University of the
West of England
BRISTOL

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Code: UJXU5B-15-3 **Title:** Independent Research Project   **Version:** 2

Level: 3   **UWE credit rating:** 15   **ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

Subject type: Non MAR subject (but Project module equivalent)

Owning Faculty: Business and Law

Faculty Committee approval: QSC   **Date:** 01/10/2008

Valid from: September 2009 (revised 2012)

Pre-requisites: None

Co-requisites: all 7 Foundation subjects and English Legal System

Excluded combinations: None

Learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion of the subject, the student will be able to
1. Demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a specific area of law within an identified topic which falls outside the syllabus content of the Foundation subjects

Intellectual skills

On successful completion of the subject, the student will demonstrate their ability to
1.   Plan and implement an appropriate legal research strategy in the context of a legal topic

Subject/Practical skills

On successful completion of the subject, the student will be able to
1.   Select relevant authorities and apply them in their response to the task
2.   Critically evaluate the subject matter of the project
3.   Produce a coherent response to the research task, as identified

Transferable/Key skills

On successful completion of the subject, the student will be able to
1.   Communicate their understanding of the subject matter of the project in a manner and style appropriate to the task
2.   Show time and information management skills by responding to a specific task requiring research in an area of law on which there has been no tuition
3.   Work independently, over an extended period of time, in planning and executing an appropriate research strategy

Syllabus outline:

Students are given a choice of topic for their Independent Research Project (IRP) from a list of tasks prepared by members of the teaching team, and will reflect staff teaching and research interests. In line with the JASB requirements for the "eighth area of legal study", the research topics will fall outside the taught syllabi of the seven Foundation subjects.

Teaching and learning methods:

The aim of the subject is to provide an opportunity for a sustained piece of independent research in an area of law additional to those areas studied within the seven Foundation subjects. Undertaking an individual research project towards the end of the course means that students can use the skills they have acquired on the course to analyse and discuss a topic which is of particular interest to them. They need to undertake research using primary and secondary sources and to be able to evaluate critically those sources to produce a coherent and well thought out argument.   Communication through the written word needs to be clear and concise as a maximum word limit of 5000 words is imposed on the project. Students will have already established writing skills through the production of coursework (four pieces in total) they will have undertaken formative coursework and will have received feedback on writing style in most of the core subjects prior to undertaking the project. Most topics call for analysis of the current state of the law and a requirement to consider as appropriate future developments and opportunities for reform in the particular area of the law chosen.

The IRP is an opportunity for students to both analyse legal information and communicate their findings efficiently in the context of an extended piece of their own work. They need to show a logic approach to argument to use language accurately and to document their sources correctly. It is also an opportunity for students to illustrate how they have learnt to take responsibility for their own independent learning.
Students will be encouraged to make full use of the printed and electronic resources available to them .These include (amongst other things) a range of printed case reports, legislation, texts and journals, as well as a range of electronic journals and a wide variety of resources available through web sites and information gateways (including online study and legal research sites provided by the Law Library). The University Library's web pages provide access to subject relevant resources and services, and to the library catalogue. Many resources can be accessed remotely.

We have increased the amount of initial guidance given to students by providing introductory lectures and workshops at the start of block 2 (Full-time) and Year 2 (Part time) when the project is to be completed. The lectures which are backed up by materials placed on Blackboard concentrate on writing style and presentation.
In the workshops which are delivered by the law librarians revision is given on research methods and help give with advanced research concentrating on journals as well as text books and then cases and legislation where appropriate.

The submission date for the project will normally be end April, early May. This should leave a period for revision of other subjects between submission of the IRP and the start of TB2 and Year 2 examinations.

Assessment

A 4000 to 5000 word response to a specific task, using the template for coursework and the IRP, the work should fall between 12 and 15 pages of the template.