

Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice

**Practical Legal Training Course
Information for Prospective Students
2008**

**Faculty of Law
Legal Practice Unit**

**Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice
Information for Prospective Students for 2008**

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GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN LEGAL PRACTICE

Practical Legal Training Course

The Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (GDLP) is the award of the University of Wollongong for students who successfully complete the Practical Legal Training Course. The Course is accredited by the Legal Profession Admission Board (LPAB) as a qualification for law graduates who wish to apply for admission as a legal practitioner in New South Wales. It is also accepted as practical legal training for first admission in the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory.

The Course was the first in Australia to offer recognition of prior skills training and professional experience, and flexible delivery combining on and off-campus training. We devised an alternative course which offered more flexibility for students with employment, family and financial responsibilities, and which enabled those living in country areas to remain there if they preferred to do so. Other courses have since followed our lead.

Features of the Course

- Emphasises developing legal skills and strategic frameworks for application in a wide range of legal practice
- Integrates coursework and professional experience
- Allows students to maintain current employment or undertake a voluntary placement during the course
- Offers students flexibility in the program through a combination of on and off-campus activities

Course Options Available

- The course is available full-time (20 week program) or part-time (conducted over 2 academic sessions)
- Law students in their final year of studies (subject to conditions) may also apply for the course. This will enable them to qualify for admission to practice up to 6 months earlier than previously.

If you are interested in completing your GDLP with us in your final LLB year, you should carefully plan your overall study and workplace workloads. Read this booklet carefully, and discuss with the Director how you can achieve the best results in both your LLB and GDLP studies. Then decide if you wish to take up one of these options.

Course Structure

The GDLP is an integrated program of coursework and professional experience that includes a combination of off-campus and on-campus activities.

The coursework part of the GDLP may be completed either on a full-time basis over a 20 week period or on a part-time basis over two academic sessions. The course also includes a period of 80 days of professional experience, up to 40 days of which may be credited for prior legal placements or legal workplace experience that meets the guidelines. (For University of Wollongong students, the placements undertaken in LLB 311 or LLB190 will be credited towards the GDLP professional experience.) Any remaining days must be completed either during the coursework part or within 6 months of completing the coursework.

Course Content

The Course content meets the requirements of the *National Competency Standards* for newly-admitted practitioners. Course activities cover a breadth of practice areas and skills, but are also designed to relate to work undertaken in the employment or placement site.

Course Program:

LLB 843 Professional Practice **OR** [LLB 396 Professional Practice and LLB 847 Professional Experience];*

LLB 844 Practice Management;

LLB 845 Conduction Litigation; and

LLB 846 Commercial & Property Practice

* UOW students who have completed, or are enrolled in LLB 396 as part of the LLB degree, are required to enrol in LLB 847. All other students enrol in LLB 843.

A full description of the Course subjects may be found at
<http://www.uow.edu.au/law/plt/subjects.html>

The **Coursework** component commences with a period of off-campus preparation followed by a week-long on-campus program to introduce you to the Course, to its teaching and learning methods, and to provide skills development and legal practice management tools in preparation for the work in the remainder of the Course.

Over the following 17 weeks students:

- complete a range of self-directed assignments and tasks. Much of this work requires interaction with staff and other students, through on-line learning, email, telephone; and
- attend 3 weekend assessment sessions on campus.

The GDLP also provides 3 on-campus weekend sessions (Saturday only) to allow students to further explore learning activities in a face-to-face learning environment.

The **Professional Experience** component of the GDLP consists of 80 days of legal work experience. Up to 40 of these days may be completed before students commence the course and credit can be given for this prior experience. Remaining days will generally be undertaken concurrently with the coursework. While engaged in coursework, students are permitted to credit a placement of up to 3 days of law-related professional experience each week.* Additional days worked during the coursework period of the Course are not usually included as part of the Course. However, part-time students may negotiate alternatives with the Director. All professional experience must be completed within 6 months of completing the coursework.

Professional experience must be in a law-practice based environment: consult <http://www.uow.edu.au/law/plt/placementprogram.html> for details.

Students already in law-related practice based locations as defined can retain their employment, subject to their capacity to complete all coursework. Students without such employment may arrange voluntary placements to meet the requirements: Please note that the Faculty is unable to make those arrangements for you, but will discuss options with you.

* In special circumstances, further days may be credited with the permission of the Director.

Final Year Options

Final year LLB and LPAB students may complete the GDLP subjects to the following conditions imposed by the LPAB:

Students must have completed all 'Priestley 11' core subjects: in terms of the Wollongong LLB degree, these are:

- Criminal Law and the Process of Justice **OR** Criminal Law and Process A and Criminal Law and Process B
- Law of Torts
- Law of Contracts **OR** Law of Contract A and Law of Contract B
- Property and Trusts A
- Property and Trusts B
- Public Law A (Administrative Law)
- Public Law B (Australian Constitutional Law)
- Remedies and Procedure
- Evidence
- Law of Business Organisations
- Lawyers and Australian Society (coursework only)

Students must have completed all components of the UOW LLB Skills Program (or equivalent) and UOW LLB students must have completed at least one 4-week professional placement before commencing the GDLP

Prior to enrolment, students must negotiate a study plan with the Director for both the final year LLB or LPAB and the GDLP course, including the professional experience component of the course;

The applications of students who meet the LPAB subject requirements will still need to be approved by the Director in consultation with the Sub-Dean, having regard to the following criteria:

- student performance and expectations in the LLB degree or LPAB Diploma
- external employment workload, and
- their overall LLB or LPAB and GDLP workload.

OPTION A – Full-time in the final session of the degree or diploma:

- In addition to meeting the above requirements, you may study only **one** subject concurrently with the GDLP. You will not be able to graduate with the GDLP (or obtain the Certificate of Satisfactory Completion required for admission to practice) until you are also qualified to graduate with your degree or diploma.
- You can expect the GDLP study workload to be about 25 hours of sustained assignment work each week throughout the course.

OPTION B – Part-time over the final 2 sessions of your degree or diploma:

The course content is identical to the 20-week course, but will be offered over 2 academic sessions. You may be able to commence the course even if some Priestley or skills subjects have still to be completed, depending on the pre-requisites for the GDLP subjects. You also need to consider your overall study workload and expectations for your degree and what you wish to achieve in the GDLP. You can expect the GDLP part-time workload to be between 10–15 hours of sustained assignment work each week throughout the course.

You complete your professional experience component of the course in accordance with the agreed study plan.

You will not be able to graduate with the GDLP (or obtain the Certificate of Satisfactory Completion required for admission to practice) until you are also qualified to graduate with your degree or diploma.

Enrolment Guidelines – Full-time and Part-time Course

If you wish to enrol in the *full-time course* you need to enrol in the relevant single session intake of these GDLP subjects:

| Subjects | February Intake | June Intake |
|--|-----------------|-------------|
| LLB 843 Professional Practice* | Autumn | Spring |
| LLB 844 Practice Management | Autumn | Spring |
| LLB 845 Conducting Litigation | Autumn | Spring |
| LLB 846 Property and Commercial Practice | Autumn | Spring |

* If you have completed LLB 396 Professional Practice, you do not enrol in this subject. Only enrol in LLB 847 Professional Experience.

If you wish to enrol in the *part-time course*:

- you will complete LLB 843 and LLB 844 over two sessions. You complete LLB 845 and LLB 846 in single sessions and you can choose in which session you do LLB 845 or LLB 846
- you need to enrol in the appropriate *annual* intakes of LLB 843 and LLB 844: if you enrol in Autumn session (ie February intake), in the Subject Descriptions these subjects are referred to as '*Annual*'; if you enrol in Spring (ie June intake), they are referred to as '*Spring (year)/Autumn(year)*'. Refer to table below:

| Subjects | February Intake | June Intake |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| LLB 843 Professional Practice* | Annual | Spring /Autumn |
| LLB 844 Practice Management | Annual | Spring /Autumn |
| LLB 845 Conducting Litigation | Autumn or Spring | Spring or Autumn |
| OR | | |
| LLB 846 Property and Commercial Practice | Autumn or Spring | Spring or Autumn |

* If you have completed LLB 396 Professional Practice, you do not enrol in this subject. Only enrol in LLB 847 Professional Experience.

What to Expect – Assignments, Attendance and Assessment

The GDLP Course subjects are unlike traditional academic subjects. The principal learning strategies of the course are the application of problem-based learning, and reflection on experience. Each subject contains a series of modules, which may be delivered as a seminar, a workshop, a series of sequenced assignments, or the conduct over a period of time of a practice file. Skills, knowledge and ethical conduct are integrated, as they are in practice. Theoretical knowledge of the law, acquired in the LLB, is assumed and is reinforced in the coursework.

The Course blends face-to-face activities and a significant online teaching and learning component to assist you in completing your research and assignments. You will need access to the internet to enable you to interact with the online learning management system, to read materials, access learning resources submit assignments and communicate with staff and other students. The Course uses the University's eLearning program to deliver its online component. You will need to ensure that any computer you use for work in the Course can be configured to accommodate the eLearning program. Details of how to check your browser and how to configure your computer may be accessed through <http://www.uow.edu.au/its/vista/>. As in practice, you will also be expected to make use of the online resources that are available to you as a University of Wollongong student to research issues.

The Course is delivered in a mix of on and off-campus activities. The compulsory on-campus activities consist of the "Introductory Week" and the assessment weekends. Further face-to-face on-campus sessions are held to provide interactive learning opportunities. In between these on-campus sessions, students engage in sustained and paced practical activities (reading and research, completion of assignments, conducting interactive transactional files, and interaction with staff, other students and external legal practitioners, as required) with deadlines to meet each week. You will be expected to make a high commitment to the demands of the Course, and to interact co-operatively and professionally with staff and other students in the Course, especially where required to do so in the interactive transactional files so as not to adversely affect other students' learning in the Course.

During the Course, you will need to attend the Introductory/Intensive week, and at such times on the assessment weekends as is necessary for the subjects in which you are enrolled. For part-time students, this attendance will take place over 2 semesters. You should not enrol in the GDLP if you are unable to attend the compulsory sessions.

Assessment is based on satisfactory completion of assignments, participation in scheduled activities, and the achievement of the National Competency Standards required of a newly-admitted practitioner. These are described in the Course handbook. A significant amount of your work in the Course is completed by external expert legal practitioners.

If you intend to continue working full time in your law-related employment, you should ensure that your employer is aware of and understands the extent of your course workload and will be prepared to make allowance for this. In some instances, it may be better to negotiate for part-time employment or to take study leave for some part of each week during the Course.

Course Dates for 2008*

Course 2008/1: Commences 21 January and concludes 6 June 2008

On-campus dates:

Introductory/Intensive Week: 4-8 February

Assessment Weekends: 3, 17 and 24 May

Course 2008/2: Commences 23 June and concludes 7 November 2008

On-campus workshop dates:

Introductory/Intensive Week: 7-11 July

Assessment Weekends: 4, 18 and 25 October

Preparing a Study Plan

Your Study Plan should be based on allocation of no more than 40 hours per week (ie the equivalent of a full-time working week) between all of your LLB or LPAB, GDLP, and professional experience or employment commitments. In making these calculations:

- Allocate 8 hours per week for each LLB subject plus time for preparation for assignments and examinations
- Allocate 10– 15 hours per week for each GDLP practice subject
- Prioritise and plan ahead for all assignments – don't leave any assignment to the deadline
- If undertaking the course full-time, reduce your employment workload if necessary; if undertaking the course part-time, consider more flexible arrangements for your professional experience in consultation with the Director.

Course Fees for 2008

There are 2 payments to be made for the Course:

- An initial payment of \$ 300 when you apply to enrol in the Course. This is payable to the Faculty of Law, for the course materials which will be provided by the Faculty to each student throughout the Course. This fee is **non refundable** should an applicant subsequently decide not to enrol in the Course.
- The tuition fee for the whole course, payable to the University, is \$ 6,300* for domestic students, plus student body fees. (If a final year student, student body fees are payable as part of your degree program). The Commonwealth FEE-HELP scheme, which replaces the Post-graduate Loan Scheme (PELS), is available to domestic students to meet tuition fees for non-research post-graduate studies: refer to the DEST website (www.dest.gov.au) for details.

* \$5,450, if you complete LLB 396 and, therefore do not enrol in LLB 843

Once your application to enrol is approved, you will receive an offer from the University (UniAdvice) to enrol in the Course. Acceptance of the offer must be made before the course commences. Tuition fees are payable (or FEE-HELP application lodged) at the time of accepting the offer to enrol. The fee is allocated to each subject as follows:

LLB 843 Professional Practice – (8cp) - \$ 1050

LLB 844 Practice Management – (8cp) - \$ 1050

LLB 845 Conducting Litigation – (16cp) - \$2100

LLB 846 Commercial and Property Practice – (16 cp) - \$2100

LLB 847 Professional Experience - (nil cp) - no fee

International Students

Overseas law graduates should first contact the Legal Profession Admission Board (LPAB) for directions as to what requirements they must meet in order to qualify for admission in New South Wales. They may be required to complete some additional law studies, and it is necessary to complete them before commencing or concurrently with the practical legal training requirements. Overseas students must also hold a student visa or other temporary visa for residence in Australia.

For information, contact the LPAB website at <http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lpab> or phone (02) 9392 0300

The University's tuition Course fee for international students in 2008 is A\$ 9950

* All students should view the current fee structure for their subjects at: <http://www.edu.au/student/finances/index.html> before submitting their application to enrol

Enrolling in the Course

Applications for the course commencing on 21 January 2008 must be in by no later than 14 December 2007. Applications will be accepted in order of receipt.

Normally, there are 40 places only available in each Course, inclusive of all applicants and part-time students already in the course.

To apply, obtain an enrolment kit from the Faculty of Law Office (or download the kit from our website) at <http://www.uow.edu.au/law/plt/howtoenrol.html> and follow the instructions.

Your application to enrol must be lodged initially with the Faculty, where it will be checked by the Director.

If a final year student, you may be asked to make an appointment with the Director to discuss your proposed study plan. If part-time, you may be asked to enrol in a particular practice subject in each session.

Applicants who are eligible for entry into the Course will be made an offer by UniAdvice (the University student administrative centre). This offer must be accepted and the Course fee paid for your enrolment to be completed.

If, at any time after lodging the application and before formal enrolment, you wish to withdraw your application, please notify the Legal Practice Unit so that any student on a waiting list can be considered for the Course.

Once you are enrolled, you need to discuss with the Director any intention to withdraw from or defer a subject, so that an alternative study plan can be devised.

Further Information

Further information about our Course may be found on our website at

<http://www.uow.edu.au/law/plt/plthomepage.html>

If you would like to know more about the program, please contact:

- Faculty of Law
Phone: (02) 4221 3456
Fax: (02) 4221 3188
Email: law@uow.edu.au