

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	LLM
4	Programme Title	Master of Laws by Research
5	Programme Code	5819 F/P
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Last updated	July 2021

10 Programme Aims

1. To enable students to acquire specialised legal knowledge, legal skills and research in a subject-matter of the students' choice.
2. To allow students to develop a greater understanding of the nature of law and regulation.
3. To enable students to develop their research, organisational and presentation skills, and their capacity and opportunity for independent learning.
4. To provide students with the opportunity to develop other key skills that will equip students for future learning and employment.
5. To ensure that the programme conforms to University policies and meets the requirements of a Level 7 qualification as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.
6. To comply with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1. Have a critical understanding of key legal principles, doctrines and theoretical approaches in respect of their chosen research topic.
- A2. Have a critical appreciation of the literature within their chosen field of study.
- A3. Have a critical understanding of relevant theoretical perspectives (including those drawn from other disciplines) on the legal and policy issues raised by the subject studied by the student.
- A4. Be acquainted with contemporary research and scholarship in this subject.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The Dean of Postgraduate Studies shall appoint two supervisors for a candidate registered on the Master of Laws (by Research) programme on the recommendation of the Head of the Newcastle Law School. The supervisors will supervise the candidate in accordance with the University's *Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.

A candidate registered on the Master of Laws (by Research) programme is required to present a thesis of no more than 30,000 words embodying the results of the candidate's research on a legal subject previously approved by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The candidate may be required by the examiners to present himself or herself for an oral examination on the subject of the thesis.

Assessment Strategy

These are assessed by the thesis.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1. Analyse legal issues, including identifying and ordering issues by relevance and importance
- B2. Synthesise materials derived from diverse sources
- B3. Exercise critical analysis judgement by discriminating between the merits or otherwise of particular arguments
- B4. Exercise skills of evaluation in making a reasoned choice between competing solutions or arguments.

Teaching and Learning Methods

B1 to B4 are primarily developed and demonstrated through attendance of research methods' workshop discussions. This will involve:

- How to design and write PhD research proposals
- How to organise and manage their work in order to carry out Doctoral/Mphil/LLM (Research) effectively
- How to carry out research independently, using advanced legal research sources, including international, European and comparative legal materials, electronic and other legal search engines
- How to select an appropriate methodology for the design and implementation of research proposals and for the construction of research data
- How to present and publish their research findings.

Assessment Strategy

These are assessed by the thesis.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1. Engage in legal/socio-legal problem-solving (insofar as appropriate for the legal subject studied) by identifying relevant issues, applying relevant concepts, principles and rules, making judgements and reaching conclusions supported by sound and informed reasoning.

C2. Engage in theoretical reflection on the subject being researched, including identifying the criteria by which the law's regulation might be evaluated and making judgements thereon supported by sound and informed reasoning.

C3. Write, speak and think with care and precision in the analysis and synthesis of the law.

C4. Identify issues for research and to retrieve accurate and relevant legal and other sources in primary and secondary form, both in paper and digital formats.

Teaching and Learning Methods

C1 to C4 are primarily developed and demonstrated through attendance at workshop discussions. This will involve students developing their knowledge to:

- Find, evaluate and employ legal research materials
- Engage in theoretical reflection on the legal subjects being studied, including identifying the criteria by which the law's regulation might be evaluated and making judgements thereon supported by sound and informed reasoning
- Identify issues for research and appropriate methodologies for the execution of research projects in the chosen subject domain
- Exercise critical judgement by discriminating between the merits or otherwise of particular arguments or methodologies
- Exercise skills of evaluation in making a reasoned choice between competing methodologies, solutions or arguments

This will also be complemented by regular meetings with their supervisory team.

Assessment Strategy

These are assessed by the thesis.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

D1

(a) Read, interpret and understand legal English language accurately in relation to complex technical texts

(b) Present arguments intelligibly and accurately

D2

(a) Act independently in organising time, tasks and meeting deadlines

(b) Undertake independent research both in areas already studied and those investigated without prior study and

(c) Reflect on the learning process using feedback

D3 Develop their research skills

Teaching and Learning Methods

Under D1, the ability to argue orally is developed primarily through seminars and further developed in studying research methods. This is also complemented by regular meetings with their supervisors.

D2 is developed through attendance on the taught module and through engagement with their supervisors at regular intervals. Students are also required to prepare their project proposal for approval at an early stage in their studies which has to be articulated to a panel who are not subject specialists.

D3 These are developed through the taught module which requires the students to fully appreciate and discuss different methods.

Assessment Strategy

A full-time candidate registered on the Master of Laws (by Research) programme must submit the thesis for examination within 12 months from the start of the prescribed period of study. A part-time candidate registered on the Master of Laws (by Research) programme must submit the thesis for examination within 24 months of the end of the prescribed period of study.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

1. The Master of Laws (by Research) programme is available for study in both full-time and part-time modes.
2. The period of study for full-time mode shall be a minimum of 12 months. The period of study for part-time mode shall be a minimum period of 24 months.
3. All candidates are required to complete the Law School's research training module. For the purposes of the Master of Laws (by Research) programme; this is not a credit bearing module.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Opportunity to engage in specialised legal or socio-legal study, to relate theory to practice through research.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[Programme Regulations 2026-27](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Accreditation reports

n/a

Additional mechanisms

n/a

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.