CORPORATE AND ACADEMIC SERVICES

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Part 1: Basic Data						
Module Title	Research Methods					
Module Code	UJGUP7-15-M		Level	M	Version	1.1
Owning Faculty	FBL		Field	Law Postgraduate		
Contributes towards	LLM in Commercial Law LLM in Environmental Law and Sustainable Development LLM in International Banking and Finance Law LLM in International Law LLM in International Trade and Economic Law LLM Global Trade					
UWE Credit Rating	15	ECTS Credit Rating	7.5	Module Type	Standard	
Pre-requisites	None		Co- requisites	None		
Excluded Combinations	None		Module Entry requirements			
First CAP Approval Date	QMAC December 2011		Valid from	1 September 2012		
Revision CAP Approval Date	26 March 2015		Revised with effect from	September 2015		

Review Date	September 2018

Part 2: Learning and Teaching
Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the module, students are expected to demonstrate:

- a critical understanding of the range of research methodologies and methods that can be used in legal research, in particular an appreciation of the scope and limits of doctrinal legal research [assessed in components A and B];

- an ability to critically analyse the strengths, weaknesses and practicalities of undertaking different types of legal research [assessed in components A and B];

- an ability to critically analyse legal research from the perspective of the methodology and methods adopted therein [assessed in components A and B];

- an ability to locate a wide range of legal research through independent library and ICT-based research activities [assessed in components A and B];

- an ability to develop a rigorous legal research project, dissertation or plan

	for work-based project which engages effectively with methodological concerns and good academic practice [assessed in component B];
	• an awareness of the standards of good academic writing and practice, which can be used throughout the student's LLM studies, including the ethical implications of different choices in legal research [assessed in components A and B];
	• Communication skills, both oral and written, in the articulation of their own and others' approach to legal method and strategies in research [assessed in components A and B];
	• an ability to reflect effectively on the nature of what they do in order that they can do it better [assessed in components A and B]
	On completion of this module, students should have the following transferable skills:
	• ability to present a structured argument at both abstract and concrete levels in the subject area [assessed in components A and B];
	• ability to recognise problems and identify solutions [assessed in components A and B];
	• ability to analyse, evaluate and reflect upon complex materials relating to the subject area [assessed in components A and B];
	• ability to undertake independent research [assessed in components A and B];
	• ability to work in groups; and
	• an awareness of and sensitivity to issues of diversity in both classroom and research contexts, achieved through both active participation in group work and the discussion of power and respect for those being researched in workshops.
Syllabus Outline	Research Methods facilitates the development of the student's own approach to legal research by introducing the student to key skills and concepts in a range of approaches to legal research. The analysis of distinctive aims, forms and priorities in different legal methodologies allows the student to develop their own 'best practice' in legal research through discussion and reflective practice. This is achieved through both forms of assessment, which encourage both the critical analysis of methodological concerns and the synthesis of new legal knowledge by contextualizing abstract methodological concerns in relation to both existing research, students' own dissertation research or participation in work-based projects. By the end of the module the student will be able to produce a comprehensive and critical literature review and establish a programme of research or activity with likely outcomes.
	Research Methods supports effective student achievement on the postgraduate programme, given that it is only after undertaking a literature review and establishing, by choice of methodology, a research project and its likely outcomes, that the substantive research undertaken will be of the appropriate level. This is particularly the case in relation to the dissertation. It also supports effective student achievement by providing a forum in which communication skills and techniques can be discussed and developed.
	The following is a list of topics that will be explored in the seminars. The emphasis may shift where there is a shift in relative importance. The exact content of these workshops may be changed to reflect more recent developments or interests in this subject area.
	• Doctrinal approaches to legal research • Socio-legal approaches to legal research • Empirical approaches to the legal research • Developing written and oral communication skills

	• Comparative approaches to legal research • Feminist Approaches to legal research
Contact Hours/Scheduled Hours	12 x 2 hour workshops Scheduled contact is supplemented by independent learning structured around reading and questions set in advance. In addition, students are encouraged to attend seminars organised by the Centre for Legal Research and the Research Units of the Department of Law.

Teaching and Learning Methods	The main focus of teaching and learning on the taught LLM programme is through independent research and debate in the context of 2 hour weekly workshops. The workshop-based approach to teaching and learning is designed to enable the student to develop the independent research, analytical and reflective skills required for successful completion of a postgraduate level course. Students will need to complete the necessary preparatory reading and study of any set case materials in advance of each workshop. From each workshop, the student will be expected to have developed a general mastery of the subject under consideration. In addition, students will be expected to raise, critically assess and defend different points of view on controversial issues in class and to make presentations to the class on their own and in groups. **Scheduled learning** for this module is in the form of workshops. The activities covered in workshops may include lectures, seminars, tutorials, group discussions, group exercises, role play, case studies, presentations by students and staff, in groups or individually, debates and other activities such as films or video and online discussions. **Independent learning** includes hours engaged with essential reading, case study preparation, preparation for oral presentations, assignment preparation and completion etc. **Distance Learning** Research Methods is also available as a distance-learning option for certain pre-identified groups of students. While the basic seminar structure remains unaltered, students learn primarily through online learning materials that guide the students through the readings and provide numerous opportunities for self-assessment and reflection. Tutors also provide email and 'live' online support opportunities. Each study unit culminates with a 2 hour online workshop where the work accomplished through their online learning is tested, applied and discussed.
Reading Strategy	All students will be encouraged to make full use of the print and electronic resources available to them through membership of the University. These include a range of journals (both print and electronic) and a wide variety of resources available through web sites and information gateways. This is particularly relevant with this module, as its focus on underpinning methodological concerns in legal research means that a diverse range of sources and examples can be drawn upon in teaching. The University's Library website pages provide access to subject relevant resources and services, and to the library catalogue. Many resources can be accessed remotely. Students will be presented with opportunities to develop their information retrieval and evaluation skills in order to identify appropriate resources effectively. This module is supported by Blackboard, where students will be able to find all necessary module documentation, to include guidance on essential and further reading within the module outline. Direct links to information resources and digitised materials will also be provided from within Blackboard.

	Any essential reading will be indicated clearly, along with the method for accessing it, for instance, students are expected to purchase a set text (currently Henn et al, details below) or will be referred to texts that are available electronically or elsewhere. The set text is supported by extensive reference to a wide variety of other sources, books and academic articles, the vast majority of which can be accessed electronically through digital services or as e-books. Where possible electronic versions will be made available via Blackboard. The reading list will be made available in the module outline which will be accessible via Blackboard and through any other vehicle deemed appropriate by the module/programme leaders.
	If further reading is expected, this will be indicated clearly. If specific texts are listed, a clear indication will be given regarding how to access them and, if appropriate, students will be given guidance on how to identify relevant sources for themselves, for instance, through use of bibliographical databases. Essential reading and additional reading will be distinguished. Where the readings are books, a selection of readings will be indicated for the individual sessions.
Indicative Reading List	***Indicative Reading List:*** **Recommended Texts** The following are recommended as useful general texts and provide an indication of the type and level of information that students will be expected to use. Current advice on reading will be made available in the module outline which will be accessible via Blackboard. M Henn, et al, *A Critical Introduction to Social Research* (2nd edn, Sage 2009) P Clinch, *Using a Law Library: A Student's Guide to Legal Research Skills* (Blackstone 2001) Chs. 3-8 F Cownie, *Legal Academics: Culture and Identities* (Hart 2004) M Salter, *Writing law dissertations: an introduction and guide to the conduct of legal research* (Pearson 2007) N Gilbert, *Researching Social Life* (3rd edn, Sage 2009) G Holborn, *Legal Research Guide* (Butterworths 2001), Chs. 1 -5 R Hunter et al (eds), *Feminist Judgments – from Theory to Practice* (Hart 2010) (to be made available as e-book) P Thomas and J Knowles, *How to Use a Law Library* (Sweet & Maxwell 2001) chapters 1-7 K Bartlett, 'Feminist Legal Methods' (1990) 103 HLR 829 A Bradney, 'Law as a Parasitic Discipline' (1998) JLS 71-84 H Collins, 'Methods and Aims of Comparative Contract Law' (1991) 11 OJLS 396-406 R Deech, 'Divorce Law and Empirical Studies' (1990) 106 LQR 229-245 D Feldman, 'The Nature of Legal Scholarship' (1989) 52 MLR 498 D Harris, 'Socio-legal studies in the United Kingdom' (1983) 3(3) LS 315 R Posner, 'Legal Scholarship Today' (2002) 115 HLR 1314 D Rhode, 'Legal Scholarship (2002) 115 HLR 1327 P Selznick, 'Law in Context Revisited' (2003) 30(2) JLS 177

	C Smart, 'The Woman of Legal Discourse' (1992) 1 Social & Legal Studies 29
	Recommended databases and internet sources: Lexis Library Westlaw Hein Online **Legal Journals** Journal of Law and Society Modern Law Review Social and Legal Studies Feminist Legal Studies Harvard Law Review Law Quarterly Review Legal Studies

Part 3: Assessment		
Assessment Strategy	Learning outcomes will be assessed by a poster presentation and written coursework. Assessment questions will be set by tutors. Both assessments require students to undertake independent research building on material covered in the workshop sessions. Both assessments are designed with the specific aim of helping students to connect the ideas and practices of good academic research with the study and research they will conduct throughout the whole LLM. The coursework assessment is designed to support students in preparing their dissertation or work based project as outlined in the Dissertation module specification.	

Identify final assessment component and element	**Component A**	

	A:	**B**:
% weighting between components A and B (Standard modules only)	25%	75%

First Sit

Component A (controlled conditions) **Description of each element**	**Element weighting** (as % of component)
1. Poster Presentation and Questions (15 minutes)	100%
Component B **Description of each element**	**Element weighting** (as % of component)
1. Written coursework essay (maximum 4000 words)	100%

Resit (further attendance at taught classes is not required)

Component A (controlled conditions) **Description of each element**	**Element weighting** (as % of component)
1. Poster Presentation and Questions (15 minutes)	100%
Component B **Description of each element**	**Element weighting** (as % of component)
1. Written coursework essay (maximum 4000 words)	100%

If a student is permitted a retake of the module the assessment will be that indicated by the Module Description at the time that retake commences.