- Private Client

2.2 Year 2

Core Practice Areas: (September to February)

- Property Law and Practice Litigation (Civil and Criminal)

Course Skills:

Writing

Advocacy

Professional Conduct and Regulation (including Solicitors' Accounts)

One or two vocational electives from a choice of eight subjects as outlined below (March to June):

- Advanced Personal Injury
- Advanced Criminal Litigation
- Client in the Community
- Commercial Property
- Employment Law
- Family Law
- General Commercial Law
- Private Client

3.0 Why part time?

Both the University and this School have a long tradition and strong commitment to part time courses. The School also runs a successful and thriving part time law degree. We believe that part time courses fill a void in the current provision, by offering a way into the profession for mature entrants, with existing family and work commitments, who would otherwise

be unable to afford to continue their legal training. We are fully committed to part time provision and believe that our experience in this area allows us to cater fully and sympathetically for part time students. We also believe that we understand their needs and have effective systems in place to provide good support mechanisms. We are convinced that there are substantial benefits to be gained from combining a part time course with office experience, which enables theory and practice to be reflected on and reinforced. But beware of considering the LPC as a traditional part-time course. It is very demanding and the workload is high with a focus on student centred learning. The course is at postgraduate level and therefore students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and are expected to attend sessions fully prepared.

4.0 Who studies the LPC part time?

Some of our LPC students combine a part time LPC with a part time training contract. Others are Legal Executives or Magistrates Courts Clerks with years of experience and who are not required to undertake a training contract at all. Yet another group of students find that a part time LPC enables them to work and spread the cost of the LPC over two years. The age, background, life and work experience of our students varies considerably and we believe that this diversity adds a richness and interest to our LPC and gives it a particular "flavour" of its own. We encourage the sharing of this experience and these skills and believe that students and staff all benefit from the variety.

5.0 When does the course begin?

The course begins in the week commencing 6 September 2010 and runs over two academic years of approximately 35 weeks each, ending in **June 2012**. The Course does not follow the standard University calendar and runs from the beginning of September until

June with only two weeks vacation at Christmas and two weeks vacation at Easter/Spring Break. You will be expected to attend 2/3 compulsory induction days in the first week. These usually take place between 10am and 5pm.

6.0 Where is the course taught?

The course is based in a new modular facility within the grounds of the John Foster Building, 98 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5UZ.

7.0 When do I have to attend?

7.1 Days of attendance

The course runs over two evenings each week (Tuesdays and Wednesdays).

7.2 Times of attendance

Classes begin at 5.45pm for evening sessions and run until 9.00pm. Afternoon sessions begin at 1.30pm and run until 4.45pm.

7.3 Compulsory Attendance

LJMU requires that attendance at the small group sessions on the Course is compulsory and attendance is strictly monitored. The LPC Assessment Regulations make provision to require a student to leave the course in the event of unsatisfactory attendance.

7.4 Breaks

This allows for a short break of about fifteen minutes in each 3 hour teaching block.

7.5 Class contact

Students attend for 6 hours class contact each week.

7.6 Time commitment

We estimate that as well as attendance at programmed sessions, preparation will require at least 10 to 15 hours per week.

8.0 Who teaches the course?

Staff are a mixture of full and part time members of the academic staff of the School. They are qualified practitioners and run the course with support and assistance from local practitioners and occasional guest speakers.

The teaching staff are approachable, enthusiastic and committed to part time provision. Staff strive to be available to give help, give feedback and support. All teaching staff maintain their links with the legal profession in a number of ways including consultancies and placements, sitting on local law society committees, writing for the legal periodicals etc. They also regularly update their knowledge by attending and/or delivering CPD courses and conferences. A number of the part time staff remain in practice on a part-time basis.

9.0 What is it like to be a student on the LPC at LJMU?

We encourage students to develop a learning atmosphere, which is friendly, supportive and non-competitive. Students are actively encouraged at a very early stage in the course to form study groups and support networks. We circulate contact details and suggest students team up with other students in their area. We also operate a student mentor system. A small group of existing second year students act as mentors to new first year students. They attend induction sessions and are available at personal tutor meetings to share experience of coping with the demands of the course and to offer support. It also encourages a greater degree of contact between the first and second year students. We have found this co-operative and supportive approach most beneficial for students as it does much to relieve the feelings of isolation which can develop amongst part time students. Teamwork is an important part of the LPC ethos here at LJMU, both between students and between students and staff. The Course Leader and LPC teaching

team operate an “open door” policy and students are supported by a Pastoral and Careers Tutor and Personal Tutors. Help and guidance are at hand and student care and welfare is a high priority. We encourage students to approach us with concerns at an early stage and welcome feedback on all aspects of the course so that we continue to develop and improve the course.

10.0 How is the course taught?

Much of the course is taught through small group (maximum group size 20) skills-based teaching, supplemented with large group sessions, directed reading and self-study exercises and preparation. Considerable emphasis is placed on practice with the student acquiring a range of essential Lawyers’ Skills by carrying out realistic transaction based tasks. Students are required to take part in role-plays, simulations, case studies and electronically recorded exercises and assessments.

11.0 What is the library provision?

11.1 The Learning Resource Centre

LPC students use the Aldham Robarts Learning Resource Centre (LRC) which is in nearby Maryland Street. It is one of the most up to date library facilities in Europe. It provides excellent and comfortable study accommodation, photocopiers, audio and video booths, information, computing and multimedia facilities.

11.2 Term Time opening

Monday to Thursday
8.45am to 9pm (with full support services)
9pm to 11pm (reference only basis) IT facilities are available on a 24-hour basis.
Friday: 9.30am to 9.00pm (with full support services) IT facilities are available on a 24-hour basis.
Weekends: 10.00am to 4.00pm (with full support services) IT facilities are available on a 24-hour basis with closure on

Saturday and Sundays between 4am and 8am to allow for essential maintenance.

11.3 Vacation time opening

The LRC will be closed for two weeks in December. There will be a reduced service during the summer vacation and the spring break. Full details will be published online.

The extended opening hours in the evenings and at weekends are particularly designed to serve the needs of part time students. The LRC combines excellent IT and computer provision with many legal sources available in electronic format. More traditional academic and professional book stock, journals and law reports are also available. Remote access to electronic sources is available from any PC.

12. How is the course assessed?

12.1 Assessment of the Compulsory and Vocational Elective Subjects

Assessment of both Stage 1 and Stage 2 subjects is by supervised assessments. In both Year 1 and Year 2, Stage 1 subjects take place in February/March and Stage 2 examinations in June.

12.2 Open Book examinations

All examinations (except Solicitors’ Accounts) are open book with designated materials and manuals being permitted in examinations.

12.3 Course Skills Assessment

Course Skills are separately assessed in skills exercises throughout the course. In the case of the oral skills of interviewing and advocacy, these assessments are recorded. We provide plenty of opportunity for students to practice these oral skills on DVD before the assessment.

13.0 What are the three core practice areas all about?

- Property Law and Practice
- Business Law and Practice
- Litigation (Civil and Criminal)

13.1 Property Law and Practice

Property Law and Practice covers the sale and purchase of residential and commercial property, both leasehold and freehold, registered and unregistered. The Property Law and Practice course deals in a transactional way with the substantive law, process and procedure, using case studies both in large and small group sessions. The final assessment comprises 1 supervised assessment of a minimum of 3 hours duration which may be in two parts.

13.2 Business Law and Practice

Business Law and Practice covers the setting up and running of partnerships and limited companies. It incorporates a wide range of topics, including company documentation, conduct of meetings, share capital, officers of the company, the impact of European Union Law on businesses, agency, winding up, dissolution and insolvency and Business Accounts. It employs the skills of problem solving, fact analysis, writing and drafting and negotiation. The final assessment comprises 1 supervised assessment of a minimum of 3 hours duration. The assessment may be in two parts.

13.3 Litigation

The Litigation course includes both Civil and Criminal Litigation. Litigation is assessed by way of a supervised assessment of a minimum duration of three hours and is in two parts, Civil Litigation and Criminal Litigation. There is a weighting in favour of Civil Litigation with 60% of the final mark for litigation coming from Civil and 40% from Criminal Litigation.

13.3.1 Civil Litigation

The Civil Litigation Course is taught in a transactional way. It includes pre-action considerations, including taking instructions, pre-action protocols, interviewing witnesses, fact investigation and evidence gathering. It continues with formally starting a case and following it through to trial including consideration of the application of the Civil Procedure Rules and examination of the main procedural steps in a civil case. The Civil Litigation course is based around two major case studies, one a personal injury case and the other a commercial dispute.

13.3.2 Criminal Litigation

The Criminal Litigation Course deals with funding, police powers, advising the client in the police station, taking instructions and identification issues. It also covers the initial hearing, bail issues, mode of trial and committal, preparation for trial, sentencing and appeals. Criminal evidence is covered including confessions, unfairly obtained evidence, the right to silence, procedural aspects and evidence of disposition and character, hearsay, corroboration and identification issues. The Criminal Litigation course is based around two major case studies, one a theft matter and the other an assault case. Criminal Litigation is assessed as part of the overall subject of litigation as outlined in 13.3.

14.0 Which vocational elective subjects are available?

You are able to choose three Vocational Electives from the following range, one in Year 1 and two in Year 2:

- Advanced Personal Injury
- Advanced Criminal Litigation
- Client in the Community
- Commercial Property
- Employment Law
- Family Law

- General Commercial Law
- Private Client

15.0 What do students think about the course?

When we asked some of our past graduates what they thought about the course, this is what they said:

“It is a full time course being studied part time,...although I found it hard, I also found it very rewarding and I was able to make friends with a number of people in my group who are still friends of mine now the course has finished...it should also be emphasised that the course is a much more practically oriented one than the degree or ILEX course but they should benefit from a good team...from whom we all took encouragement.”

“The LPC is the most demanding course I have ever undertaken. However, with excellent tutors who are friendly and approachable together with the great friends who I have met on the course and not to mention an understanding wife, I survived ...at LJMU I was never a number I was always a person and this helped greatly...there was no greater feeling than standing on the rostrum on graduation day...”

“My advice to anyone who is wondering how to ‘survive’ the LPC is to be self-disciplined from the very beginning of the course...there is a great deal of work to get through (and stressful times are ahead) but by tackling it methodically and consistently one can survive the two years...just.”

“I think my initial impression was the volume of work, not only the reams of paperwork involved and the several rain forests we took home with us on a weekly basis, but also the amount of necessary preparation for the following weeks small group session...I feel the key to the course is certainly making sure that you are well organised, keeping on top of the work and ensuring that you do the necessary preparation for the small group sessions each week. If you fail to do that, the only person you are fooling is

yourself, because you do not obtain the full benefit from the session...it requires 100% commitment and really is tantamount to putting your life on hold for a 2 year period.”

16.0 How much does it cost?

The fees for 2010 will be set shortly and will be available by request. They can be paid by instalments throughout the two academic years. The fee includes The Law Society registration fee and the course materials and LPC Manuals. Students will also be required to pay a fee to become student members of the Solicitors Regulatory Authority prior to enrolling on the course (see paragraph 18.0).

17.0 How many places are there?

There are 72 places available each year.

18.0 What are the entry requirements?

In order to enrol on this course you must have satisfied the Solicitors Regulatory Authority enrolment requirements for attending the Legal Practice Course. This means you must have obtained a letter from the Solicitors Regulatory Authority confirming that you have completed the Academic Stage of Training and enrolled as a Student Member of the SRA. This is a compulsory requirement. The final date for making your application for student membership is 1st August, or the earlier date of 1st April if there are issues to declare regarding character and suitability.

19.0 What are the admissions criteria?

The factors which are taken into account when making decisions on individual applications are:

- Academic merit, normally evidenced by the possession, actual or predicted of a qualifying law degree with at least a second class honours or an average of at least 50%, actual or predicted in the Common Professional Examination/Graduate Diploma in Law. In the case of applicants who

have taken or passed the examinations of the Institute of Legal Executives particular attention is given to academic references.

- The need to study in the area for strong personal reasons - evidence of successful attendance and completion of part time courses in the past.
- Evidence of motivation to be a Solicitor (significant evidence of which may be provided by, among other things, prior or current relevant work experience, and/or application for a training contract, but may be provided in other ways) as between applicants who are equally qualified in accordance with the first and fourth paragraphs above, LJMU may give preference to those who are or have been students of LJMU. In all cases the admissions process will comply with LJMU's equal opportunities policy, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation and disability.

20.0 When is the closing date for applications?

There is no closing date for applications for entry on to the Part-time Legal Practice Course – applications are welcome all year around.

No offers of a place on the course can be made before 1st February in the year of entry. Offers can be made subject to (inter alia) completion of a qualifying law degree, GDL or FILEX examination result which may be awaited.

21.0 Do you want to apply?

Having read this information, we very much hope that you are still interested in joining us at LJMU on the Part time Legal Practice Course. We are happy to supply additional information and to answer any queries or concerns you may have. We can also arrange for you to visit us and

meet staff and fellow LPC students, if you think this would be helpful. We look forward to receiving your application.

22.0 What if you aren't sure or want further advice?

If you require any further information, advice or guidance please contact any one of the following, who will be pleased to take your call and deal with your enquiry:

The LPC Administrators,
Julie Seddon tel: 0151 231 3952
email: j.e.seddon@ljmu.ac.uk and
Colin Meagher tel: 0151 231 3952
email: c.j.meagher@ljmu.ac.uk

Admissions Tutor, Caroline Chinn
tel: 0151 231 3981
email: c.chinn@ljmu.ac.uk

Postgraduate Admissions Team
Tel: 0151 231 3999 email:
BLWadmissions@ljmu.ac.uk

How to Apply

If you are interested and would like an application form please complete the form overleaf and return it to:

BLW Admissions Team

School of Law
Liverpool John Moores University
John Foster Building
98 Mount Pleasant
Liverpool L3 5UZ

Please send me an application form for the Part time Legal Practice Course:

Name:

Address:

Home Tel:

Work Tel: