



# Subject Benchmark Statement: Law

## The Basics

This document is a summary of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Law. It is specifically designed to provide a short and accessible overview of the main statement for students, employers and academics. It is not intended to replace or alter the Subject Benchmark Statement, which should be referred to in the design and approval of courses and when any further detail is required.

Subject Benchmark Statements are an established part of the quality assurance arrangements in UK higher education as non-regulatory, sector-owned reference points, developed and written by academic communities on behalf of their subject. Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the benchmark academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their course or programme.

Subject Benchmark Statements are presented in four sections. The first section outlines the contextual information - providing the operational landscape, and boundaries, of subject discipline. This includes consideration of the ways in which the discipline addresses wider social goals specifically in relation to: equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); the requirements of disabled students; education for sustainable development (ESD); and, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Section 2 covers distinctive features of the course, including curriculum design, partnership arrangements, flexibility of delivery, progression and ongoing monitoring processes. The third section explains any features relevant to teaching, learning and assessment activities for the subject. The final section describes the benchmark standards of achievement reached by all graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours in the subject, with some subjects also including achievement at master's level.



## Why study a degree in Law?

The study of law involves the acquisition of legal knowledge, general intellectual skills and certain skills that are specific to the study of law. It provides students with knowledge and understanding of key legal concepts and insights into the relationship between law, culture and society. In doing so, it develops students' general intellectual skills and qualities of mind by applying these to legal issues and contexts. An understanding of the importance of values and ethics - in theory and practice - is also an important component of the study of law.

The study of law is both national and global in outlook, relevance and application. Therefore, the study of law may focus on one or more jurisdictions. This Statement requires knowledge of the main features and principles of whichever legal system is (or systems are) being considered. Areas covered may include the relationships between individuals; between individuals and other entities; individuals and the state; as well as sources of law. The subject of law is shaped by and in turn impacts on, among other things, the ethical, social, political, environmental and economic norms of different jurisdictions. Such impact may also be reflected in the curriculum.

The study of law can empower students to identify, understand and address wider influences and considerations, and the significance and impact they have upon individuals, society and culture. This involves not only being aware of existing law, but also developing an expansive and critical understanding, identifying potential gaps and discussing its future potential. Examples include: rewriting existing judgments from alternative perspectives; asking normative questions using legal and non-legal concepts; and considering the application of law to new, emerging societal and cultural challenges. The study of law will apply principles of justice and fairness to societal and cultural inequalities and recognise that society does not remain static. A Law degree will empower students by incorporating new norms and understandings of the everchanging relationship between law, society and culture.

Law degrees prepare graduates for a range of careers. Law students are employable not only in regulated legal practice, but also in a variety of highly-skilled and analytical roles. This includes humanitarian work, business, finance, politics, education, journalism, public policy, public service and social services in the UK and internationally.



## What are the main teaching and learning approaches in Law?

The teaching and learning environments developed by different providers will reflect their respective approaches to legal study. Learning and teaching methods are designed to best fit the subject matter at hand and the learning outcomes set, considering the needs of different learners. Innovation in teaching methodology and engagement with innovative approaches could drive curriculum design and development. Learning and teaching methods will embrace principles of sustainability, inclusion and diversity as well as accessibility. This may include synchronous and asynchronous methods of delivery, using technology-enhanced learning as appropriate, along with in-person, classroom-based learning and teaching opportunities (both curricular and extracurricular). As far as possible, providers will ensure digital inclusivity for students (for example, equal access to wi-fi and digital equipment).

The study of law includes an appreciation of the complexity of legal rules and concepts, ethical rules and principles, a respect for context and evidence, and an awareness of the importance of principles of justice and the rule of law. As a discipline, law also draws on a range of methods and concepts from the humanities and social sciences, and a variety of approaches, contexts and disciplinary associations are potentially involved in legal study.

Law degrees provide opportunities for developing proficiency in legal understanding. This means knowledge and comprehension of, and the capacity to question and apply, theories, concepts, values, principles and rules of public and private laws within a range of contexts. They include, but are not limited to, individual, regional, national and global contexts, as well as institutional, normative, social, political, economic, cultural, historical, ethical, philosophical, technological and ecological contexts. Legal understanding also includes the ability to recognise ambiguity and deal with legal uncertainty.

It involves offering evidenced conclusions via the application of knowledge to address actual or hypothetical problems in different contexts, and developing the capacity to produce syntheses of relevant doctrinal policy and contextual issues, present reasoned choices between alternative solutions, and make critical judgements on the merits of particular arguments. No particular legal subjects or areas of regulation are required for legal understanding to be developed, although it is expected that legal study will include detailed engagement with substantive areas of law in order to demonstrate and provide opportunities for students to develop this understanding. Individual courses may differ in their content and may focus on one or more jurisdictions. Providers intending a course to operate as part of a pathway into legal or other professional practice will be aware of the requirements of relevant PSRBs.



## How are students assessed?

The assessment of Law courses will include a mix of methods that are accessible to all students. Providers can ensure transparency of inclusive and authentic assessment strategies to avoid disadvantage. Where individual students may be disadvantaged by particular assessment methods, adjustments to those assessments are considered in conjunction with the provider's procedures, while ensuring fairness across the full cohort. The procedures used for assessment cover the subject knowledge (breadth and depth), abilities and skills developed through the degree course; and assessment design is aimed at alignment with teaching and learning approaches, and desired learning outcomes.

Law students will encounter a range of assessment methods during their course. There will be differentiation between assessment that identifies a wide range of diverse learner needs and assessment that focuses on subsequent academic performance. Providers will design assessments to ensure that the overall assessment burden is considered, including the impact on wellbeing and accessibility.

Feedback will be given to students on both formative and summative work in a way that allows them to 'feed forward' and make changes to their learning practices with respect to future assessments. To develop feedback literacy and self-efficacy skills, providers may give opportunities for peer and self-assessment of their work - for example, by engaging with marking criteria or providing exemplars of previous student work and the feedback given on that work. To ensure equality and inclusion with respect to diverse student cohorts, a variety of feedback methods could be used, such as written, audio, multimedia, screencast and 'viva voce' style formats.



## Benchmark Standards

The minimum threshold standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Law are outlined on **pages 13-14** of the full Subject Benchmark Statement. The vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to [Annex D: Outcome classification descriptions for FHEQ Level 6 and FQHEIS Level 10 degrees](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours - 1st, 2.1, 2.2 and 3rd.

The full statement was developed by subject experts drawn from across the sector. Details of the Advisory Group can be found on **page 15** of the full Statement.

### Read the full Subject Benchmark Statement

The [full Subject Benchmark Statement](#) is available on the QAA website.



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