

Dissertation

Module title			
Dissertation			
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)	Module number / reference	ECTS Value	Duration
Level 8 NFQ	LLBH - D	10 ETCS	Two semesters (Semester 1 and 2), 24 weeks.
Parent programme(s). Principal programme title, and embedded(s) if relevant		Stage of parent programme	Semester No.
Bachelor of Laws (Honours)		3	1 and 2
Bachelor of Laws (Honours) in Criminal Justice		3	1 and 2
Bachelor of Laws (Honours) in Commercial Law		3	1 and 2
Teaching and Learning modes	Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)		
Classroom / Face to Face			
Workplace			
Online			
Other (Identify)	100% (Independent research under the guidance of their supervisor)		
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)			
Please see section 4.2 for full details of entry requirements.			
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module	Sixty (60)		
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week	3		
Pre-requisite module title(s) (if any)	Professional Research, Practice and Advocacy		
Co-requisite module title(s) (if any)	No		
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No		
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)			
PC with Microsoft Office, Zoom and access to the internet through which an individual can gain access to the Griffith College student intranet: Moodle. Zoom will also be required for the seminars through which the module will be taught (block release).			
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.			
Role e.g. Tutor, Mentor etc	Qualifications & experience required:		# of Staff with this profile (WTEs)

Lecturer	Lecturers expected to hold at least a level 8 legal qualification, preferably with a professional legal qualification. It is an advantage to have completed the Certificate in Education, Learning and Development provided by Griffith College.	0.25 WTE
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Analysis of required learning effort		
*Effort while in contact with staff	Minimum ratio teacher / learner	Hours
Classroom and demonstrations	1:15	24
Mentoring and small-group teaching	-	-
Other (specify)	-	-
Independent Learning		
Directed e-learning (hours)		-
Independent Learning (hours)		226
Other hours (specify)		-
Work-based learning hours of learning effort		-
Total Effort (hours)		250

Allocation of Marks					
	Continuous Assessment	Supervised Project	Proctored Practical Exam.	Proctored Written Exam	Total
Percentage Contribution	100				100%

Module aims and objectives

This module aims to enable learners to learn from the experience of researching and writing a substantial work on a legal topic. Further, it aims provide the learner with an opportunity to develop research questions and to provide them the skills to source relevant information to answer these questions. Finally, it has as primary objective to facilitate learners in sharpening their analytical and critical thinking processes through a systematic approach to presenting a unique analysis of the research question posed.

Minimum intended module learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, learners will be able to:

- (i) Identify a research question and outline the approach by which it is to be answered.

- (ii) Demonstrate extensive and up-to-date knowledge of the chosen field.
- (iii) Utilise advanced research skills to investigate, interrogate and critique the chosen field.
- (iv) Critically evaluate the law on the chosen topic.
- (v) Critically analyse the theoretical and philosophical underpinning of the law in the chosen field.
- (vi) Conceptualise and communicate legal arguments with clarity and precision.
- (vii) Take responsibility for self-directed learning and management of a major research project.
- (viii) Critique the law and, where appropriate, offer suggestions for reform.

Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall MIPLOs

The dissertation module provides learners the opportunity to pursue their interest in a chosen legal field through structured engagement with a research question of their own election. As well, it provides learners with experience in drafting research questions, conducting legal research, marshalling a variety of legal sources into a well-structured analysis and drafting a large document of scholarly work that seeks to provide an original contribution to the discussion the chosen issue. Specifically, it corresponds to IPLO's 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10.

Information provided to learners about the module

The learners will have in their possession their Faculty Handbooks from their previous year. The Faculty Handbook provides general information about the faculty, its staffing, resources, and operation. Detailed programme information is supplied through Moodle, including copies of the approved module descriptors from the accredited programme (detailing related teaching, learning and assessment) along with a programme timetable. Another copy will be provided to the learners upon their request.

During the first class of the Module, learners are given a detailed outline of the Module showing the schedule of delivery and the dates when assignments are released and due for submission.

Moodle is used to provide learners with ongoing access to module related information, from the handbooks and module outlines provided in advance of the module commencement, the lecture material and links to related resources provided on a scheduled basis in line with the module delivery.

Module content, organisation and structure

Admission to the Dissertation module is at the discretion of the Faculty. The basis for admission is the submission the start of term of an acceptable dissertation proposal. Before commencing work on this module learners must submit a proposal and outline of their prospective submission to be analysed by the Faculty. It must include evidence of research into their subject and the research methods (deskbased only) they intend to employ, or that their chosen topic entails. The proposal must also contain an argument as to the validity of this work and its anticipated contribution to the field.

When the Course Committee has approved proposals, each learner is assigned a dissertation supervisor by the Programme Director. Each supervisor is responsible for giving guidance and direction for the duration of the dissertation module. Attendance and action points arising from the supervisor's meetings are recorded with work targets and schedules set by the faculty. After successful admission, learners will be supported by a suite of front-loaded workshops on dissertation drafting and legal methodologies which may prove useful in conducting the research.

The learners will have to submit three drafts through the year which will show the Faculty their research trail. The learner is also required to submit minutes of their meetings with their supervisor for a minimum of three meetings that were held during the drafting of the dissertation piece.

Module teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

This module consists of learners undertaking a supervised self-directed piece of research. Throughout this process, learners draw upon the full resources at their disposal in order to research independently a written work on an approved topic with support from their assigned supervisor. The work must then be marshalled, written and presented, according to the standard formatting conventions of the Law Faculty regarding organisation and terminology.

Work-based learning and practice-placement

This module is a 10 ECTS module which consists of desk-based research and writing and does not involve work-based learning or practice-placement.

E-learning

Moodle, the College Virtual Learning Environment is used to disseminate notes, advice, and online resources to support the learners. E-learning activities include learner feedback, forums where learners contribute, formative quizzes and video links. The learners will also have access to a number of other online resources through the library such as access to databases and research tools (Westlaw.ie, Westlaw.uk, JustisOne (vLex) and Hein Online) as well as access to online copies of books published from Bloomsbury Online.

Module physical resource requirements

Requirements are for the lecturer to utilise a PC with Microsoft Office, Zoom and access to the internet through which an individual can gain access to the Griffith College student intranet: Moodle. There are no further software requirements for this module. In relation to Microsoft Office the lecturer will require to use PowerPoint or Word to present the information to the learners. Zoom will be required in conjunction with Microsoft Office in order to record the lectures when the module is being delivered for block release or for the Blended Programme when organised in advance. Zoom will also be required for the seminars through which the module will be taught (block release).

Reading lists and other information resources

Primary reading

- *Cahillane, L. & Schweppe, J. (eds.) (2017) Legal Research Methods: Principles and Practicalities. Dublin: Clarus Press*
- *McConville, M. & Hong Chui, W. (eds.) (2017) Research Methods for Law. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press*
- *Salter, M. & Mason, J. (2007) Writing Law Dissertations: An Introduction and Guide to the Conduct of Legal Research. London: Pearson*
- *Watkins, D. & Burton, M. (eds.) (2017) Research Methods in Law. London: Routledge*

Secondary reading

- *Determined according to the chosen field of study within law.*

e-Resources

- *Bloomsbury Professional Online*
- *JustisOne – Vlex*
- *Westlaw.ie*
- *Westlaw UK*
- *Heinonline*
- *Griffith College Library Website*

Specifications for module staffing requirements

Lecturers qualified to at least a Level 8 legal qualification (LLB (Honours), preferably with a professional legal qualification and a third level teaching qualification (e.g. Certificate in Education, Learning and Development offered by Griffith College). Learners also benefit from the support of the Programme Director, Faculty Administrators, a dedicated Learning Technologist Office, the Learning Supports Office, at least one Learner Representative for each Stage, the Students' Union and a free (off campus) Counselling Service.

Module summative assessment strategy

This module is assessed by continuous assessment consisting of:

- (a) The preparation, submission and oral presentation of the Dissertation;
- (b) The preparation of a Comprehensive Outline, three drafts and the final submission worth 70% of the final mark:
- (c) A short reflective journal outlining the research and drafting journey of the learner worth 10% of the final grade. In particular, to permit assessment that is distinct from the final submission, learners must submit a summary of their meetings and feedback received from their supervisor to date and evidence how they have incorporated that feedback into their work.

The following table indicates the module's learning outcomes' alignment with the assessment used for the module:

No.	Description	MIMLOs	Weighting
1	Assignment - Proposal 10% - Presentation 10%	i - vii	20%
2	Project - Comprehensive Outline 5% - Draft One 5% - Draft Two 5% - Draft Three 5% - Final Submission 50%	i - vii	70%%
3	Reflective Journal	i - vii	10%

Reassessment/Repeat assessment strategy: Griffith College regulations state that learners must pass all component elements of the module to be deemed to have passed the module.

- In the event of a learner failing components of / this module, they will be required to submit a new individual repeat assignment which will be made available on Moodle to learners, and which must be submitted as per faculty instructions.
- In the event of a learner failing the group assessment element of this module, a new individual repeat assignment will be made available on Moodle to learners which must be submitted as per faculty instructions.
- In the event of the learner failing the exam, learners will take the re-sit exam at the next available sitting, details of which will be made available to learners via Moodle.

Sample assessment materials

Please see sample assessment supplementary document.