

**LLM DISSERTATIONS**

# What is an LLM Dissertation?

It is a requirement of all LLM programmes that dissertation is submitted. This counts for 100% of the requirements for this course

# Direct Entry to Stage 2

Students who have completed an appropratie qualification in the qualify. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.You will be provided with a comprehensive research methods study units which is an integrated part of the course and assists in the completion of the LLM and LLM Top Up.

# What standard is expected?

It is in effect, a significant research project in your chosen subject area demanding a high standard of achievement reflecting Masters level work. It is not a 'long essay'; surveying the arguments of material contained in a limited number of references on a broadly defined topic. At masters level students are expected to display a sound familiarity with source literature in his/her chosen area, a high level of theoretical competence, a clear ability to sift and evaluate evidence relevant to the area of legal studies being examined, design investigations in a sure and competent way, and to produce a dissertation of potentially publishable quality. You will be expected to synthesise conceptual, analytical and research skills. Define a legal problem within an appropriate theoretical or conceptual framework appropriate methods and techniques of analysis; it should show evidence of an appropriate research methodology. To assist with this you will be provided with a research methods course. It is not necessarily expected that original research results may emerge, but the dissertation should demonstrate the potential of the student to progress to this given further time and resources.

# What topic can I select?

Appendix A (below) contains a short outline of legal research sufficient to get you started in selecting a topic.

# How do I get started?

By providing us with a short 300-500 word outline of your research proposal. Appendix B contains a preliminary LLM proposal form. You should complete and submit this form to us and it will assist us in determining whether we can offer supervision. It will also help focus your thoughts.

# How will I be supervised?

You will be allocated a supervisor. The dissertation handbook will be available to you on MyBeckett (the virtual learning platform) as soon as the course begins with details about what to expect from your supervisor and what is expected of you.

# How is progress monitored?

There are specific rules which require the submission of written material including interim reports on progress. The LLM dissertation handbook will have further details.

# I have completed the Legal Practice Course or have other appropriate qualifications and/or have been working in legal practice and have a particular area of expertise which I want to develop. Is an LLM a suitable way of doing this?

Yes, provided you understand that the LLM is an academic course. By all means develop and reflect on your practice experience. The LLM will provide you with the opportunity to do this. The research methods unit will help you develop an academic perspective and help you convert practical experience into academic study.

# Should I undertake the LLM Dissertation part time or full time?

Most of our students are working and find it easier to undertake the LLM part time . If you decide to undertake it full time then you would have 6 months.

# Is the LLM award the same as that awarded to students who have to complete the stage 1 taught courses?

Yes.

# Contact Details

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# Appendix A: Legal Research - Thinking About A Topic

* Legal research must contain an in depth study and critical evaluation of particular problem in law, which may include legal theories, law in practice, socio-legal studies, law in context, legal policy, other applied legal topics, with the formulation of alternative approaches where appropriate

**A. Choosing a Dissertation Topic - Initial Thoughts**

The initial steps are extremely important, yet some students find this the most difficult part of the dissertation. In selecting a topic, you must be able to demonstrate its practical and/or theoretical interest in a subject area. It is particularly important to be aware of the way in which your topic relates to broader themes in the disciplines concerned. A sensible proposal should take into consideration manageability, in terms of time and resources whilst showing an awareness of the existing state of knowledge on the subject so that research may be located in the wider debate. Fairly extensive reading around your chosen topic is important if only because you should include a literature survey near the start of the dissertation. The following specific points may help:-

1. There are virtually no topics where the last word has already been said: start to delve and researchable issues soon emerge.
2. By all means choose a topic which has interested you, but remember that the dissertation is an academic piece of work and the study must be approached in an objective and disinterested manner.
3. You are strongly advised to relate your topic of research interest to the expertise/knowledge of staff: try to capitalise on in-house experience.
4. Have you checked the recent academic literature (e.g. journals, books) to see where the research focus is at present? Can you update some research done a number of years ago? Sources of information of use to you in constructing a literature review include books, journal articles, and research theses. When carrying out a literature search, the most recent issues of abstracts/indexes should be consulted first.
5. For many students, topics may arise from their work situation. This is to be welcomed, though to be done with care, as there can be problems of ensuring a research project with an adequate academic framework conducted with sufficient objectivity and a disinterested focus. In the case of practitioner research, previously published research should not dictate the form of the stated research problem and research questions asked: but *aid* the development of the research design, once the problem(s) and questions are closely identified.
6. When confronted with the prospect of having to carry out research, researchers often concentrate most on the question of how they are going to collect the data (and later on how this data might be analysed) - the mechanics of the research process. The more conceptual element of the research process - identifying, developing and contextualising the problem and questions to be addressed in the first place is usually assumed to be of less importance. However, if research is to be fruitful, then the way in which research problems and research questions are identified and developed must receive adequate attention.

**Appendix B**

**COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING AND SUBMIT**

**Research Question: what am I going to investigate?**

**Topic or Working Title**

**OUTLINE RESEARCH PROPOSAL 300-500 words**