

## Module 1: Advanced Legal Research and Writing

<b>Stage</b>	1						
<b>Semester</b>	1						
<b>Module Title</b>	Advanced Legal Research and Writing						
<b>Module Number/Reference</b>	LLM-ALRW						
<b>Module Status (Mandatory/Elective)</b>	Mandatory						
<b>Module ECTS credit</b>	10						
<b>Module NFQ level (only if applicable)</b>	9						
<b>Pre-requisite Module Titles</b>	N/A						
<b>Co-requisite Module Titles</b>	N/A						
<b>Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)</b>	No						
<b>List of Module Teaching Personnel</b>	Dr Claire Hogan						
<b>Contact Hours</b>				<b>Non-contact Hours</b>			<b>Total Effort (Hours)</b>
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Practical</b>	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>Seminar</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Placement</b>	<b>Independent work</b>	
30						170	200
<b>Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)</b>							
	<b>Continuous Assessment</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Practical</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Total</b>		
<b>Percentage contribution</b>	100				<b>100</b>		

### Intended Module Learning Outcomes

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

1. Apply advanced online research skills to select key legal material for assignments, module reading, examination preparation and dissertation writing
2. Display mastery of the routine utilisation of a legal house style – OSCOLA – in written assignments and the dissertation
3. Demonstrate an ability to write legal prose with rigour, clarity, precision and style
4. Identify and refine a dissertation research question and formulate a detailed research proposal
5. Identify, select and apply appropriate legal research methodologies to a dissertation research question
6. Design appropriate strategies for the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data
7. Demonstrate comprehension of the ethical considerations required for undertaking research
8. Communicate orally complex legal argument in a persuasive, clear and logical fashion

## Module Objectives

The aim of this module is to inculcate in the learner advanced legal research and writing skills. The module initially focusses on the development of online research skills and search operators. The learner develops an understanding of various research methodologies which can be employed when conducting research; doctrinal, comparative, socio-legal etc. Furthermore, the module fosters within learners the ability to write excellent legal prose with style, precision and accuracy. Learners master a legal house style; the Oxford University Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA).

## Module Aims (to provide learners with)

- the ability to effectively utilise online databases such as HeinOnline
- the capacity to cite effectively through use of OSCOLA
- an understanding of research methodologies such that they appreciate the range of available lenses through which a research question may be analysed
- the skill and confidence to formulate a research proposal
- the ability to effectively criticise the law and develop compelling legal argument
- the capacity to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data in a systematic and organised fashion

## Module Curriculum

- o Topic 1: Introduction to Legal Research and Writing
- o Topic 2: Computer Lab Session – Online Research Skills
- o Topic 3: OSCOLA
- o Topic 4: Avoiding Plagiarism; Correct Methods of Citation, Paraphrasing and Direct Quotation
- o Topic 5: Legal Writing 1: How to Argue, Criticising the Law
- o Topic 6: Research Methodology 1: Various Lenses
- o Topic 7: Research Methodology 2: Surveys and Statistics
- o Topic 8: Legal Writing 2: The Importance of Structure and Readability
- o Topic 9: Getting Started: Finding a Research Question

## Reading lists and other learning material

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M., *How to Research* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2010)

Currie Oates, L., & Enquist, A., *The Legal Writing Handbook: Analysis, Research And Writing* (Aspen, 2006)

Hanson, S., *Legal Method and Reasoning* (London: Cavendish, 2011)

Knowles, J., *Effective Legal Research* (London: Sweet & Maxwell / Thomson Reuters, 2012)

Salter, M., & Mason, J., *Writing law dissertations: an introduction and guide to the conduct of legal research* (Harlow, 2007)  
Webley, L., *Legal writing* (London: Cavendish, 2010)

Legal Databases:

[www.irishstatutebook.ie](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie)

[www.bailli.org](http://www.bailli.org)

[www.justis.com](http://www.justis.com)

[www.westlaw.ie](http://www.westlaw.ie)

[www.westlaw.co.uk](http://www.westlaw.co.uk)

[www.lexisnexis.com](http://www.lexisnexis.com)

[www.heinonline.org](http://www.heinonline.org)

[www.courts.ie](http://www.courts.ie)

[www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie)

### **Module Learning Environment**

A learning environment that promotes collaborative learning is promoted and learners are encouraged to actively engage in all class discussions and exercises.

### **Module Teaching and Learning Strategy**

The module is delivered by means of structured and participative style lectures. The learners are assigned reading the week previous to each class, and some learners are asked to lead the discussion of the material.

The lecturer regularly encourages small group formation to discuss nascent research questions and appropriate methodology strategies.

### **Range of modes of direct contact**

Teaching consist of weekly lectures for which learners are expected to have previously completed assigned reading and prepared draft answers to certain questions. In addition, learners are expected to present individually and in groups on various topics assigned to them throughout the semester.

Total contact hours: 30 Hours

### **Range of other learning methods**

Independent learning and research supported with on line resources available through Moodle.

Total non-contact hours: 170 Hours

## Module Assessment Strategy

Assessment Methods			
Element number	Weighting	Type	Description
1	25	Continuous Assessment	Case note (2,000 words) on one of two assigned cases (one commercial and one human rights) in which the learner has to reference the case, two other related cases, one piece of legislation, one book and one article. The goal behind this is to get the learner familiar with how to use the OSCOLA referencing system.
2	50	Continuous Assessment	Formal research proposal for chosen dissertation topic (3,000 words)
3	25	Continuous Assessment	10 minute oral presentation followed by 4 minute Q&A on proposed dissertation topic, to include theoretical framework and research methodologies to be employed.

### Diagnostic/ formative assessment

Feedback through formative assessment supports learners taking control of their own learning.

### Further information on assessment

Marking criteria is distributed to learners with each assignment brief. These are used to provide learner direction on all summative assessments.

<b>Assessment Strategy</b>			
<b>Module Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Element 1</b>	<b>Element 2</b>	<b>Element 3</b>
1. Apply advanced online research skills to select key legal material for assignments, module reading, examination preparation and dissertation writing	✓	✓	
2. Master the routine utilisation of a legal house style – OSCOLA – in written assignments and the dissertation	✓	✓	
3. Demonstrate an ability to write legal prose with clarity, precision and style	✓	✓	
4. Identify and refine a dissertation research question and formulate a detailed research proposal		✓	✓
5. Identify, select and apply appropriate legal research methodologies to a dissertation research question		✓	✓
6. Design appropriate strategies for the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data		✓	✓
7. Demonstrate comprehension of the ethical considerations required for undertaking research.		✓	✓
8. Communicate orally complex legal argument in a persuasive, clear and logical fashion			✓

Please see **Annex 2** for Faculty Marking Criteria Guidelines and **Annex 3** for Sample Examinations and Continuous Assessment along with Marking Criteria