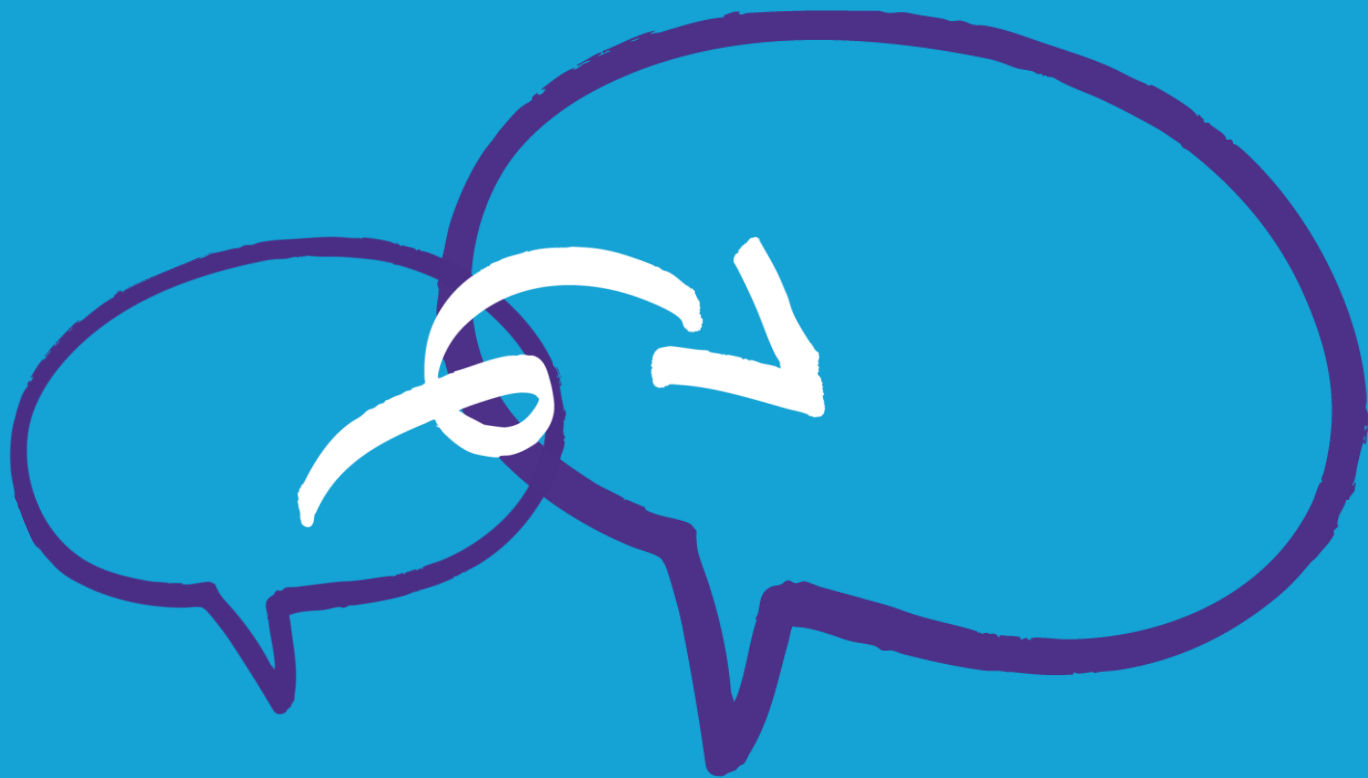




Subject Benchmark Statement

Law

March 2023



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About this Statement

This document is a QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Law that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies. Subject Benchmark Statements are an established part of the quality assurance arrangements in UK higher education, but not a regulatory requirement. They are sector-owned reference points, developed and written by academics on behalf of their subject. Subject Benchmark Statements also describe the nature and characteristics of awards in a particular subject or area. Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as an expert quality body on behalf of the higher education sector. A summary of the Statement is also available on the QAA website.

Key changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement include:

- a revised structure for the Statement, which includes the introduction of crosscutting themes of:
 - equality, diversity, and inclusion
 - accessibility and the needs of disabled students
 - education for sustainable development
 - employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education
- a comprehensive review updating the context and purposes, including course design and content in order to inform and underpin the revised benchmark standards.

How can I use this document?

Subject Benchmark Statements are not intended to prescribe any particular approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Rather, they provide a framework, agreed by the subject community, that forms the basis on which those responsible for curriculum design, approval and update can reflect upon a course, and its component modules. This allows for flexibility and innovation in course design while providing a broadly accepted external reference point for that discipline.

They may also be used as a reference point by external examiners in considering whether the design of a course and the threshold standards of achievement are comparable with those of other higher education providers. They also support professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) with the academic standards expected of students.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of courses in Law
- a prospective student thinking about undertaking a course in Law
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of Law graduates.

Relationship to legislation

The responsibility for academic standards lies with the higher education provider which awards the degree. Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them by their relevant funding and regulatory bodies. This Statement does not interpret legislation, nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements.

The regulatory status of the Statement will differ depending on the educational jurisdictions of the UK. In England, Subject Benchmark Statements are not sector-recognised standards as set out under the Office for Students' [regulatory framework](#). However, they are specified as a key reference point, as appropriate, for academic standards in Wales under the [Quality Assessment Framework for Wales](#) and in Scotland as part of the [Quality Enhancement Framework](#). Subject Benchmark Statements are part of the current quality arrangements in Northern Ireland. Because the Statement describes outcomes and attributes expected at the threshold standard of achievement in a UK-wide context, many higher education providers will use them as an enhancement tool for course design and approval, and for subsequent monitoring and review, in addition to helping demonstrate the security of academic standards.

Additional sector reference points

Higher education providers are likely to consider other reference points in addition to this Statement in designing, delivering and reviewing courses. These may include requirements set out by PSRBs and industry or employer expectations. QAA has also published [Advice and Guidance](#) to support the [Quality Code](#), which will be helpful when using this Statement - for example, in [course design](#), [learning and teaching](#), [external expertise](#) and [monitoring and evaluation](#).

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in [QAA's Glossary](#). Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Statement where appropriate.

1 Context and purposes of a Law degree

Purposes and characteristics of a Law degree

1.1 Studying law at undergraduate level is an academic matter. 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, society, and the environment. The study of law should also develop students' awareness of the legal frameworks governing sustainability and climate change. Law graduates should understand the underlying role of law in addressing environmental challenges, along with other global and societal challenges, promoting sustainable practices, and ensuring environmental and social justice at local, national, and global levels. In doing so, it develops students' general intellectual skills and qualities of mind by applying these to legal issues and contexts locally, nationally, and globally. An understanding of the importance of values and ethics, in theory and practice, is also an important component of the study of law and should provide students with the ability to critically engage with ethical questions related to sustainability, inclusivity, inequality, and the promotion of social justice. Graduates should develop a strong sense of responsibility toward mitigating the legal and societal challenges posed by contemporary issues today.

1.2 A Law degree does not in itself confer the right to practise law professionally, although the variety of academic and legal skills Law students encounter can provide a valuable intellectual preparation for entry to regulated legal practice. Routes to qualification in the different branches of the profession in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland can have specific requirements as set down by PSRBs. Higher education providers keep these requirements in mind to enable students to understand which routes their undergraduate degree will equip them to follow. The balance between the acquisition of legal knowledge, general intellectual skills and subject-specific skills in a curriculum will vary between providers.

1.3 The study of law engages students in a wide range of legal methods and techniques, which are generally drawn from the wider humanities and social sciences. It seeks to explore values relating to law, culture, society, and the environment and examine the professional behaviours that may arise as a result of these. In this context, professional behaviours may refer to individual or group actions and identity within study, work and other cultural and societal contexts, which may include the legal profession. These behaviours may relate to issues such as sustainability and equality, diversity

and inclusion. They may include digital skills, and both inter and intrapersonal skills: for example, the development of creative thinking in decision-making. They can also include qualities of mind relating to personal development, well-being and the affective domain - including self-knowledge and reflection, motivation and emotional regulation, as well as the ability to learn from others, respecting their needs and perspectives, dealing with group conflicts and solving problems collaboratively. This may also include awareness of legal responsibilities within a global context to understand how legal systems interact with global issues like climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequalities. Students should be encouraged to develop creative and interdisciplinary approaches to resolving legal problems that arise in the context of sustainability and climate adaptation, while considering the needs of both global and national societies and cultures. Consideration of such behaviours is likely to foster individual students' sense of personhood and citizenship by encouraging students to recognise, understand and potentially seek to mitigate challenges and inequalities which arise at personal and wider organisational, systemic, cultural and societal levels. There are many ways of achieving this. Different higher education providers will choose different approaches, paying attention to issues of sustainability, accessibility, equality, inclusivity and the needs of the global and local society.

1.4 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 natural world, 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 should also be reflected in the curriculum.

1.5 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, activism, education, journalism, public policy, public service, and social services in the UK and internationally. Graduates will also be prepared for roles that engage with the legal aspects of sustainability, climate change, and environmental protection. Law students will have opportunities to pursue careers in climate justice, environmental advocacy, and the legal regulation of sustainability practices across industries.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

1.6 Law, as a system of authority and power, may contribute to inequalities in society while also providing opportunities for challenge. In order to challenge the hierarchies that law arguably sustains, and to pursue legal interventions that seek to remedy discrimination, studying law **through an intersectional and decolonised lens** can take a critical approach to understanding the relationship between law, power, **equity**, and equality.

1.7 Equality is more than a formal designation in a statute book or judicial pronouncement in a case. Substantive equality accommodates those from different backgrounds, **decolonising**, dismantling barriers to learning and participation, challenging stereotypes and stigmas, **advancing systems change and** cultivating the agency of students. It can enable all students to 'see themselves' in the law curriculum and to understand how they might thrive **and be advocates to contribute to a healthier and more just society and environment.**

1.8 The interaction of law with equality, diversity and inclusion will therefore be highlighted, given that the law is involved in regulating these issues while more generally being linked with concerns of justice and fairness. Legal study may thus encourage reflective engagement with the history, politics and impacts of law and legal knowledge with respect to these issues. This includes the actual and potential uses and limitations of legal understanding in managing equalities in culture, society, and the environment, highlighting the shifting role of law and legal institutions with respect to different forms of systemic injustice **and understanding how these injustices should be advocated for and addressed.**

Accessibility

1.9 Providers demonstrate their commitment to widening access and holistic, inclusive participation to ensure that each Law student can thrive and reach their full potential regardless of their background or disability. Providers anticipate and take responsibility for the provision of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment methods underpinned by a desire for accessibility for all marginalised groups. They will also have responsibilities for making reasonable adjustments and taking on proactive preventive duties and obligations.

1.10 Access and accessibility cover many dimensions, including digital literacy, access to learning materials and spaces, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, but also employability, mobility and equality of access to extracurricular and co-curricular activities where possible.

1.11 In meeting the needs of disabled students, consideration could be given to creating inclusive learning environments. There are multiple disabled identities and disability in the context of studying law, and they should be understood in all its various forms. Disabled Law students can experience a complex transition through law school where identities are constructed and reconstructed on multiple occasions in different contexts.

1.12 Flexibility of assessment methods needs to be considered by providers to meet the **unique** needs of different students and demonstrate that learning is possible in a variety of ways.

Sustainability

1.13 The central place of law in society means that it has an important role to play in securing sustainable development and the well-being of future generations and such concerns **should** feature in legal studies. Central to this is [Education for Sustainable Development](#) (ESD) which ‘empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society’ ([Education for Sustainable Development \(unesco.org\)](#)). Taking account of the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability, and the overriding need for ecological sustainability on which all else depends, legal studies may raise awareness of the role of the law in creating the established patterns within society and in potentially achieving change **and a just transition**. The relevance of law to achieving all of the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) might be recognised as well as the value of all eight of the [UNESCO sustainability competencies](#) in developing Law graduates in:

- understanding and applying complex legal rules
- identifying appropriate approaches to multifaceted problems
- **reflecting critically on the impact that law does and could have on all members of society and the environment.**

1.14 Content and delivery of law teaching **must** address sustainability issues, as with other disciplines. There are many ways of incorporating sustainable development into legal studies, as illustrated in the [QAA/Advance HE Guidance](#) on this topic. **In addition, the ability to develop green skills, “the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society.”¹. In the**

¹ Definition from [Green skills and environmental awareness in vocational education and training – CEDFOP](#)

context of Law this may include creativity, adaptability, collaboration, resilience, and empathy as well as monetary and legal compliance.

Entrepreneurship and enterprise education

1.15 [Enterprise and entrepreneurship education](#) supports behaviours, attributes and competencies that impact on the individual student in terms of successful careers. It aims to prepare students for change and uncertainty and can provide enhanced impact through placements and activities that build links between academic institutions and external organisations.

1.16 Beyond employment, entrepreneurship education seeks to provide competencies to help students lead a rewarding, self-determined professional life, well placed to add social, cultural and economic value to society throughout their careers and the lives of others before their careers. Law students and professionals have a duty to meaningfully contribute to the improvement of society and the environment and should have the knowledge and ability to advocate for change at all stages of their educational and professional pathways.

1.17 Law operates within a range of contexts and these will differ between legal jurisdictions and global contexts. Certain common themes will operate across boundaries. These include developing technological frameworks and platforms for the delivery of the practice and business of law, as well as an increasingly technologically sophisticated networked and online digital society. Lawyers can adapt and innovate to ensure and safeguard inclusive and accessible access to the law and justice as a fundamental right. In so doing they support the medium through which legal services are accessed by individuals and organisations, whether commercially or otherwise.

1.18 As artificial intelligence tools and software evolve, the role of human lawyers in decision-making and processes will change. Providers may explore emerging models in the delivery of legal services in a digital society and the emerging and potential ethical issues involved. This can incorporate the ethical and responsible use of digital justice, extend the frontiers of artificial intelligence in legal reasoning, and advance continuing professional development in the development of digital skills and technology.

2 Distinctive features of a Law degree

2.1 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 and the environment. 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, environmental and cultural challenges. The study of law will apply principles of justice and fairness to societal, cultural, and environmental 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, culture, and the environment.

Progression

2.2 Over the course of a degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6; FQHEIS Level 10) Law students will progress from one level of study to the next, in line with the regulations and processes for each institution. However, it is expected that each level would see the progressive attainment of knowledge, skills, expertise and experience that build towards the final achievement of meeting the threshold level subject skills listed in this Statement. This will usually include successful completion and the award of credit for the full range of learning and assessment, including any practical components. Upon graduation from an undergraduate degree, it would be expected that a student who had achieved a second-class degree or higher would be capable of, and equipped for, undertaking postgraduate study in Law or an associated discipline. Entry requirements to postgraduate courses are, however, determined by individual providers and may require specified levels of achievement at undergraduate level.

2.3 Undergraduates studying a combined, joint or major-minor route will achieve core elements of the specific and generic skills for the subject, and will add others according to the requirements of the relevant joint courses. Additionally, they may explore the overlap between their two subject areas via interdisciplinary study.

2.4 Integrated master's degrees (FHEQ Level 7; FQHEIS Level 11) in Law are available at MLaw level or similar in the UK, alongside other master's iterations, and typically comprise a four-year full-time course or a part-time course of not less than five and not more than eight academic years. Other permutations leading to master's awards, encompassing both academic and professional study, can exist.

2.5 An undergraduate degree course typically lasts three years in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and four years in Scotland, though some institutions may offer an accelerated schedule. Students who exit their award earlier may be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education, a Diploma of Higher Education, or other named award depending upon the levels of study completed to a satisfactory standard. For students following part-time routes, their study time would be the equivalent of the three or four-year degree.

Flexibility

2.6 Providers will consider holistically the learning, teaching and assessment of a Law course to ensure that it offers learning in creative ways across different modalities of delivery - to include online, blended or face-to-face - to widen access and ensure that all students can achieve their full potential within an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Practical learning opportunities - for example, through clinical education, work placements, mentoring schemes and via other experiential and/or innovative routes - can be considered across all modalities of learning. Where appropriate, the flexibility of digital tools will be used to build the digital confidence and fluency of students within the context of some of the complex and challenging changes brought about by technologically mediated practices. This fluency is likely to include knowing what technology works best in a given situation and developing digital literacies grounded in authentic disciplinary and professional values and identities.

2.7 Providers will seek to harness potential solutions, using different technological mediums, for flexible delivery methods which facilitate student learning in accessible, meaningful and impactful ways. These will present opportunities for knowledge exchange and skills acquisition that are fair and accessible for all in ways that will afford increased opportunities. For example, offering courses as a work-based learning route, a theoretical

route, a skills-focused route, or a route for those who have already acquired a degree and experience in a different discipline.

Partnerships

2.8 Partnerships can be characterised as symbiotic relationships between providers, employers and social enterprises. Through partnerships, providers can highlight their reputation and the quality of their Law students by fostering individual growth, notions of citizenship and collaborative competency. Partnerships are advantageous to Law students, Law schools, and other interested parties because they provide a broader social benefit. This can include increasing access to justice, such as using law clinics for supporting litigants in person, volunteering in charitable organisations, or working in policy units. They can benefit providers and students by developing strong links with various stakeholders and industries, for example, fostering dialogues with employers regarding employment.

Monitoring and Review

2.9 A major feature of academic quality assurance and enhancement at a higher education institution is having in place monitoring and regular review processes for the courses it delivers to ensure confidence in the provision. Considering the student voice will form part of this. Degree-awarding bodies and their collaborative partnerships routinely collect and analyse information and undertake periodic course review according to their own needs. They draw on a range of external reference points, including this Statement, to ensure that their provision aligns with sector norms. Monitoring and evaluation are a periodic assessment of a course, conducted internally or by external independent evaluators. Evaluation uses information from both current and historic monitoring to develop an understanding of student achievement or inform future course planning.

2.10 Externality is an essential component of the quality assurance system in the UK. Providers will use external reviewers as part of periodic review to gain an external perspective on any proposed changes and ensure threshold standards are achieved and content is appropriate for the subject.

2.11 The external examination system currently in use across the UK higher education sector also helps to ensure consistency in the way academic standards are secured by degree-awarding bodies. Typically, external examiners will be asked to comment on the types, principles and purposes of

assessments being offered to students. They will consider the types of modules on offer to students, **how the course addresses societal, cultural, ethical and environmental challenges**, the outcomes of a cohort and how these compare to similar provision offered within other UK higher education providers. External examiners are asked to produce a report each year and make recommendations for changes to modules and assessments (where appropriate). Subject Benchmark Statements, such as this one, can play an important role in supporting external examiners in advising on whether threshold standards are being met in a specific subject area.

2.12 Qualifying Law degrees in the UK with professional and vocational outcomes will also require evaluation and accreditation from relevant PSRBs. Institutions should be explicit to potential and current students about their routes to professional qualification.

3 Content, structure and delivery

Content

3.1 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 and practice. Legal study should emphasize principles of justice not only in traditional contexts but also in relation to inclusive legal systems that address inequalities based on race, gender, disability, and other social categories and protected characteristics. A key component of this is studying the ways in which laws may perpetuate or challenge systemic inequalities and how legal reforms can promote social justice, inclusion and sustainability. This includes looking at how marginalized communities are affected by legal decisions, policies, and processes and contemporary issues such as climate change, particularly in areas relating to human rights law, social welfare law and environmental law.

3.2 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.

3.3 Law degrees should also provide an opportunity to explore the intersection of law with sustainability and the climate crisis. This may include examining legal frameworks that govern environmental protection, sustainable development, and international climate agreements. Understanding how law shapes, and is shaped by, policies relating to climate change, environmental justice, and resource management is increasingly critical. Graduates should be able to analyse the legal challenges posed by environmental degradation, climate adaptation, the rising recognition of ecocide, and the role of law in promoting sustainability and equality in an inclusive and equitable way.

3.4 Alongside providing opportunities for developing legal understanding, legal study involves the acquisition of skills specific to the study of law. This includes the interpretation, analysis and application of legal rules and principles and the ability to identify, retrieve and use a diverse range of legal sources and sources of academic commentary. Legal study also includes the interrogation of these materials in terms of their legal meaning, authority and effects in different contexts. This may include empirical, analytical, and/or theoretical methods, and/or the critical apprehension of methods for understanding legal knowledge and techniques.

3.5 As well as the subject-specific skills identified above, there are a number of skills inherent in legal study and understanding that are transferable to a range of contexts, including employability. Law graduates will be equipped with the following general and widely applicable skills:

- intellectual independence, including the ability to ask and answer cogent questions, identify gaps in their knowledge and acquire new knowledge, and engage in critical analysis and evaluation, to better challenge and advocate for change
- problem solving and adaptability
- adeptness in conducting independent research, including accurate recognition of issue(s), the identification, retrieval and evaluation of accurate, current and relevant information from a diverse range of appropriate sources, and their appropriate application
- ability to work with a range of data, including textual, numerical and statistical
- clear, effective and precise verbal and/or non-verbal communication in responding appropriately and sensitively to a range of differing positions and arguments
- digital literacy in finding, managing, creating and communicating information

- self-management, including an ability to reflect on their own learning, make effective use of feedback, a willingness to listen to advice and to acknowledge and correct errors
- willingness and ability to work collaboratively, including the capacity to work with professionals from other disciplines (e.g., environmental science, urban planning, and policy) to address contemporary challenges through a legal lens.
- engagement with their own personal and professional development, including academic integrity
- understanding of ethical conflicts that may arise and how to make reasoned, balanced judgements to resolve them
- development of personal integrity and an awareness of the potential ethical impacts of decision-making
- development of professional reflective capabilities to enhance personal practice.
- development of environmental literacy, to understand the basic principles of environmental law and sustainability, including the ability to critically analyse legal frameworks for their environmental impact.
- commitment to social equity with the ability to recognize and act upon the unequal impacts of legal decisions, policies, and regulations on different communities, with a view to promoting inclusivity and fairness.

Teaching and Learning

3.6 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). Additionally, providers should adopt environmentally sustainable practices in their teaching delivery, such as reducing the use of paper, promoting digital submission of assignments, encouraging the use of energy-efficient technologies, choosing ethical suppliers, and working with responsible partners and external reviewers.

3.7 The interactions between teaching, research and professional practice are key elements of the environment in which Law is taught. Staff will be given opportunities for development and may have opportunities to interact with learned societies in law and broader external networks. Staff teaching on Law courses may have obtained, or may be supported towards obtaining, a postgraduate qualification in learning and teaching or an equivalent recognition - such as Advance HE's [PSF](#). **Students studying for a Law degree are taught within an environment that is conducive to learning, intellectually stimulating and embraces intellectual and/or neurological diversity.** Students will have access to, and be appropriately trained in the identification, retrieval and use of, legal sources and sources of academic commentary. They will have access to relevant published literature, digital technologies, databases and associated software and computing resources **Providers are to ensure that legal sources used in teaching reflect diverse social contexts and address the experiences of marginalised and/or underrepresented groups.** To ensure development of digital literacy skills, students will be supported to use these resources effectively in group and individual learning environments.

3.8 Staff teaching on law courses should be encouraged to pursue continuous professional development in the areas of sustainability and inclusive teaching practices. This can include training in environmental law and climate education. Similarly, staff should be supported in acquiring skills related to inclusive and sustainable education, ensuring that the learning environment is accessible and supportive to all students. Providers of Law courses should ensure that teaching and learning methods reflect a commitment to sustainability. This can include embedding topics related to environmental law, climate change, and sustainability into the core curriculum and encouraging students to critically engage with legal issues surrounding environmental justice. Providers might also facilitate interdisciplinary learning experiences where law students collaborate with students from other fields (e.g., environmental science, economics, social work) to solve problems related to sustainability and climate change. For example, the use of interdisciplinary modules (core or elective) on sustainability and climate change which will bring together multiple subject areas to educate law students on the skills required to mitigate risks of the climate crisis and enhance sustainable development.

3.9 Providers of Law courses should ensure that teaching and learning methods reflect a commitment to sustainability. This can include embedding topics related to environmental law, climate change, and sustainability into the core curriculum and encouraging students to critically engage with legal issues surrounding environmental justice. Providers might also facilitate interdisciplinary learning experiences where law students collaborate with

students from other fields (e.g., environmental science, economics, social work) to solve problems related to sustainability and climate change. For example, the use of interdisciplinary modules (core or elective) on sustainability and climate change which will bring together multiple subject areas to educate law students on the skills required to mitigate risks of the climate crisis and enhance sustainable development.

Assessment and feedback

3.10 A provider's assessment strategy will reflect the skills and understanding developed within the curriculum, constructively aligned to the methods of teaching and learning adopted by the particular course at both course and modular levels. This strategy will clearly and directly reflect the defined learning outcomes of the course components, support student learning and enable students to demonstrate progressive levels of attainment. In this way, assessment as and for learning (as opposed to assessment merely of learning) will be promoted and developed.

3.11 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 will be considered in discussion with the student concerned, while ensuring fairness across the full cohort.

3.12 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.

3.13 The following list indicates a range of possible assessment practices, ensuring reasonable adjustments have been made to support disabled students and students with diverse learning needs:

- extended personal research projects, such as a dissertation, carried out over a prolonged period that involves extensive synthesis of legal and related sources, to assess powers of data assembly and analysis (including textual, conceptual, and/or empirical analysis, as appropriate), knowledge deployment, argument and reasoning, as well as skills relating to presentation, research design, logistics and time management
- other essays and written assignments, to assess knowledge and understanding of a topic, and communication, analytical and

presentation skills, including research essays, professional legal writing (such as writing letters of advice or drafting research memoranda), drafting policy documents, writing responses to consultations, producing annotated bibliographies or case notes and rewriting judgments

- unseen and seen tests and examinations under timed conditions (with or without reference materials, and including take-home, online and/or on-campus formats), requiring written essays and/or multiple-choice questions, to assess knowledge, recall, understanding and analytical skills
- presentations and other verbal and/or non-verbal activities, such as mooting, negotiating or interviewing
- graphical presentations in a variety of media formats, including the production of posters, comics or other artistic outputs, or creating pieces of legal design or legal visualisations (such as visual contracts), or presentations in other media and formats (for example, creating a video, animation, podcast or webpage, writing blogs or creating vlogs, or using social media)
- a mixture of individual and group activities, including collaborative peer learning, to develop and assess teamworking skills
- integrated reflective practice and reflective accounts (written or otherwise)
- practical activities, such as observed participation of practical team-based exercises in the field, laboratory and/or classroom, portfolios (or e-portfolios) of work relating to practical exercises, or reports on placements and activities or other reflective forms of writing
- practical, problem-based activities that address 'real world' challenges which may be set or assessed by community partners or other stakeholders.

3.14 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.

4 Benchmark standards

4.1 This Subject Benchmark Statement sets out the minimum threshold standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Law. Demonstrating these standards over the course of study will show that a student has achieved the requisite range of knowledge, skills and understanding expected of graduates in Law. It applies in full to those students whose degree course contains at least 50% of Law.

4.2 The majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards articulated below. 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.

Threshold level

Subject knowledge, understanding and skills

4.3 On graduating with an honours degree in Law, students should be able to:

- identify, locate, and retrieve standard legal materials in relevant jurisdictions' law in paper and electronic form
- synthesise information from a number of primary and secondary legal sources to appreciate their relative value and to achieve knowledge and understanding of complex legal issues
- apply legal knowledge to problem scenarios and draw reasoned conclusions supported by legal authority
- identify a range of possible outcomes to problems supported by legal authority and informed by current research and advanced legal scholarship
- make a critical judgement of the merits of particular arguments and make a reasoned choice between alternative solutions
- demonstrate appropriate legal citation and reasoning skills in written answers and communication
- analyse, evaluate and interpret the primary source materials of law; that is, statutes, law reports, treaties, directives and other relevant materials
- understand and use terminology, both verbally and non-verbally and in writing, to convey and explain technical legal information

- demonstrate advocacy skills through engagement with contemporary issues to encourage collective action
- demonstrate a range of techniques for conducting legal research, including methods drawn from other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, where appropriate
- exhibit some awareness of the inherent uncertainties, ambiguities and the limits of knowledge and their effect on understanding and application of the law
- show understanding of individual, regional, national and global contexts, as well as institutional, normative, social, political, economic, cultural, historical, ethical, philosophical, technological and ecological contexts
- recognise and critically assess the ways in which the law and legal systems may contribute to or challenge systemic discrimination based on race, gender, disability, and other protected identities.
- demonstrate a range of legal skills (for example, critical analysis, problem-solving) necessary to enable them to reach a basic understanding of all branches of relevant jurisdictions, even if not previously studied
- develop skills in digital literacy in finding, managing, creating and communicating information
- participate in problem-solving exercises
- develop employability skills and awareness of career opportunities, professional requirements and of the need for future planning
- develop an awareness of the future direction of the legal profession and its constant evolution, including the ability to develop a foundational understanding of environmental law and ESG legal frameworks. For example, graduates should be able to identify key national and international legal instruments that govern environmental protection, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development. This includes understanding the legal duties and obligations related to environmental justice, corporate social responsibility, and climate resilience.

Generic skills and qualities of mind

4.4 On graduating with an honours degree in Law, students should be able to demonstrate the following generic skills alongside qualities of mind articulated in paragraph 1.3:

- identify issues, questions and problems
- identify gaps in their own knowledge and acquire new knowledge
- understand and analyse knowledge and information

- synthesise the state of knowledge on a particular topic
- apply knowledge and understanding to provide evidenced conclusions, including to complex actual or hypothetical problems
- communicate effectively and appropriately verbally and/or non-verbally
- present knowledge or an argument in an inclusive way that is comprehensible to others
- work with a **diverse** range of data, including qualitative and quantitative empirical data
- engage with a range of forms of digital technology to collate, analyse, select and present information
- intellectual independence, including undertaking tasks independently (with appropriate guidance and support), conducting self-directed research and demonstrating critical judgement
- work collaboratively, including undertaking work in a group or team and/or participating in discussions
- **critically** reflect on their own progress, **perceptions and biases**, including questions of academic integrity
- identify and examine underlying values and ethics within law, culture, society, and the environment and on a personal **and collective** level
- understand the importance of well-being, mental health and emotions and their relationship with learning **and with others**
- make appropriate use of feedback provided to further their intellectual development
- appreciate and engage in **intersectional** contemporary debates relating to law, individuals, culture, and society, for example, around inequality and sustainability **and climate change**.

5 Membership of the Advisory Groups for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Law

Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Law (2023)

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Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Law (2019)

The fourth edition, published in 2019, was revised by QAA to align the content with the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published in 2018. Proposed revisions were checked and verified by a member of the review group of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Law from 2015.

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