

SCHOOL OF LAW, POLITICS & SOCIOLOGY

SUSSEX LAW SCHOOL

Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL)

Course Handbook 2018/2019



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Introduction

This handbook summarises the most important aspects of practice and procedure in the management of the GDL, it includes;

- A clear outline of what you should expect in the management of your degree course
- A clear indication of what is expected of you during your time in the Sussex Law School.
- Information about the administrative procedures from admission to examination.

Message from Head of Department

Congratulations and Welcome to the Sussex Law School. You are now a member of a vibrant, exciting, friendly Law School at a University that prides itself on its interdisciplinary approach to study and its teaching and research excellence. You are embarking on a degree course which encourages lively and informed debate, discussion and critical investigation into legal principles and the context in which they develop. I hope that you are ready to work hard on a stimulating and interesting exploration of a fascinating subject, and that you will also take this opportunity to make new friends, become involved with the student law societies and take part in the extra-curricular activities, pro-bono work and competitions (such as mooting, criminal advocacy, mediation, negotiation, client interviewing and legal debating) that we run.

The Sussex Law School (SLS) is a department within the School of Law, Politics and Sociology (LPS) and is responsible for teaching law at both undergraduate (LLB) and postgraduate (GDL, LLM and PhD) levels, as well contributing to the social sciences foundation year. There are currently around 1,000 undergraduate students and 200 postgraduate students in the Sussex Law School, taught by around 75 academic faculty specialist in their chosen fields and a small team of excellent Associate Tutors. You will also benefit from the support of the staff in the LPS School Office (Freeman Building, room G41).

This Handbook has been produced to assist you in settling into Sussex University and as a source of guidance and information throughout your degree. Please take the time to read through it now and consult the Handbook as questions arise during your studies. You should keep this Handbook as an important source of information for use throughout your time at Sussex, adding to it materials which are distributed during the course of your studies. However, please note that this handbook is not a substitute for the formal statements and requirements of the official documents of the University.

When you registered in SLS you will have received, amongst other things, information about your Academic Advisor and where and how to contact her or him. Your Academic Advisor is your first point of contact if you have a problem. After an initial meeting at the start of the year, further meetings will be scheduled throughout the year, and you will also be able to contact your Academic Advisor at his or her weekly office hour (details of which can be found on Sussex Direct). Should you have any personal, financial or accommodation problems which affect your studies you should seek advice at the University's Student Life Centre.

I hope that you have a stimulating, enjoyable and successful time here at the Sussex Law School.

Professor Susan Millns



Key Contacts

Name	Contact Details	What you can contact them about
Mr Francis Roake <i>Course Co-ordinator</i>	f.b.roake@sussex.ac.uk 01273 678261 Freeman School Office (G41)	-Course Administration -Timetable Changes -General Queries
Dr Mark Davies <i>Course Convenor</i>	m.r.davies@sussex.ac.uk 01273 877062 Freeman F37	-Course Queries -Lecture & Seminar Feedback
Dr Philip Bremner <i>Academic Advisor</i>	p.d.bremner@sussex.ac.uk 01273 872924 Freeman G25	-Feedback -Module Choices -Study Skills -References -Personal Development
Prof Susan Millns <i>Head of Department</i>	s.millns@sussex.ac.uk 01273 678532 Freeman F54	-Departmental & Course Feedback -Student Experience
<i>Student Representative</i>	Information Available on Sussex Direct	-Module/Course Concerns -Student Experience
<i>Student Mentor</i>	Information Available Here: sussex.ac.uk/lps/internal/students/studentmentors	-Academic Skills -Understanding Modules -S3 Study Skills
Student Life Centre	sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/ 01273 876767 Bramber House	-Personal Issues -Finance -Counselling -Progression and Withdrawal -Drop-In Sessions
Student Support Unit	sussex.ac.uk/studentssupport/ 01273 877466 Bramber House	-Support for Long-Term Physical & Mental Health Conditions (eg. Learning Difficulty, Disability & Autism Spectrum Support)

Course Overview

The course is intended to satisfy the Academic Stage of Training for professional legal qualification as regulated by the Bar Standards Board and Solicitors Regulation Authority. After completing this course students need to complete the Vocational Stage of Training elsewhere and take up professional placements before they can gain professional qualification. The course is designed to equip the student with information on the structure and context of the English Legal System, the Seven Foundations of Legal Knowledge mandated in the Bar Standards Board and Solicitors Regulation Authority and - in line with its location in a research intensive institution - to develop legal research skills and the opportunity to complete a self-initiated piece of legal research supported by a supervisor and assessed through a dissertation. Three of the Seven Foundations of Legal Knowledge are taken in the autumn term and assessed in the first assessment period and the remaining four are taken in spring and assessed in the second assessment period. The English Legal System module is taken and assessed prior to any other module assessments. The Dissertation element runs through the year and assessment is divided between the first and second assessment periods.

The intensity of the course requires effective/committed time management. Students report that they enjoy the challenge and the experience. Special points of interest in relation to this course include the development of professionalism and legal skills through the extra-curricular activities organised by the Law School and the Student Law Society. These include internal competitions in mooting, negotiating and client interviewing, sponsored by local firms of solicitors and judged by practitioners and academics and participation in many other external competitions. Previous GDL students have participated and performed extremely well in these. It is now a mandatory element of the course that GDL students take the workshops for at least one of these competitions as part of the Self-Development and Legal Education module.

Overall, at Sussex the emphasis is on the high level development of academic skills which come from being part of a research intensive school.

Course Aims (summary)

The course is intended to satisfy the Academic Stage of Training for professional legal qualification as regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and the Bar Standards Board (BSB). After completing this course students need to complete the Vocational Stage of Training elsewhere and take up professional placements before they can gain professional qualification. The course is designed to equip the student with information on the structure and context of the English Legal System, the Seven Foundations of Legal Knowledge mandated in the SRA/BSB Joint Statement and - in line with its location in a research intensive institution - to develop legal research skills and the opportunity to complete a self-initiated piece of legal research supported by a supervisor and assessed through a dissertation. Three of

the Seven Foundations of Legal Knowledge are taken in the autumn term and assessed in the first assessment period and the remaining four are taken in spring and assessed in the second assessment period. The English Legal System course is taken and assessed prior to any other course assessments. The Dissertation element runs all through the year and assessment is divided between the first and second assessment periods.

The intensity of the course requires effective/committed time management. All courses except the Dissertation are assessed by an unseen exam. Some are also assessed through coursework. Special points of interest in relation to this course include the development of professionalism and legal skills through the extra-curricular activities organised by the Law School and the Student Law Society.

Learning outcomes

Demonstrate knowledge of the concepts, principles and rules of the areas of law studied as part of the course;
Identify relevant institutions and participants in law and demonstrate the ability to appreciate law in its context;
Apply relevant rules and principles to the resolution of problems and demonstrate the ability to develop arguments in actual or hypothetical situations;
Demonstrate independent research skills and the ability to identify and locate relevant sources, including electronic resources, relevant to the subjects studied;
Demonstrate analytical ability, the capacity to appreciate critical arguments and the ability to synthesise arguments;
Communicate, orally and in writing, with a view to presenting arguments or analyses as well as participating in discussions in support of the above outcomes and with view to completing formative assessments on the course;
Complete a piece of self-initiated research for a legal issue or topic not examined under any of seven foundations of legal knowledge;
Assume responsibility for developing appropriate legal skills and awareness of professional developments through extra-curricular engagement in law school activities.

Course Structure

You will take 150 credits.

Year	Term	Module	Credits
Year One	Autumn	Introduction to the English Legal System	15
	Autumn	Public Law	15
	Autumn	Criminal Law	15
	Autumn	Law and Policy of the EU	15
	Autumn	Dissertation	30
	Autumn	Self-Development and Legal Education	0
Year One	Spring	Law of Contract	15
	Spring	Law of Tort	15
	Spring	Land Law	15
	Spring	Equity and Trusts	15
	Spring	Dissertation	30
	Spring	Self-Development and Legal Education	0

Teaching and Learning

There are many different types of teaching and learning at Sussex at you will encounter some or all of these throughout different stages of your study.

Seminars

The seminar comprises a tutor and a group of students. The group discusses a topic drawn from the readings for the module or the topic of a lecture. You are expected to prepare for each seminar and the tutor will try to ensure that everyone has a full part to play in discussions.

Lectures

The lecture is led by an academic member of staff and should provide you with an overview of the different perspectives for the topic under consideration.

Self –Directed Learning

The seminars and lectures will provide you with the resources to develop your skills as self-directed, independent learner. Your engagement with your subject will develop and you will take more responsibility for choosing where to focus your reading, the topics that interest you and the development of your own academic skills.

Academic Advisor

Your Advisor can provide you with advice and assistance on academic matters, discuss feedback and will supervise your general progress. You may also need someone to provide you with a reference, your Advisor will be able to do this- make sure they get to know you! You should ensure you make arrangements to see your Advisor during the last week of the Spring Term to discuss your work to date. Details of your Advisor are found on Sussex Direct along with office hours and contact information, if you wish to see them outside of these times, email them for an appointment.

Lecture Capture

Information as to whether lecture capture is available for your modules will be provided by module convenors/lecturers.

Lecture recording is provided to supplement and enhance the student learning experience and **not** as a replacement for student contact hours. You are still expected to attend all timetabled teaching sessions.

Canvas

The virtual learning environment used for all your modules. You will be able to find, as appropriate, module information and resources such as module handbooks, lecture handouts, readings etc. <https://studymdirect.sussex.ac.uk/login/>

Sussex Direct

The administrative hub for all students and staff, you will be able to find information on timetables, exams and assessments, module marks etc.

<https://direct.sussex.ac.uk/login.php>

The Library

In addition to the books, documents, official publications and audio-visual items held in the Library building, you can access Library information and collections, including eBooks, online journals via the internet. You will need your University ID card, which doubles as your library card for your time at University. Find out more information at www.sussex.ac.uk/library

Skills Hub

The Skills Hub website (www.sussex.ac.uk/skillshub) brings together all the resources available to you at Sussex to help you develop your skills in these key areas:

- Writing and referencing
- Library and research
- IT Skills
- Exams and assessments
- Employability
- Personal development

Assessment

How your work is marked

Any work you submit for formal assessment is marked by a team of internal academic staff, who have all received training on the marking scheme and providing feedback. In addition following marking a process of moderation takes place, this checks that the marking has been carried out consistently and according to approved marking criteria. Moderation is carried out internally by someone independent of the module and a sample of assessments is seen by an external examiner.

Marking Criteria

Mark %	Degree Class	Comment
85-100	First – Distinction for the GDL	Work of exceptional quality that shows an excellent command of the subject in question and originality in thought and extent of knowledge required.

70-84	First – Distinction for the GDL	Work that shows an excellent, though not necessarily faultless, command of the subject in questions, together with elements of originality in thought and in the extent of the knowledge acquired.
60-69	Upper second (2i) Merit for the GDL	Work that shows an above average command of the subject in question, possessing qualities of thoroughness, conscientiousness, and insight.
50-59	Lower second (2ii) Pass for the GDL	Work that reveals the student has acquired a basic command of the material covered in the module.
40-49	Third Pass for the GDL	Work that shows some understanding of the material covered in the module, but of a poor quality and with elements of misunderstanding and lack of thoroughness.
0-39	Fail	Work that fails to come up to the standard expected of university students admitted to an honours degree.

Guidelines distributed to tutors to assist in marking written work

Marks between 85% and 100%
A mark in this range is indicative of outstanding work. Marks in this range will be awarded for work that exhibits all the attributes of excellent work but has very substantial elements of originality and flair. Marks at the upper end of the range will indicate that the work is of publishable, or near publishable academic standard.
Marks between 70% and 84%
A mark in this range is indicative that the work is of an excellent standard for the current level of your degree course. The work will exhibit excellent levels of knowledge and understanding comprising all the qualities of good work stated above, with additional elements of originality and flair. The work will demonstrate a range of critical reading that goes well beyond that provided on reading lists. Answers or essays will be fluently written and include independent argument that demonstrates and awareness of the nuances and assumptions of the question or title. Essays will make excellent use of appropriate, fully referenced, detailed examples.
Marks between 60% and 69%
A mark in this range is indicative of good to very good work that holds great promise for future standards. Work of this quality shows a good level of knowledge and understanding of relevant module material. It will show evidence of reading a wide diversity of material and of being able to use ideas gleaned from this reading to support and develop arguments. Essay work will exhibit good writing skills with well organised, accurate footnotes and or a bibliography that follows the accepted 'style' of the subject. Arguments and issues will be illustrated by reference to well documented, detailed and relevant examples. There should be clear evidence of critical engagement with the objects, issues or topics being analysed. Any quantitative work will be clearly presented, the results should be correct and any conclusions clearly and accurately expressed.
Marks between 50% and 59%
A mark in this range is indicative that the work is satisfactory to very satisfactory. Work of this quality will show clear knowledge and understanding of relevant

module material. It will focus on the essay title or the question posed and show evidence that relevant basic works of reference have been read and understood. The work will exhibit sound essay writing and/or analytical skills. It will be reasonably well structured and coherently presented. Essay work should exhibit satisfactory use of footnotes and/or a bibliography and in more quantitative work it should be possible to follow the logical steps leading to the answer obtained and the conclusions reached. Arguments and issues should be discussed and illustrated by reference to examples, but these may not be fully documented or detailed.

Marks between 40% and 49%

A mark in this range is indicative that the work is of an acceptable standard. Work of this type will show limited knowledge and understanding of relevant module material. It will show evidence of some reading and comprehension, but the essay or answer may be weakly structured, cover only a limited range of the relevant material or have a weakly developed or incomplete argument. The work will exhibit weak essay writing or analytical skills. It may be poorly presented without properly laid out footnotes and/or a bibliography, or in the case of quantitative work, it may not be possible to follow the several steps in the logic and reasoning leading to the results obtained and the conclusions reached.

Marks below 40%

20-39%

A mark in this range is indicative that the work is below, but at the upper end is approaching, the standard required to pass. It indicates weak work that is below the standard required. This will be because either the work is too short, is very poorly organized, or is poorly directed at the essay title or question asked. It will show very limited knowledge or understanding of the relevant module material and display weak writing and/or analytical skills. Essay work will exhibit no clear argument, may have very weak spelling and grammar, very inadequate or absent reference and/or bibliography and may contain major factual errors. Quantitative work will contain significant errors and incorrect conclusions.

0-19%

A mark in this range is indicative that the work is far below the standard required. It indicates that the work is extremely weak and well below degree standard. This will be because either the work is far too short, is badly jumbled and incoherent in content, or fails to address the essay title or question asked. It will show very little evidence of knowledge or understanding of the relevant module material and may exhibit very weak writing and/or analytical skills.

External Examiner

External examiners provide an important and independent input into the assessment process helping to ensure that quality and standards are maintained are in line with practice across the sector. External examiner details for each module can be provided by the module convenor.

Feedback

What is Feedback?¹

Feedback is an essential part of your learning at university and should help you to understand the areas in which you are doing well and what you can do to improve and progress. Feedback:

- Helps you to assess your own learning and reflect on your development
- Allows you to discuss your learning with your tutors
- Helps you to understand what is expected of you and what good performance is
- Provides you with information about your learning
- Motivates you and encourages you to think positively about your learning

What feedback is not...

- **A justification for your mark.** For some pieces of work you will receive a grade and feedback comments. The comments are not a justification for your mark. Your mark will reflect your achievement for that particular piece of work, whilst the feedback can provide you with much more, including suggestions to consider for your next piece of work.
- **Every aspect of your assessment.** In providing feedback your tutors will select and comment on the most important areas that you've done well at and where you can improve (e.g. if it doesn't mention spelling mistakes that's not to say that you didn't make any or if it doesn't mention that you showed a good understanding of a primary text - that is not to say that you didn't demonstrate this). Tutor's carefully select their feedback in order to best help your learning.
- **The end of a process.** Often you will receive feedback some time after completing a piece of work, when you may be more focussed on your next assignment. However, good feedback at university is designed to contribute to your ongoing development and you should think about how you can make best use of feedback on previous work to help you improve the next piece.

What does feedback look like?

There are lots of different types of feedback, and you should expect to receive different types during your time at Sussex. It is not always linked to assessment so

- **Written Feedback** Perhaps the most obvious type of feedback you will receive will be the marks and comments which your tutors will give for your submitted work. You may get this feedback online, via Sussex Direct, or as comments written on your work.
- **Verbal Feedback** You may receive verbal feedback during seminars or other teaching sessions. You may also receive recorded verbal assessment

¹ Content from the Using Feedback section on the S3 website: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=57> (accessed 14 July 2015).

feedback where assignments have been submitted electronically. Be proactive, ask for a meeting with staff to discuss your feedback. Feedback may also be given directly after a presentation or discussion, it's important to capture this feedback, take notes or ask if it can be recorded.

- **Peer Feedback** Discussing ideas with other people on your course can be a good way of developing your ideas. If you are struggling with concepts, other students may be able to explain them to you in a way that you understand. They may also be able to suggest readings that they found useful or relevant.

You can find out lots more about the types of feedback and to use it effectively at the Study Success at Sussex Website <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=58>

Academic Integrity

Academic Misconduct

The University takes academic misconduct very seriously, full details of the regulations along with the penalties for any misconduct can be found in the University Examination and Assessment Regulations, available online at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment>

Examples of Academic Misconduct include:

- Collusion- working with others on tasks that should be carried out individually.
- Plagiarism- taking and using the intellectual work of other people without acknowledgement.
- Personation- getting another person to prepare your assessments or sit an exam for you.
- Misconduct in unseen exams accessing or attempting to gain access to unauthorised material, or communicating with others in the exam room.
- Fabrication of results- making up the results of experiments and other research.

All students should refer to the Study Success at Sussex web pages

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/> for more information and guidance on good academic referencing skills or speak to their Academic Advisors when in any doubt.

Plagiarism

All the work you produce must be entirely your own work, though of course this will be informed by what you have read, heard and discussed. It is very important that you avoid plagiarism: the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as if they were your own.

Plagiarism is defined in the Examination and Assessment Regulations² as:

'Plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people, and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one's own in written work submitted for assessment. To copy sentences, phrases or even striking expressions without acknowledgement of the source (either by inadequate citation or failure to indicate verbatim quotations), is plagiarism; to paraphrase without acknowledgement is likewise plagiarism. Where such copying or paraphrasing has occurred the mere mention of the source in the bibliography shall not be deemed sufficient acknowledgement; each such instance must be referred specifically to its source. Verbatim quotations must be either in inverted commas, or indented, and directly acknowledged.'

² The 2018-19 Regulations were not available at the time this handbook was prepared. Check this year's Regulations, once they are available on the University website, for any changes.

Plagiarism is a serious examination offence, your mark may be reduced (possibly to zero) if you are found to have plagiarised. To avoid plagiarism, intentional or unintentional be careful to record all sources in your notes and make sure you provide accurate references in all your written assignments.

Referencing

Please note that SLS has approved the **Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA)** as the primary referencing system to be used by students. For more information about OSCOLA and our own guidance on the importance of referencing correctly and how to do it, please consult the **SLS Guide to Referencing**. This can be found in the **Important Information about your Modules** handbook available on the Canvas sites for your course, with other information about OSCOLA and referencing also posted on Canvas. We recognise that precision in referencing will improve over time, as your skills in this area develop.

Student Feedback

The Department really values your input on what is working well and your suggestions as to how things could be improved. There are a number of opportunities for you to provide feedback throughout your time at Sussex so do make the most of them!

Student Representatives

Student Representatives serve a vital connection and communication channel between staff and students. Anyone can stand for the position so it may be something you would want to consider. It's important to know who your representatives are in case you have any difficulties or suggestions which need to be passed on to staff.

Feedback to Staff

Do talk to members of staff about your modules, seminars and lectures throughout the year. Provide feedback on things that have been successful but also suggest where you think improvements can be made.

Module Evaluation Questionnaires

Regular feedback from students helps to improve both our modules and our teaching. A 'Module Evaluation Questionnaire' is filled in by you anonymously. Do take these seriously as they can be of great assistance in identifying strengths and weaknesses. A report on all questionnaires from modules is discussed regularly by the Department. Members of staff look at their own results to see where improvements can be made.