



Nottingham Law School

Nottingham Law School Notes *summer 2014*

Welcome to the summer edition of Nottingham Law School Notes! For those of you that have just finished sitting your exams, we hope that they went well as they could and wish you the very best of luck for your results. The exam period is always a difficult time of year, but now they are over, many of you will be thinking about the next step in your legal career.

At Nottingham Law School (which is part of Nottingham Trent University), we run the full range of courses for graduate students who wish to become professional lawyers. The main courses we offer are the Graduate Diploma in Law ("GDL"), the Masters in Law Legal Practice Course ("LLM LPC") and the Bar Professional Training Course ("BPTC"). So if you have ever considered becoming a solicitor or a barrister, or have thought about a career in Law but don't have a Law degree, you can come to us as experts in this field.

This edition includes details of our newly validated LLM Legal Practice Course, our recent Varsity Cup event, upcoming events, tips from our careers service on what to do now you've finished your exams, and also looks at whether vocational law courses really do offer the "gold standard" in legal education.

Our LLM Legal Practice Course – A New Award

We are excited to inform you that our LPC has recently been revalidated so that successful completion of all of its elements will result in the award of a Master's degree. You will therefore leave the LPC with an LLM Legal Practice Course award if you successfully complete all elements of it.

The LLM shall be awarded for no additional cost – it is included in the LPC fee, so is too good an opportunity to turn down!

On the LLM element of the LPC, you will have the opportunity to complete a project or dissertation with the support of a dedicated supervisor, focusing on aspects of legal practice that are of interest to you. This will be supported by a Professional Legal Practice Module comprising:

- A series of lectures delivered by experts and practitioners within the legal profession;
- Bridge to Practice workshops focused on preparing you for the workplace; and
- Commercial awareness workshops.

Obtaining an LLM Legal Practice Course will really help you stand out to employers in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Not only will you leave Nottingham Law School with an internationally recognised LPC qualification, but you will be able to differentiate yourself with others by also being able to demonstrate to employers that you possess real practical knowledge and insight which is regarded as essential in today's legal marketplace. You will be able to talk about your project or dissertation to future employers, and demonstrate that you possess commercial acumen and a real understanding of the legal field you have researched.

The LLM element of the LPC is optional – you do not have to study for the full master's award. However, given that the fees for the LLM element are included and it will help you stand out from the crowd, we would highly recommend that you take up this opportunity to obtain the full LLM award.

Vocational Law Courses: The Gold Standard?

We are acutely aware of the challenges facing students when deciding whether to study the GDL, LPC or BPTC. When making this decision, students often ask us questions like:

- What is the point of doing the GDL, LPC or BPTC if I won't get a training contract or pupillage?
- How can I possibly afford to do the GDL, LPC or BPTC if I don't get sponsorship?
- What is the point of doing the GDL or LPC when other people are telling me that I can go down the ILEX route or get an apprenticeship?

The first of these questions was discussed at the NLS Student Conference "Your Future, Your Legal Career" held at NTU in November 2013. The conference included presentations and round table discussions involving academics, solicitors, barristers and careers advisers. Whilst there are no easy answers to this question, some of the conclusions that arose from this conference were as follows:

- There are jobs out there for law students, but they may be jobs that students have not previously thought about (or even been aware of) and that exist beyond the traditional jobs of solicitor and barrister. There may even be future law jobs out there of which we cannot yet conceive (think "Facebook" – it barely existed 10 years ago).
- Students need to try and focus on what kind of job or kind of work they want to do on a day-to-day basis. By identifying the kinds of things that they want to spend their time doing, students can then go on to consider what routes are available to them to do it. They may find that it is possible to achieve a particular outcome without necessarily doing the LPC or the BPTC.
- Having said that, the LPC and BPTC are the **gold standard** when it comes to vocational law courses. Not only do they provide an entry route into the regulated professions of solicitor and barrister, but they are also great courses in themselves. The LPC and BPTC provide students with an excellent level of legal knowledge and a set of legal skills that will serve them well in *any* job they ever go on to do – even if they never become solicitors or barristers or even work in the legal sector at all.

What about the cost of these courses if you don't have sponsorship? The GDL, LPC and BPTC are expensive courses, but you have to consider that by taking these courses you are investing in your career. Look at what value for money the course offers by considering points like what additional benefits are offered beyond the

course itself, what scholarships are on offer to assist with fees, whether you can study the course flexibly to give you sufficient free time to hold down a part time job alongside your studies, what the careers advice is like and what opportunities there are to undertake Pro Bono work. At Nottingham Law School you can, for example, study the GDL on a distance learning basis, and the LPC on a part time basis, to enable you to earn while you learn.

And what about other routes to becoming a solicitor, like the ILEX route or getting an apprenticeship? If you are a current LLB student, then you are probably beyond the need for the ILEX route. Although you can work and take ILEX exams as you do so, remember, that if your ultimate aim is to become a solicitor, you will still need to do the LPC at some point – so you need to consider whether you wish to defer studying the LPC and do some interim lower level training or whether you bite the bullet and simply do the LPC outright.

As far as apprenticeships go, it is far from clear at this stage how they will work and whether they will actually lead to full time jobs. It is also the case that they are aimed predominantly at school leavers who do not intend to go to university at all. It may well be the case therefore that neither of these options are viable.

Paula Moffatt, principal lecturer at Nottingham Law School, considers these questions further in her recent article in the Solicitors Journal, which can be accessed [here](#).

You can also find further advice on whether to undertake the LPC or BPTC by visiting our “Your Future, Your Legal Career” conference web page at www.ntu.ac.uk/yourfuture. At this link you can also access the full conference report and conclusions, and a video of the presentations.

The Advocacy Cup

On 12 April 2014, Nottingham Law School hosted its annual Advocacy Cup event. This is an inter-varsity trial advocacy competition, and this year a team from Cambridge University tackled a team from Oxford University in a mock jury trial. It involved the case of Charles Hawtrey who had been accused of entering a dwelling house and stealing an iPad.

Cambridge University acted as the prosecutor and Oxford University the defence. HHJ Stokes QC, The Recorder of Nottingham, presided over the event as the Judge. The Jury was made up of Nottingham Law School’s BPTC students. Both teams were assigned barrister mentors from Nottingham’s criminal Set of Chambers, and senior members of the Local Bar were also present.

Both teams did an excellent job at battling it out but in the end Oxford University won by securing an acquittal for their client, and were presented with The Advocacy Cup 2014 having edged out their old rivals Cambridge University.

Set out below is a comedic “news report” summarising the trial:

A jury at Nottingham Law School acquitted a man of burglary in record time recently. Charles Hawtrey had been accused of entering a dwelling house in the south Nottinghamshire village of Keyworth and stealing an ipad from home owner Sidney James. Mr James disturbed an intruder who he claimed he immediately recognised as “Little Charlie Hawtrey” his former newspaper delivery boy. The prosecution relied heavily on supporting evidence in the form of a baseball cap recovered from Hawtrey’s home address which was similar to one worn by the intruder. The jury obviously didn’t attach much weight to it however and found

Hawtrey not guilty within 5 minutes of retiring to consider their verdict! The Recorder of Nottingham, HHJ Michael Stokes QC said that Hawtrey left the dock "without a stain on his character"!

Did you know...?

- *Scholarships:*

If you accept a place on our GDL, LLM LPC or BPTC, you will be eligible to apply for a Nottingham Law School scholarship? UK and EU students can apply for one of our competitive scholarships for the GDL (full time or distance learning), LLM LPC (full time or part time) or the BPTC. These scholarships are worth up to £2,000 and are awarded as a reduction in fees. The closing date is Monday, 30 June 2014. For more details, go to www.ntu.ac.uk/scholarshipsnls. Also don't forget that if you are an existing NLS student, you will be eligible for a progression discount!

- *Our careers service:*

Once you have been offered and have accepted a place with us on our GDL, LLM LPC or BPTC courses, you will be able to have full access to our excellent careers service. Our careers team can provide you with as much guidance and assistance as you require in your search for a training contract, pupillage or other graduate career. Our annual surveys have shown that more than 80% of our full time and part time LLM LPC and GDL students secure a training contract, paralegal work or other work, while our BPTC has consistently achieved the highest pupillage success rate nationally. A whole host of careers support is available to you, which includes:

- careers seminars dedicated to training contract and pupillage applications and interview techniques;
- workshops delivered by practitioners from regional and national firms, Chambers and the Judiciary;
- presentations by international and regional practices and Chambers on a range of topics including commercial awareness;
- access to a specialist careers consultant and dedicated careers tutor within Nottingham Law School who can assist you with applications and help you formulate career plans;
- interview preparation advice, including mock interviews; and
- a mentoring scheme with trainees from law firms including Eversheds, Browne Jacobson and Shoosmiths.

- *Flexible study options*

We recognise that some students may have work or caring commitments that mean that all day or full time study can be difficult. We therefore offer the following flexible study options:

- You can study the LLM LPC on a full time or part time basis. The full time course runs over one academic year, and the part time course over two.
- Full time LLM LPC students can choose whether to study in the morning or afternoon for the Stage One modules (and the deadline for making this selection is 31 July 2014 and operates on a first come first served basis).
- GDL students can study the GDL on a distance learning basis.

• Our Graduate LLB

If you study our LPC after successfully completing a GDL, either with Nottingham Law School or another provider, you can apply for the award of a Graduate LLB after successful completion of the LPC to recognise your achievement.

Now you've finished your exams, here is some advice from our bespoke careers team on what to do next if you want to become a solicitor...

If you've accepted a place on our LLM LPC or GDL for this September, you may be thinking that all you have to do now is wait for your exam results, graduate and seek some summer employment - but that's only part of what's ahead for you. You'll already know that the competition for Training Contracts is now more intense than ever, so now is also the time to start thinking about your career as a solicitor, and

- decide what type of firm you want to apply to, whether it's commercial, high street, or broader-based;
- find out where the right training contracts for you are advertised;
- be selective in deciding which firms to apply to;
- prioritise your applications by closing-date e.g. most of the larger, more commercial firms will have a date of 31st July 2014 for their 2016 training contracts;
- ensure that your applications are as effective as possible by showing the closest match between what a firm is looking for and what you have to offer – don't copy and paste applications but rather tailor carefully each application you submit;
- apply early!

So there's a lot of work for you to do if you are going to give yourself the best chance of getting the training contract that you want. It will all require a great investment of time, but you don't have it all to do yourself, and don't forget that once you have accepted a place at Nottingham Law School on the GDL, LLM LPC (or BTPC), the Law School's Careers team will be on hand to help.

Other News and Events

• New Legal Advice Centre for NLS

Head of Pro Bono, Nick Johnson, is delighted to let you know that on 25 June 2014 the Law School's brand new Legal Advice Centre shall be officially opened by Attorney General Dominic Grieve in readiness for the 2014/15 academic year. The Centre will give all NLS students a greater opportunity to participate in our Pro Bono schemes, which involve opportunities to provide legal advice and information to the local community and individuals on a wide range of legal problems, such as employment law, housing or welfare benefit issues.

• Celebrating 50 years of legal excellence

This year, Nottingham Law School is celebrating 50 years of excellence in legal education. We are compiling a snapshot of life in the Law School over the last 5 years, so if you or your family has studied or worked with us, we'd love to hear from you! Please send your photos and memories to nls.enquiries@ntu.ac.uk

- *Postgraduate open days and other events*

Our next postgraduate and professional open day is scheduled to take place on Saturday, 1 November 2014. This will provide you with an opportunity to find out more about our GDL, LLM LPC and BPTC courses and speak to staff. You will have the opportunity to take part in a campus tour, meet course leaders and tutors, discuss the best options for your career, and find out more about fees, funding, scholarships and our Pro Bono opportunities.

A Master's in Law drop-in event is also scheduled to take place on Thursday, 13 November 2014. This will provide you with an opportunity to find out more about our Master's offering in the Law School.

If you can't make any of our open days, Nottingham Law School regularly attends law fairs across the country where staff will be on hand to answer any questions you may have. We kick off our visits to law fairs on Monday, 20 October 2014 at Nottingham Law Fair at the University of Nottingham.

Keep an eye on our website at www.ntu.ac.uk/nlsevents for information on upcoming events.

Do you want more information about Nottingham Law School? Go to <http://www.ntu.ac.uk/nls/> to find details of our courses and admissions criteria.

Alternatively, you can email either paula.moffatt@ntu.ac.uk or june.gorton@ntu.ac.uk who will be delighted to help you!

Programme Leaders of the full-time courses are: BPTC - Ian Fox: ian.fox@ntu.ac.uk; LPC - Jason Ellis: jason.ellis@ntu.ac.uk; GDL - Gail Cunningham: gail.cunningham@ntu.ac.uk