

## Welcome to the School of Law!

Congratulations on gaining a place to study with us. As Director of Undergraduate Studies, I believe this information will be useful to you before you join us.

### Teaching and learning methods

The School of Law at Manchester is an inspiring place to study Criminology. In the School of Law there are over 70 acknowledged experts in law, criminology and ethics and you will be working alongside some of the brightest and best students in the country.

It is important to remember that university is not the same as school. The approach to teaching is much different as it is important to develop your skills as an independent learner and to encourage you to take responsibility for your own learning.

Teaching is a mixture of classroom based workshops, lectures, seminars and guided independent study that will require you work on your own and with your peers in developing and designing presentations. Independent study will also require you to engage with the academic literature, journal articles, academic books and text books, as this will help you to understand your subject and to write assignments. You will receive a reading list for each course unit and this will guide you on which material to read but we can't read it for you.

The importance of independent study is that you need to think about the most effective ways of managing your time, balancing between different course units and the other demands of university life. How you manage this balance is important and your personal adviser will be happy to help you develop strategies that work for you. Getting this right in the first year can mean that you will be equipped to analyse situations; question points of view; and openly discuss your own ideas.

It helps that The University of Manchester is committed to continuous investment in state-of-the-art facilities. With one of the largest academic libraries in the UK and more than 10,000 PCs across campus, and a common room for all bachelors' students, our study facilities are excellent.

### Scheduled teaching and learning activities

#### Teaching sessions

Each course unit has three hours of classroom based teaching per week (one of which is a seminar hour). This can vary from interactive learning where you are expected to engage with the teaching topic and debate your ideas. The course unit guide will indicate the relevant reading for the teaching session and this will provide you with a background to the subject. Some teaching sessions are lectures but again you are expected to interact in the lecture room with your colleagues.

## Seminars

There is one seminar per week for each course unit. Seminars are on average 12 students with a dedicated seminar taker from the teaching staff. Seminars are important as they provide the opportunity for you to explore the subject in more detail, to debate your ideas with others and to test your understanding of the subject matter. Seminars are a supportive environment that respect each other's ideas and approaches to the topic. Seminars rely on your input and you must be prepared to both prepare for them and actively take part in them. Seminars have the advantage of helping you integrate your learning of the course unit and across different courses.

## e-Learning

We have a virtual learning environment (VLE) called Blackboard (BB). Material you need for each course is posted there by each Course Director so that you can study online in your own time. You can also download papers, take part, or even set up, on-line discussions and take online tests, and get access to audio and video material. You can also access BB on the go on your mobile phone or tablet.

## Feedback and advice sessions

One hour drop-in sessions are held every week for every course – take advantage of them! They are held by members of staff teaching on the course and times will be posted on Blackboard. They will help you to get any extra support you feel you may need – particularly if you have not understood something in a lecture or a seminar.

## Legal study skills and criminology careers sessions

At Manchester you'll have access to our annual programme of employability workshops, which are facilitated by City and local law firms, barristers' chambers and criminal justice organisations. Go to them and they really will help you to develop skills that you will need when the time comes to start applying for a job (much earlier than you think!).

The current programme includes:

- **Advocacy skills** – delivered by a leading QC and Head of Chambers in Manchester.
- **Law in the City** - for first year law students, organised by five leading City law firms. This involves a day in London with: talks; interactive sessions; and the opportunity to meet and quiz graduate recruiters, trainee solicitors and lawyers from each firm.
- **Interview skills** – delivered by a former partner of a large City law firm, an alumnus of Manchester.
- **Criminology careers in focus** – delivered by professionals from a range of criminology-related professions, open to all students.
- **Criminology skills sessions** – organised in association with the careers service, providing the opportunity to audit skills, learn how to enhance employability skills, get involved with volunteering and other sessions.

## Unscheduled teaching and learning activities

A wide range of non-course specific teaching and learning activities are available to our students at various levels of their studies including:

- A full First year Induction programme which includes a meeting with your academic advisor. This is member of the academic staff who is allocated to you at the beginning of your studies and stays with you throughout your degree – she or he is always on hand to write references and deal with any academic or personal problems you may have during your time with us. They will contact you but you need to be proactive - get to know them.
- Coursework and written examination feedback sessions – engage with these – they are vital if you are to improve.

Below is some reading which you could start before you arrive so do try and do some of it – the skills books are particularly useful. I will see you all briefly on your first day and then we will get to know each other during the course of your degree. I'll look forward to it!

With very best wishes,

Norma Hird LL.B, LL.M  
Director of Undergraduate Studies

## Suggested reading for all our students

1. Read a good newspaper regularly.
2. TV programmes/news bulletins are very helpful. BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme is entertaining as well as informative; *Channel 4 news* generally has good coverage of international issues and *BBC Newsnight* reviews leading national and international events.
3. Try, if you can, to visit your local Magistrates' Court and/or Crown Court to get a sense of 'law in action'.
4. You will receive a text book when you arrive for Welcome as part of your Welcome pack. For Criminology this is Finch & Fafinski, *Criminology Skills*. This is a fantastic resource and you should refer to it throughout your studies.

We do not require that you buy any books before you arrive at University and you will be advised what books to buy for your specific modules during the first lectures, but for each degree course we have identified texts and websites that you may find interesting and useful as you begin your University degree. Try to read at least one of the following introductory books, as they'll be really useful: You may find these books in your local library or available second-hand.

### Reading for BA Criminology students

#### Books

- Weyers, J, McMillan, K. *The Study Skills Book* Pearson
- Maguire, M, Morgan, R, Reiner, R. *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* OUP
- Westmarland, L. *Researching Crime and Justice: Tales from the field* Routledge

#### Websites

- <http://blog.law.manchester.ac.uk/>
- <http://www.justice.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.gmp.police.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-probation-service>
- <http://crimbrary.blogspot.co.uk/>