

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	Cert HE Legal Studies (Level 4)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	N/A
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home School/other teaching departments	Birkbeck Law School
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	1 year September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	Law
Birkbeck Course Code	UEHLEGST
HECoS Code	100485 (law)
Start date of programme	Autumn 2019
Date of programme approval	Summer 2019
Date of last programme amendment approval	April 2019
Valid for academic entry year	2024-25
Programme Director	Dr Susy Menis
Date of last revision to document	16/04/2024

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

This is an open-access course (i.e. no formal qualifications are required), but all modules are taught at university level so students must be fluent in English reading, writing and speaking.

All applicants need to be aged over 18.

Course aims

The Certificate of Higher Education in Legal Studies provides you with an introduction to legal studies that is critical, interdisciplinary and blends theoretical and practical approaches. It is designed for students from a range of backgrounds and seeks to enable students to develop key skills and knowledge broadly applicable to the study of law and legal issues.

With a focus on developing academic, legal and transferable skills, the programme is aimed at transforming students to lifelong learners, to upgrade their credentials and enhance the diversity of their skills. It is suitable for those who wish to undertake a course of study which will prepare them for degree level, and for those who are interested in widening their horizons.

The Certificate of Higher Education in Legal Studies aims to:

1. Develop critical understanding of the English Legal System and the administration of justice.
2. Introduce a range of debates, principles, and values underpinning legal practice.
3. Explore the law in its cultural and socio-political context.
4. Identify, locate and appraise a range of legal and non-legal sources.
5. Develop sound academic, legal and transferable skills such as reading, writing, oral and presentation skills, as well as group work and information technology skills.

Key features:

- Students can self-enrol onto each of the four modules; the enrolment is open access, and modules can be completed across 1-2 years. Students completing the four modules will be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education.
- The programme differs from the LLB with Foundation year in content and aim. The Certificate programme is designed to introduce socio-legal (and critical legal) studies in general. It is aimed at a varied student population, including those who are interested in introductory legal studies with the potential for further study in law, but also those who may not necessarily wish to progress into a full law degree. The programme also targets those who may be interested in only taking single modules.
- All four modules are designed in such a way to allow students practical application of knowledge and skills through the examination of problem questions, case studies, and case scenarios; and the practice of skills through the creation of presentations, awareness-leaflets, and small research projects.
- Students study a range of legal topics such as the creation and development of legislation, the trial process including police powers, sentencing, and the protection of human rights and civil liberties. Students will also debate questions related to law and ethics such as ethical journalism, medical negligence, and ethics of the legal profession.
- Because the programme is enrolled on a modular basis, it is classified as part-time, although students can complete all four modules within one year.

Because the programme is run on a modular basis, students can start the programme at multiple points in the year (i.e. October, January or April) subject to sufficient enrolments.

Course structure

The Certificate in Higher Education in Legal Studies is designed to introduce students to a range of topics in the field and to build students' skills, knowledge and confidence in the subject.

Students take four compulsory modules:

- English Legal System
- The Administration of Justice
- Law, Society & Ethics
- Law in Context

Each module is taught over the course of one term, and classes primarily take place in the evening in three-hour slots (6-9pm). Attendance is normally once a week, except when taking more than one module at a time (e.g. module 3 and module 4, April start).

To allow flexibility, the 4th module (Law in Context) takes a blended learning approach, which incorporates both face-to-face and online learning. Students will have three classes across the eleven weeks but will spend the rest of the time engaging in online-discussions and independent study via the virtual learning environment (Moodle).

It is strongly recommended that students take no more than one module per term except for the summer term, where they will need to take two modules at a time if they wish to complete a Certificate in Higher Education within a single academic year (starting in October).

It is also strongly recommended that students take the module English Legal System first, followed by the module The Administration of Justice.

Modules' content and assessments are designed in a scaffolded way, in order to slowly but confidently build students substantive knowledge and skills. Students wishing to take modules as stand alone with no aim to complete a Certificate, will be supported in the same way as students taking the whole programme. This includes Saturday academic skills intensive workshops every term

Detailed Module Descriptions:

1. English Legal System:

In this course students explore the working of the English Legal System. By looking at the principles and values underpinning the common law, they will develop an understanding of the approaches taken to law making by Parliament, and its application and development by the judiciary. Students will not merely study these topics, but will learn how to apply their learning on problem case scenarios. By looking at a range of case law and legislations, the course builds the skills and knowledge necessary for developing cogent arguments and analysis. Students will explore and practice legal reasoning whilst developing transferable skills such as acquiring a good grasp in information technology (e.g. using course virtual learning environment), learn to reflect and enhance their academic strengths and understand how to set targets for personal and professional development.

2. The Administration of Justice:

This course provides a coherent framework for the study of law making – 'judges made law'. It is structured to address one main theme: case law. This is one out of the three foundational building blocks of the English legal system. The module is primarily designed to allow you to develop your academic and legal skills in the context of judicial reasoning; emphasis is placed

on transferable skills and personal development such as reflective writing. These skills are integrated within the study of the substantive material.

3. Law, Society and Ethics:

This course explores the importance of ethical considerations in social life and the law. Students will examine issues concerning the legal profession, ethical journalism, medical negligence and ethics and the environment. By looking at a range of case scenarios and case law, they will critically assess the effects of ethical decisions. The course will introduce basic research skills; it will enhance appreciation of civic responsibility giving the opportunity to design an awareness-flayer on an ethical question.

4. Law in Context:

This module provides the widest context of learning, looking at other aspects affecting law, justice and social perception of crime. You will be introduced to several themes and critically reflect on these. For example, you will look at the reasons for prosecuting a criminal behaviour from a public interest point of view; you will consider how the media might affect social perception about crime and justice and you will evaluate some of the problems in using crime statistics. Finally, you will reflect on the question on when it is necessary to criminalise a harm and what happens when existing legislation is not able to protect against harmful behaviour. The discussions in class on these themes will help you to carry out your own mini research on a legal topic.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Part-time (modular)					
4	LALW045S4	English Legal System	30	Compulsory	T1
4	LALW046S4	The Administration of Justice	30	Compulsory	T2
4	LALW047S4	Law, Society and Ethics	30	Compulsory	T3
4	LALW048S4	Law in Context	30	Compulsory	T3

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Birkbeck Law School employs a variety of teaching and learning strategies to enable learning outcomes to be achieved. In particular, we promote student learning through lectures, seminars, virtual learning environments, one-to-one tutorials, web-based independent skills tutorials and public seminars and research events.

Students will be able to take each of the four 30-credit compulsory modules as standalone modules. The compulsory modules employ a range of teaching methods such as lectures, seminars and tutorials. Skills will be imbedded in the learning of the substantive material and students will be able to attend one Saturday intensive skills workshop and a library hands on session each term. The fourth module (Law in Context) takes a blended learning approach where students will engage in online-discussions and learning exercises.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

The assessments on the Programme are designed to support students in developing a range of skills and learning approaches. Student will be assessed with a range of methods, including:

- short writing exercises
- essays and reports
- class presentations
- case-study analysis
- online discussion forums
- self and peer assessment

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe and evaluate the fundamental principles and values of the common law legal system, approaches to the making of law, its application and development
2. Describe and evaluate the trial process, the administration of justice and values underpinning it
3. Identify and evaluate legal principles in their social, political and cultural context
4. Explain and evaluate ethical considerations underlining law and social relations
5. Utilise information from various sources to produce a logical argument, to evaluate an argument and draw conclusions.
6. Apply the techniques of legal reasoning and inference to problem solving and use the skills of legal research to assess law in context
7. Present information in different formats to a variety of audiences
8. Demonstrate an excellent grasp in information technology
9. Reflect on own academic and professional strengths and limitations and take responsibility for setting targets and implementing plans for personal/academic/professional development
10. Collaborate with others effectively

Careers and further study

Graduates can pursue careers in the legal profession, human resources or local government. Possible professions include:

- barrister
- solicitor
- chartered legal executive
- human resources officer.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

[Further information](#) about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is available online.

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