

Module 2 Professional Ethics and Skills in Practice

Stage	1						
Semester	1						
Module Title	Professional Ethics and Skills for Practice						
Module Number	2						
Module Status	Mandatory						
Module ECTS Credits	5						
Module NFQ level	Level 7						
Pre-Requisite Module Titles	n/a						
Co-Requisite Module Titles	n/a						
Capstone Module?	No						
List of Module Teaching Personnel	James Buckley						
Contact Hours				Non-contact Hours			Total Effort (hours)
24				76			100
Lecture	Practical	Tutorial	Seminar	Assignment	Placement	Independent Work	
15	3	6				76	100
Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)							
	Continuous Assessment	Project	Practical	Final Examination	Total		
Percentage Contribution		25	25	50	100		

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

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

1. Discuss the core provisions of professional ethics and how it relates to other areas of law
2. Explain the societal impact of professional ethics;
3. Interpret relevant case law and legislation;
4. Explain the procedure for the operation of client accounts;
5. Apply rules and principles of professional ethics to factual scenarios;
6. Employ research skills and communicate effectively on matters of professional ethics.

Module Objectives

The purpose of this module is to provide students with an understanding of the ethics incumbent within the legal system in Ireland and to introduce learners to the obligations placed upon those who work in the legal sector by legislation, codes of conduct, precedent.

This module aims to develop within learners a familiarity with;

- Whistleblowing and money laundering legislation
- Disciplinary Procedures Under The IILEX Code of Conduct
- the performance of key administrative tasks such as file management, time recording and client billing
- the Professional Codes of Conduct of Barristers, Solicitors, and Legal Executives.
- the effect of legal restrictions imposed by the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Acts and the Law of Confidence on the work of a legal executive
- the appropriate interaction between legal executive and client, and legal executive and solicitor

In addition, this module aims to develop within the learners the ability to:

1. Analyse factual scenarios presenting ethical difficulty and apply their understanding of the rules of professional conduct.
2. Engage effectively with clients and other legal professionals orally through use of interview and negotiation techniques and through writing using efficient note-taking and letter writing skills.

Module Curriculum

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Introduction to Ethics.	The concept and operation of ethics in the broader academic / philosophical context.
The Legal Professional Codes of Conduct.	Detailed consideration of the Codes of each legal profession and their operation.
Ethics and Legislative Provisions / other legal restrictions	Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts, the Law of Confidence and their impact on ethics in the executive's day to day work.
Effective Oral Communication– Interviewing & Client Consultation	The importance of good communication; fundamental elements of successful client interviewing, managing phone calls and phone attendances;

Effective Oral Communication– Negotiation	The function and process of negotiation within legal practice, planning for negotiation, the role of communication and persuasion in effective negotiation
Finances in the legal office.	Appropriate handling of monies and the significance of the client account.
Whistle Blowing and the Reporting of Misconduct/Illegality	The importance of recognising and reporting misconduct or illegal activities in the work environment. The utilisation of the appropriate reporting mechanisms when faced with such a situation.
Money Laundering	Compliance with money laundering legislation, protocol within the office for the handling of money laundering documentation and the reporting of suspicious transactions.
Key administrative skills	Managing client files, recording time spent on files, billing, and handling client monies
Effective Written Communication in Legal Environment	Engaging effectively with clients and other legal professionals in writing, through efficient note-taking, letter writing and drafting and answering e-mails; the importance of competent drafting of legal documents.

Reading lists and other learning materials

1. Griffith College Manual, *Professional Ethics and Skills for Practice* (Dublin: Clarus Press, updated annually)
2. IILEX Code of Professional Conduct
3. IILEX Professional Conduct; Disciplinary Procedure
4. Law Society, *A guide to good Professional Conduct for Solicitors*, (2013, Law Society)
5. *Code of Conduct for the Bar of Ireland* (adopted 23rd July 2014)

Extracts from:

- Solicitors Acts 1954-2011
- O’Callaghan, *The Law on Solicitors in Ireland*, (2000, Butterworth Ireland Ltd.)

Module Learning Environment

Accommodation

In line with other higher education awards offered by the College, the Special Purpose Diploma in Legal Studies and Practice, will provide reasonably comparable resources and accommodation requirements, all of which can be met by facilities on campus.

At the moment, a base classroom is used for teaching purposes at both the Dublin and Cork campuses. Participants also have access to online teaching resources and Moodle¹ and an e-learning studio. It is not proposed that these arrangements be changed as they are continuing to operate successfully.

In addition, all lectures are recorded and posted on the relevant Moodle page, providing students with the opportunity to watch lectures at a later date if they are unable to attend the lecture or wish to review the lecture.

The workshop is held in an open plan room with movable desks in order to facilitate group work, discussion, presentations. The workshop is not recorded as all learners must attend.

Library

All learners have access to an extensive range of “actual” and “remote access” library resources. The library monitors and updates its resources on an ongoing basis, in line with the College’s Library Acquisition Policy. Lecturers update reading lists for this programme on an annual basis as is the norm with all courses run by Griffith College.

Equipment, Information & Communication Technology

The College is already fully resourced with the necessary teaching equipment – such as a base class room fully equipped with PC, audio and visual presentation facilities and projectors.

Further resources such as video recording equipment are also available for use on the programme. Participants may also use the College’s other computer labs, open labs and the e-learning studio. The College’s IT Services Department and the Lecturer Support Unit also support this process by continually updating classrooms and PC labs. Proposals for the acquisition of new technologies are made to the IT Services Department and to the Director of Academic Programmes, so that academic and technical issues are considered.

Extensive use is also made of the Moodle VLE for posting lecture notes and other relevant material used for study and revision. With the aid of data projectors, these can form the basis of lecture presentations.

¹ Moodle is Griffith College’s current Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Module Teaching and Learning Strategy

This module will be delivered through a series of lectures, through tutorial-style discussions, group work sessions and exercises, and supplemented by structured web-based resources and reading; and also involves one practical workshop

This module comprises of twenty-one contact hours, being fifteen lecture hours, five tutorial hours and one revision/exam preparation class, and one three-hour workshop.

Each class will comprise three hours of lectures and a one-hour tutorial.

Tutorials will comprise the review of past exam papers, class discussions, group work sessions and exercises.

The workshop will comprise an interactive, group discussion based assessment, with learners requested to engage in interviews and negotiation exercises.

Lectures and tutorials will be supplemented by structured web-based resources and reading.

In order to support learners through the exam process they engage in the answering of sample exam questions and correction of their own or peers' papers, thereby familiarising themselves with the process of writing papers and with the marking criteria.

Module Assessment Strategy

Theoretical knowledge will be assessed at the end of the module by examination (worth 50%), the purpose of which is to enable learners to become accustomed to undertaking extended examinations which are a traditional method of assessment commonly used in law-based degrees on the National Framework of Qualifications and in the sphere of professional legal training. The examination will consist of a mixture of essay style questions, which place emphasis on the learners demonstrating academic legal knowledge as well as discursive legal writing skills, and problem style questions which assess the learner's ability to apply the law to practical factual scenarios. Formative assessment will be provided in the form of interactive exercises such as mini quizzes or directed class discussion topics.

The examination will be supplemented by an Assignment worth 25% of the overall grade enabling learners to utilise their learning from class based work and to develop their legal research, problem solving, independent learning, initiative skills and professional analytical capacity. The Assignment focuses on a matter of practical importance in the field of Professional Ethics and Legal Skills. Learners will submit an assignment, which typically comprises of an essay on one of the major academic aspects of the course such as the Professional Codes of Conduct or Legislation which is relevant to the learning outcomes.

The workshop focuses on two practical exercises: the first involves the learner's capacity to negotiate in a practical role-playing negotiation; and the second involves the learner's capacity to have an effective role-play consultation/interview with a prospective client of a firm in which they work.

Element No.	Weighting	Type	Description	Module Learning outcomes
1	25%	Assignment	Learners are required to research and report on some aspect of Professional Ethics.	6
2	25%	Workshop	Learners are required to work in groups completing a numbers of tasks including drafting and mock interviews.	6
3	50%	Exam	The examination consists of a choice of both essay and problem style questions. Essay style questions place emphasis on the learners' demonstrating their understanding of the main principles of the law and their capacity to critique the law. Problem style questions enable learners to apply principles of the law to a factual scenario.	1-6

Sample Assessment with Rubrics

See Sample Assessments attached.