

Welcome to the School of Law!

Congratulations on gaining a place to study with us. We look forward to meeting you soon and would like to give you some helpful information about your studies.

Teaching and learning methods

The School of Law at Manchester really is an inspiring place to study! You will be taught by over 70 acknowledged experts in law, criminology and ethics and will be working alongside some of the brightest and best law students in the country.

However, university is not the same as school or college. For a start, you will only have about 14 hours of scheduled, face-to-face contact time each week, probably much less than you have been used to. For the rest of the week we will expect you to be reading widely on your own: books, articles (and for the lawyers, cases) which will help you to develop the academic skills you will need for your undergraduate studies. Obviously, we will guide you on which material to read but we can't read it for you – working alone requires a degree of self-motivation and self-direction and you will need to be prepared to take responsibility for your learning. You will then be well equipped to analyse situations, question points of view and openly discuss your own ideas, which are the skills we expect School of Law graduates to develop in preparation for their future careers.

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, a common room for all degree students and a dedicated moot court, our study facilities are excellent.

Once Welcome Week is over, you will have an intensive two-week course on Legal Skills and Systems as an introduction to your legal studies. After that, you will start the lectures and seminars for your individual course units. LLB Law students will study four Law courses during the year, with weekly lectures and fortnightly seminars.

Lectures

Lectures are the most traditional form of teaching in universities and are an opportunity for lecturers to provide you with knowledge about the subject, putting the material into context and explaining difficult areas in detail. Lecturers will also often critically analyse the subject matter, perhaps identifying problems and questioning whether change might be beneficial.

Seminars

Seminars are taught by seminar-takers who are members of the teaching team and are taught in much smaller groups, normally 12 students. They provide the opportunity for you to discuss course material and ask and respond to questions in a small-group setting. You will be expected to prepare for seminars by doing some guided reading and preparing work

in advance for discussion in the seminar. Seminars are a great opportunity for you to work with other students and the seminar-taker to develop your understanding of the topic and the relevant legal skills, and also ask questions about points that you have not understood.

e-Learning

We have a virtual learning environment (VLE) called Blackboard (BB). As well as your Programme sites, each of your courses will have a separate space and the material you need for your studies, so that you can access these and study in your own time. There will be a range of resources on BB for each course, including online discussion boards, tests and audio and video material. You can also access BB on the go on your mobile phone or tablet.

Feedback and advice sessions

There are one hour drop-in office hours held every week for every course – please, take advantage of them! They are held by members of staff teaching on the course and times will be posted on Blackboard and on staff doors. 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.

Extra curricular activities

At Manchester we pride ourselves on offering a wide variety of extra curricular careers opportunities. Keep an eye out for what's on offer in our weekly email bulletin.

- 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. Keep an eye out for these in our weekly email bulletin.
- Mooting, debating and mediation competitions
- Voluntary legal advice work in the School of Law Legal Advice Centre
- Student run societies for you to join, such as the Law Society, the Joint Honours Society and the Advocacy and Meeting Society

If you are keen to get a head start before you arrive you might find our suggested reading list below helpful.

The programme team look forward to meeting you on your 1st day with us and working with you throughout your degree.

With very best wishes,

Dr Javier García Oliva (LLB Programme Director) and Dr John Pearson (1st Year LLB Tutor)

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 Law students this is Finch & Fafinski, *Legal 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. We have identified some books that you may find interesting and useful as you begin your law studies. If you can, try to read at least one of the following introductory books. You may find these books in your local library or they may be available second-hand.

Introductory reading

McBride, N. *Letters to a Law Student* Pearson

Rivlin, G. *Understanding the Law* OUP

Barnard, C. *What About Law?* Hart Publishing