

Legal Information Skills

From 2009/10 two new compulsory courses are being introduced on Legal Information Skills. There are two levels: introductory and advanced. The introductory level is for all first year students on single or joint honours and the first year of the accelerated degree. The advanced level is for third year students on the single and joint honours programmes. Students who are on a compulsory or Erasmus year abroad will have the opportunity to take the course in their final year. Courses are zero credit weighted. Students will be expected to attend one session per semester and will be given self study exercises to complement the training. The courses will be delivered by the law librarians on two afternoons a week (Wednesday for the introductory level, and Friday for the advanced level). Students will be expected to sign up for a session online in a similar way to tutorial sign up.

Information for staff

You will not have to enrol students on either course.

Learning outcomes for introductory level: to provide the students with an introduction to basic research skills so that they understand and use the range of resources (general & subject specific) available through the library. This will enable them to:

- Develop an understanding of library resources printed and electronic (primary & secondary) and how they are organised and relate to law
- Develop the ability to construct basic search strategies and apply them to locate and access general and legal information and resources, both printed and electronic, using the library catalogue and other printed and electronic resources including the internet.
- Develop an understanding of basic search syntax (e.g. Boolean operators) and applying them during the search process
- Develop an understanding of the evaluation process including criteria to compare information from different sources.
- Develop the ability to use appropriate referencing systems for subject area and cite bibliographic references correctly. This will include an introduction bibliographic software such as Endnote and Reference
- Develop an understanding of legal and ethical issues relating to the use of information such as plagiarism and Copyright.

Learning outcomes for advanced level: to provide the students with advanced research skills to enable them to exploit and use a range of general and legal resources .This will enable them to:

- Develop the ability to construct complex search strategies using mind mapping techniques and apply them
- Develop the ability to conduct complex searches using search syntax, search operators, search limits, and menu driven search platforms.
- Develop the ability to conduct advanced internet searching including searching the Deep Web, and locating freely available legal resources.

- Develop the ability to evaluate information obtained from the internet including techniques to establish authority and ownership of information and websites.
- Develop the ability to produce literature reviews
- Develop an understanding of new web technologies (e.g. Web2, Blogging, Wikis, social book marking) and how they might help in managing the information process.

The courses will run on a trial basis during 2009/10. Audit files will be produced, and students will be asked to complete course questionnaires at the end of the sessions they attend.

Information for students

Students are required to attend one face to face session per semester for the course on Legal Information Skills for which they are registered. Sign-up will be online. For continuing students the process will be similar to the tutorial sign up but each group will be linked to a particular day. First year students will be issued with specific instructions (see below)

How to sign up for Legal Information Skills, introductory level.

- Go to:
<http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/ease/tutorials/>
- A list of your Ordinary courses will be displayed. Beneath each course, a list of available tutorial groups is displayed: NOTE – this is not the correct screen shot here, you WILL see the correct title ‘Legal Information Skills’ and the timetable will link to one date only.



- You can review the timetable for each group by clicking “Click for timetable”. Each group has been assigned a different Wednesday in semester 1
- Click the “Sign-up” button to sign up to the group/date you want. Once you click the button, you’ll be reminded of the timetable for that group, and offered the opportunity to “Continue” (to confirm your selection) or “Cancel” (to reject your selection and choose a different group/date).
- There is a possibility that, having selected a group/date, confirmed your selection, and clicked “Continue” as described above, you may still not have been signed up to that group/date. This depends on the amount of time you leave between selecting a group/date, checking the timetable, and confirming your selection, since sometimes there will be a large number of people attempting to signup to the same group/date at

the same time, and the person who clicks last could lose out in such a situation. If this occurs, you will be redirected to an error page (NB an example only of a screen shot):



and you will have to choose another group/date by clicking “please try again”.

- Once you’ve signed up for a tutorial group/date, you will be unable to change this selection.
- Note that:
 - You will only be able to sign-up to groups/dates that have places left.
 - You will only be able to sign-up to a group/date during a limited period of time. These times are displayed on the page.
 - If you need to alter the group/date you signed up for, please contact Susan Leask in the Teaching Office. Email: Susan.Leask@ed.ac.uk Tel: 0131 650 2344.

Changes to tutorial group timetables, and rescheduling of tutorials, will be posted on the relevant courses webpages, and you will also be emailed of any changes by an automated system. Please check the courses website (<http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/courses/>) , and your university email account, regularly.