

3.15 Module 31 Dissertation

3.15.1 Headline information about the module

Module title	Dissertation
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)	8
Module number/reference	Module 31
Parent programme(s) the plural arises if there are embedded programmes to be validated.	LLB (Hons)
Stage of parent programme	3
Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable)	Semester 1 and 2
Module credit units (FET/HET/ECTS)	ECTS
Module credit number of units	10
List the teaching and learning modes	Full-Time, Part-Time
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)	Successful completion of Stages 1 and 2 of the programme
Pre-requisite module titles	None
Co-requisite module titles	None
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	Yes
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff (staff includes workplace personnel who are responsible for learners such as apprentices, trainees and learners in clinical placements)	Lecturer and supervisors are 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 Training and Education provided by Griffith College.
Maximum number of learners per centre (or instance of the module)	60
Duration of the module	Two Semesters, 24 weeks
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week (see * below)	1
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)	Lecture room with internet access and digital projector.

Analysis of required learning effort										
Effort while in contact with staff										
Classroom and demonstrations		Mentoring and small-group tutoring		Other (specify)		Directed e-learning (hours)	Independent learning (hours)	Other hours (specify)	Work-based learning hours of learning effort	Total effort (hours)
Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner					
24	1:60						226			250
Allocation of marks (within the module)										
				Continuous assessment	Supervised project	Proctored practical examination	Proctored written examination	Total		
Percentage contribution					100			100%		

3.15.2 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.

3.15.3 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) Critically analyse 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.

3.15.4 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.

3.15.5 Information provided to learners about the module

At the start of the Academic Year, learners will receive their Faculty Handbooks. 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 along with a programme timetable detailing related teaching, learning and assessment.

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.

3.15.6 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 (desk-based 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.

3.15.7 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.

3.15.8 Work-based learning and practice-placement

This module consists of desk-based research and writing and does not involve work-based learning or practice-placement.

3.15.9 E-learning

Moodle, the College Virtual Learning Environment is used to disseminate notes, advice, and online resources to support the learners. The learners are also given access to Lynda.com as a resource for reference.

3.15.10 Module physical resource requirements

Requirements are for a fully equipped classroom. The classroom is equipped with a PC and Microsoft Office; no other software is required for this module.

Moodle can be accessed in the learner's home, various open labs on campus and in the library.

3.15.11 Reading lists and other information resources

Reading lists are largely determined by the learner's own area of research.

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.

3.15.12 Specifications for module staffing requirements

Lecturers qualified to at least a Level 8 legal qualification (LLB (Honours), BABL, BALB, preferably with a professional legal qualification and a third level teaching qualification (e.g. Certificate in Training and Education).

Learners also benefit from the support of the Programme Director, Programme Administrator, Lecturers, a dedicated Learning Technologist, Learner Representative, and Students’ Union and Counselling Service.

3.15.13 Module summative assessment strategy

This module is assessed by continuous assessment consisting of two draft submissions in advance of final submission. The drafting process intended as a means of helping learners structure their work and achieve deadlines through a series of continuous working drafts of increasing length and weight in terms of marks for the course, to be delivered in advance of the final draft. 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 assessed work breakdown can be seen in the table below.

No.	Description	MIMLOs	Weighting
1	Draft One (3, 000)	vii	5%
2	Draft Two (5, 000)	vii	5%
3	Final Submission (8, 000)	i – vi, viii	90%

3.15.14 Sample Assessment Materials

Assignment Marking Criteria – See Appendix 1