



LAWS5910

Research Methodologies in Law

Session 1, Online-scheduled-weekday 2024

Macquarie Law School

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor / Lecturer

Holly Doel-Mackaway

Contact via via iLearn page

Mon 2pm

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

160cp in LAWS units and a LAWS WAM of 75 or above. Applications for the Honours units are managed internally by Macquarie Law School.

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This is the first of two units that form the requirements for students wishing to graduate with a Bachelor of Laws (Honours). This is an advanced legal research unit, designed to develop the skills necessary to plan and execute their major legal research project. The unit introduces students to a variety of research methodologies including doctrinal, comparative, interdisciplinary, empirical, and critical legal studies (CLS) approaches. The unit emphasises theoretical concerns and requirements that pertain to research objectives, research design, research methods, argumentation, writing, and critique. The ethical dimensions of legal research are core topics in this unit and students will explore the roles, rights and obligations of students in their own scholarship. Students will learn to design research projects with rigorous research methodologies, to proffer good written analyses with sound argumentation, and to reflect on legal scholarship and on the law critically.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Identify, locate and record primary and secondary legal resources from a variety of library and online collections using appropriate research strategies and software.

ULO2: Apply principles of good written presentation and language to the processes of drafting, editing and re-drafting and referencing in accordance with the Australian Guide to Legal Citation.

ULO3: Critically apply principles and values that underpin ethical research and academic honesty and apply them to your own research planning.

ULO4: Differentiate the different kinds of legal research questions (theoretical, doctrinal, normative, empirical, comparative etc) and the appropriate methodologies for answering them.

ULO5: Prepare a sophisticated research strategy and work-plan, and apply that to your own research project

General Assessment Information

Late Assessment Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of, 0 (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special Consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Research Integrity quiz	10%	No	Week 1, by Friday 23 February, 11.55pm
Thesis Proposal	30%	No	In class in weeks 5 and 6
Thesis Plan	60%	No	Week 10, Friday 10 May by 11.55pm

Research Integrity quiz

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 4 hours

Due: **Week 1, by Friday 23 February, 11.55pm**

Weighting: **10%**

Online quiz

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically apply principles and values that underpin ethical research and academic honesty and apply them to your own research planning.

Thesis Proposal

Assessment Type ¹: Plan

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **In class in weeks 5 and 6**

Weighting: **30%**

In consultation with their supervisor and the convenor, students will prepare a proposal for their thesis including research question/s.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify, locate and record primary and secondary legal resources from a variety of library and online collections using appropriate research strategies and software.
- Apply principles of good written presentation and language to the processes of drafting, editing and re-drafting and referencing in accordance with the Australian Guide to Legal Citation.
- Critically apply principles and values that underpin ethical research and academic honesty and apply them to your own research planning.
- Differentiate the different kinds of legal research questions (theoretical, doctrinal, normative, empirical, comparative etc) and the appropriate methodologies for answering them.

Thesis Plan

Assessment Type ¹: Plan

Indicative Time on Task ²: 60 hours

Due: **Week 10, Friday 10 May by 11.55pm**

Weighting: **60%**

Students are required to submit a comprehensive legal research plan including literature review, research methodology and strategy

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify, locate and record primary and secondary legal resources from a variety of library and online collections using appropriate research strategies and software.
- Apply principles of good written presentation and language to the processes of drafting, editing and re-drafting and referencing in accordance with the Australian Guide to Legal Citation.
- Critically apply principles and values that underpin ethical research and academic honesty and apply them to your own research planning.
- Differentiate the different kinds of legal research questions (theoretical, doctrinal, normative, empirical, comparative etc) and the appropriate methodologies for answering them.
- Prepare a sophisticated research strategy and work-plan, and apply that to your own research project

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

This unit is delivered both online and face-to-face and consists of **6 x 2 hour workshops** with **2 hours of corresponding lecture material for each workshop**.

Workshops (either F2F or via zoom) for this unit run in **Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8**. The workshops are interactive and designed to equip you with the skills necessary to carry out your research project. Active participation in all workshops (in class /with video on for zoom classes) is expected and attendance at the workshops is recorded. This unit does not include a mark for class participation however, participation in class is necessary to do well in this unit.

Before each workshop students should:

- **watch** the lectures for each workshop available on ECHO and
- **read** the prescribed materials which provide information on each topic as well as a theoretical basis for the practical research activities.

During each workshop students will:

- **discuss the questions** posed for each workshop detailed on the iLearn page and
- **participate in practical activities** and apply knowledge acquired from the lecture and reading materials before class. Workshop activities are closely related to assisting student's to progress their research projects including developing the research proposal (3 Minute Thesis Presentation) and thesis plan.

Unit Schedule

Week	Lectures (6 x 2 hrs each) * Lecture topics correspond with the Workshop topics.	Workshops (6 x 2 hrs each)	Assessments
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the Honours Program and Assessments • Introduction to Legal Research • Research Integrity & Ethics 		Research Integrity Module and Quiz (Friday 23 February by 11.55pm)
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulating a Research Topic • Exploring the Legal Problem • Reviewing the Literature • Writing Research Questions 	WORKSHOP 1 (learning activities based on week 1 lectures/readings)	
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a Research Proposal / 3 Minute Thesis Skills • Writing a Research Plan • Project Management • Theoretical Frameworks 	WORKSHOP 2 (learning activities based on week 2 lectures/readings)	
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Research methodologies (1) • Legal Research methodologies (2) 	WORKSHOP 3 (learning activities based on week 3 lectures/readings)	

Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a Legal Thesis: Skills (1) • Writing a Legal Thesis: Skills (2) 	WORKSHOP 4 (learning activities based on week 4 lectures/readings)	Thesis Proposal (3 Minute Thesis Presentation)
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refining Research Skills • Preparing for next semester 	WORKSHOP 5 (learning activities based on week 5 lectures/readings)	Thesis Proposal (3 Minute Thesis Presentation)
Week 7		EASTER MONDAY - workshop wont run this week	
Week 8		WORKSHOP 6 (learning activities based on week 6 lectures/readings)	
	RECESS		
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Week 9	Optional: Consultation with Convenor about Thesis		
Week 10	Optional: Consultation with Convenor about Thesis		Thesis Plan Week 10, Friday 10 May by 11.55pm
Weeks 11/12	Optional: Consultation with Convenor about Thesis		
Week 13	Optional: Consultation with Convenor about Thesis Feedback		

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)

- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Changes from Previous Offering

The workshops will run from week 2 to week 8 (missing week 7 due to it being Easter Monday). Student feedback as well as Sem 2, 2023 convenor feedback indicated that commencing in week 2 rather than week 3 (as was previously the case) is preferable.

Unit information based on version 2024.03 of the [Handbook](#)