**Programme Specification for LLM in Professional Practice (Top-Up)**

| This document applies to Academic Year 2020/21 onwards |
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| 1. | Awarding institution/body | University of Worcester |
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| 2. | Teaching institution | University of Worcester |
| 3. | Programme accredited by | N/A |
| 4. | Final award or awards | LLM |
| 5. | Programme title | LLM Professional Practice (Top-Up) |
| 6. | Pathways available | N/A |
| 7. | Mode and/or site of delivery | University of Worcester |
| 8. | Mode of attendance and duration | Part Time over 12 months |
| 9. | UCAS Code | N/A |
| 10. | Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement | QAA Master's Degree Characteristics (2020) |
| 11. | Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision | Approved July 2019.<br>August 2019 – AQU amendments to Section 19.<br>February 2020 - Programme title changed from LLM in Legal Practice (Top Up) [APPG19.052 January 2020].<br>August 2020 – AQU Amendments. |

## 12.   Educational aims of the programme

The LLM Professional Practice (Top-Up) at University of Worcester aims to provide an intellectually stimulating and cohesive programme of legal study. The programme is designed to enable students to convert their existing Diploma in Legal Practice to a full Masters qualification. Through the range of intellectual, practical and transferable skills developed on the programme, graduates will also be well placed to prosper in a variety of fields of employment including, amongst others, law, the criminal justice system, education, business management and financial compliance.

Specific aims of the programme include:
- To give students a detailed understanding of legal research methods and methodologies;
- To enable students to engage in detailed and in depth research into a chosen area of law;
- To enable students to become independent learners and researchers and to develop general critical, analytical and problem solving skills;
- To develop personal and other key skills appropriate for employment or advancement in the legal profession and elsewhere.

## 13.   Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

| Knowledge and Understanding |
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| LO no. | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: |
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| 1. | Demonstrate detailed and systematic knowledge and understanding of the principles of a chosen area of law or legal practice, including its ethical, socio-economic context; |
| 2. | Critically appraise and understand a range of research methodologies and be able to select and apply appropriate methodologies in their own work; |

| 3. | Apply knowledge of the law gained through current or prior study or employment to address issues of concern in the subject area. |
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| **Cognitive and Intellectual skills** |
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| 4. | Critically evaluate law, legal developments, research and advanced scholarship in chosen areas of law or legal practice; |
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| 5. | Write in a clear, coherent and appropriate way in the context of an area of study; |
| 6. | Deal with complex issues systematically and creatively to reach sound judgements; |
| 7 | Demonstrate autonomy in planning and implementing an independent programme of research. |

| **Skills and capabilities related to employability** |
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| 8. | Work independently and autonomously; |
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| 9. | Critically evaluate research relating to contemporary issues in legal practice; |
| 10. | Contextualise their academic studies in legal and professional practice, recognising the wider business, commercial and social context. |

| **Transferable/key skills** |
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| 11. | Demonstrate problem solving skills in a variety of contexts and situations; |
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| 12. | Communicate effectively and appropriately in a professional context; |
| 13. | Organise and assimilate complex information and evaluate competing arguments. |

**Learning, teaching and assessment**

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy is designed to provide for a flexible delivery with a combination of part time evening teaching supported by technologically enhanced learning to enable students to complete the Programme alongside their work commitments. The strategy is predicated on a high degree of independent study, with the taught elements being designed to provide suitable levels of informed support.

The research methods component is designed to develop skills of advanced legal research which can then be utilised in the development of a dissertation that enables students to gain in depth knowledge and develop higher critical skills of reasoning and evaluation when exploring a specialist legal topic.

**Teaching**

Teaching is delivered through a combination of interactive workshops designed to develop skills of legal research and supervisory tutorials designed to support students through their research journey. These are delivered both on campus and online through the University Virtual Learning Environment.

Students are appointed a supervisor at the beginning of their studies who will provide ongoing support throughout both modules.

In addition to the formal scheduled delivery of the programme, students will have the opportunity to engage fully in the life of the School of Law including attending and participating in research seminars and conferences.

The University places emphasis on enabling students to develop the independent learning capabilities that will equip them for lifelong learning and future employment, as well as academic achievement. A mixture of independent study, teaching and academic support from Student Services and Library Services enables students to reflect on progress and build up a profile of skills, achievements and experiences that will help them to flourish and be successful.

**Contact time**
The total amount of study time on this course is calculated with reference to the module credit, meaning that 60 Credits equates to 600 hours of study time in total. By the very nature of this course, most of this time is taken up with independent self-study.

The Legal Research Methods Course includes 4 three hour interactive workshops and 6 one hour supervisory sessions. The workshops are taught over 4 weeks in the evening.

The Dissertation module includes 4 three hour workshops and 6 hours of scheduled supervisory sessions.

Supervisory can be delivered face to face at the School of Law or virtually at a distance.

**Independent self-study**
In addition to the contact time, students will undertake 564 hours of personal self-study over the year.

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including The Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive access electronic learning resources, including legal databases such as Westlaw and Lexis.

**Teaching staff**
Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. The team includes solicitors, barristers and legal academics.

Teaching is informed by research and consultancy, and 85% of lecturers on the course have a higher education teaching qualification or are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy.

**Assessment**
The course provides opportunities to test understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or 'formative' assignments. Each module has one formal or 'summative' assessment which is graded and counts towards the overall module grade.

As students on the Programme will already have completed 120 credits of post graduate study composed of structured taught learning opportunities, the 60 credits which make up the LLM Professional Practice (Top-Up) are devoted to the preparation for and the creation of a research project in the form of a dissertation. The assessment is divided between the plan for a dissertation in the Legal Research Methods module and the Dissertation itself. In most instances the Research Plan will be on the same research topic as the final dissertation, however students can undertake a different research topic if advised to do so by their supervisor.

Assessments include a 3000 word research proposal for the Research Methods module and a 10000 word dissertation for the Dissertation Module.

## 14. Assessment strategy

The assessment strategy is designed with reference to the *University's Assessment Policy,* the learning, teaching and assessment statement and the *QAA Masters Degree Characteristics* and the ongoing research into legal education including the Legal Education and Training Review.

At Masters Level, graduates are required to demonstrate lucidity and coherence in structured argument to defend their ideas and their process of realisation. Students will be required to read and research widely, reflect upon the material gathered and structure synthesised ideas into a critical, coherent argument, culminating in a practical conclusion.

The assessment methods include formative assessment to enable students to build on feedback in summative tasks. The assessments in the two modules are also constructively aligned with the Research Proposal in the Legal Research module being the Research Proposal for the final Dissertation.

Specific assessment and marking criteria, benchmarked to the University generic descriptors, are provided for each item of assessment.

## 15. Programme structures and requirements

| Module Code | Module Title | Credits (Number) | Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **LLM** |
| LLML4002 | Legal Research Methods | 15 | M |
| LLML4001 | Dissertation | 45 | M |
| | **Total** | **60** | |

## 16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

This award is located at Level 7 of the FHEQ. Programme design has been informed by the *QAA Master's Degree Characteristics* which have been employed to craft learning outcomes and content as well as learning, teaching and assessment strategies of all modules.

Programme design is also influences by the ongoing academic and professional debate into Legal Education and informed by publications such as the Legal Education and Training Review 2013.

## 17. Support for students

The following activities and documents have been put in place to provide support for students:

- Induction to include a brief course overview, introduction to the delivery pattern and assessment for the programme and specific modules, introduction to the VLE and learning resources

- VLE site to provide learning resources and module information, exchange ideas and information between course members and staff

- Programme Leader as a point of contact for overarching programme questions and concerns

- Course handbook (available via the VLE) incorporating module outlines, key contacts and guidance for assessments

- Allocated Supervisors who will play a Personal Academic Support Tutor role to help students' integration into the University, the requirements of the programme and make the best use of learning resources available and to provide a key contact for support

- Access to course information, module results via the student online learning environment (SOLE)

- Student Representation through a staff/student forum to provide feedback to the course team and enhance the on-going development of the programme

- Support from ICT staff, through the Information Desk and Study Guides to guide students in effective use of virtual and paper based resources

- Support for disabled students via Student Services and the Disability and Dyslexia Service. http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm o http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm

## 18. Admissions

**Admissions policy**

The LLM Professional Practice (Top-Up) is designed for graduates who have already completed an undergraduate degree and also a post graduate diploma in legal studies, who wish to convert their qualification into a full Master's degree. It is suitable for practitioners currently employed in the legal sector and is specifically designed so that they can study part time alongside their full time commitments.

**Entry requirements**

Successful applicants to the LLM Professional Practice (Top-Up) must have passed the Legal Practice Course, the Bar Professional Training Course or an equivalent post graduate diploma legal practice qualification. International students must have a minimum of IELTS score of 6.5 and a minimum of 6.0 in each element.

**Recognition of Prior Learning**

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm

**Admissions procedures**

All applications are sent by admissions for an academic decision by the Head of Law. All UK students who are offered a place will be invited to a University applicant day event. International students will be offered a Skype meeting with a member of the law team. All applicants apply directly to University of Worcester (UW)

**Admissions/selection criteria**

Successful applicants to the LLM Professional Practice (Top-Up) must have passed the Legal Practice Course, the Bar Professional Training Course or an equivalent post graduate diploma legal practice qualification.

19.    **Regulation of assessment**

**The course operates under the University's <u>Taught Courses Regulatory Framework</u>**

**Requirements to pass modules**
- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

**Submission of assessment items**
- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 7 days (one week) of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

**Retrieval of failure**
- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE).  It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

**Requirements for Awards**

| Award | Requirement |
|---|---|
| Masters (LLM) | Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map |

The awards of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

**Classification of Masters**

The classification will be determined by the following method.

a) Candidates will be awarded a Distinction where they have attained an average of A- (PD) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the award.
b) Candidates will be awarded a Merit where they have attained an average of C+ (PM) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the award.

For further information on honours degree classification, see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

20.    **Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers**

**Graduate destinations**

Upon successful completion of the LLM  Professional Practice, there may be opportunities for students to gain further employment, promotion within their own organisation, gain international employment or move to a senior management position in other organisations. The LLM also provides a platform to other research/higher degrees and promotion in other professional organisations. The completion of the Masters may also provide students with the ability to enhance their current working practices. Completion of this degree also enables interested students to pursue higher level research qualifications.  A wide range of employers were consulted with and provided support and advice for the structure and content of the course, and its relationship to existing professional practice and employability.

**Student employability**

The LLM Professional Practice (Top-Up) gives students the opportunity to build on and hone their existing knowledge of an area legal practice, giving them the research and analytical skills necessary to develop a detailed and extensive knowledge and understanding of an area of law relevant to their existing practice.

**Links with employers**

The development of the LLM Professional Practice (Top-Up) has been informed by consultation with a broad range of legal professionals.  The School of Law has excellent links with the profession and all of the law programmes at Worcester have been developed with the needs of the profession in mind.

**Graduate destinations**

Students undertake this course for a variety of reasons and these are reflected in their career trajectories during the course and after graduation. The reflective elements of the course encourage learners to evaluate their own experience, skills, knowledge and employability.


**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.  More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.