WHERE A UOW LAW DEGREE CAN TAKE YOU
It is my great pleasure to introduce *Where a UOW Law Degree Can Take You*, a collection of career success stories from graduates of the Bachelor of Laws program at the University of Wollongong. This publication has its origins in the questions that my colleagues and I field when we talk to prospective students about studying law at UOW—as well as our conversations with current UOW law students as they begin to think seriously about life after university.

Questions like: “What sort of job will a UOW law degree get me?”

“Does a UOW law degree give me the same options and opportunities available to graduates of older law schools, in Sydney etc.”

In its relatively short life (2008 marks our 18th birthday) the UOW Faculty of Law has developed an excellent reputation for the quality of its teaching programs. This isn’t idle boasting. The Australian Government’s Learning and Teaching Performance Fund awarded the University of Wollongong the highest possible rating (A1) in the ‘Business, Law & Economics’ discipline group, of which the Faculty of Law is a part. We achieved this rating twice in back-to-back years—2007 and 2008. Naturally, my colleagues and I are very proud of our flagship degree, and never have any difficulty extolling its virtues.

However, as impressive as these results are, we recognised that many potential students are more interested in ‘real stories’ than rankings or statistics. We accepted that no amount of genuine confidence and reassurance from my staff could quite match the impact of hearing directly from graduates about where their UOW law degree has taken them, and what they found especially valuable about their time as students in the UOW Faculty of Law.

And so we compiled these first-hand accounts from some of our graduates about their post-university careers, which offer proof that the UOW law degree is not only highly regarded by employers, but is a passport to a diverse range of career options.

We’ll also take the opportunity to highlight some of the distinctive features of our program that we (and our graduates!) think make UOW an especially attractive place to study law.

One final word of advice: if you’ve ever said “I’m interested in studying law, but I don’t want to be a lawyer”, only to be met with raised eyebrows from your parents, teachers or friends, don’t worry—you’re not alone!

In fact, the Faculty of Law actively encourages its students to see the benefits of sustained intellectual engagement with the nature and role of law, its place in our local, national and international societies—even if your dream career appears to have very little to do with ‘lawyering’. In the twenty-first century, enrolling in a Bachelor of Laws program no longer involves having to jump on a one-way train to a career as a traditionally defined lawyer. As revealed by the stories of UOW law graduates told in this publication, there’s no telling where a UOW law degree might take you.

**PROFESSOR LUKE MCNAMARA**
**DEAN**
**JULY 2008**
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**Where a Law Degree Can Take You**
ONE LLB PROGRAM, PLENTY OF OPTIONS

We recognise that not all law students have the same interests, motivations or aspirations, and so we give you more than a dozen course options from which to choose. You should select the one that suits you best.

SINGLE DEGREE OPTIONS
- Bachelor of Laws (4 years)
- Bachelor of Laws + Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (4 years)
- Bachelor of Laws – Graduate (3 years)*

DOUBLE DEGREES OPTIONS
- Bachelor of Arts – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)
- Bachelor of Communication and Media Studies – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)
- Bachelor of Commerce – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)
- Bachelor of Computer Science – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)
- Bachelor of Creative Arts – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)
- Bachelor of Engineering – Bachelor of Laws (6 years)
- Bachelor of Journalism – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)
- Bachelor of Mathematics – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)
- Bachelor of Medical Science – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)
- Bachelor of Science – Bachelor of Laws (5 years)

*Only available to holders of a previous degree.

THE COMPULSORY PART OF THE LLB

We realise that not everyone will end up practising as a lawyer (solicitor or barrister) after they graduate—in fact, we actively encourage law students to appreciate the diversity of their career opportunities—but we think that all of our graduates should have that option. For that reason, LLB students at the University of Wollongong are required to complete all the subjects that are regarded as mandatory by the NSW Legal Profession Admission Board. In addition, we require all students to complete five ‘skills’ subjects that represent one of the distinctive features of the UOW law degree—ensuring that you hit the job market with the skills and qualities that employers are looking for. For more information on the Skills Program, see page 7.

Our compulsory subjects are:
- Advocacy Skills
- Criminal Law and Process A & B
- Dispute Management Skills
- Drafting Skills
- Evidence
- Foundations of Law A & B
- Law of Business Organisations
- Law of Contract A & B
- Law of Torts
- Lawyers and Australian Society
- Legal Research and Writing
- Legal Theory
- Property and Trusts A & B
- Public Law A & B
- Remedies and Procedure

ELECTIVE OPTIONS

Depending on the course you choose, you will complete between 5 and 11 elective subjects. Every year we offer a diverse range of elective subjects drawn from the following list:

- Advanced Criminal Law and Procedure
- Advanced Family Law
- Animal Law
- Anti-Discrimination Law
- Banking Law
- Commercial and Consumer Contracts
- Comparative Studies in Law
- Conflict of Laws
- Corporate Governance
- E-Commerce Law
- Elder Law
- Environmental Law
- Family, Children and Welfare
- Human Rights Law
- Indigenous Peoples and Legal Systems
- Insurance Law
- Intellectual Property Law
- International Criminal Law
- International Environmental Law
- International Law
- International and Comparative Indigenous Legal Issues
- International and Comparative Intellectual Property Law
- Jessup International Law Moot
- Islamic Law
- Labour Regulation
- Law of Employment
- Law of the Sea
- Legal Research Project
- Marine Resources Law
- Media Law
- Mental Health Law
Natural Resources Law Review
Occupational Health and Safety Law
Objects and Subjects: Law, Things & Everyday Life
Professional Practice
Revenue Law
Special Study in Law

We are adding new elective subjects all the time. Animal Law, Elder Law and International Criminal Law are new additions in 2008.

Plus, every Summer Session we offer a program of elective subjects, including unique ‘Special Study’ subjects offered by experts from around the world. This is a great option for students looking to complete their studies in the fastest time possible, and allows us to add even greater variety to our range of electives.

Looking for even more choice? Consider taking a semester at a university overseas, or enrolling in a subject on a cross-institutional basis at another Australian university. All possible as part of your UOW law course.

**FIVE REASONS TO CONSIDER LAW AT UOW**

1. **THE INTEGRATED FIRST YEAR PROGRAM**
   We have recently introduced a unique ‘immersion’ program for all first-year LLB students at UOW. Whether you opt for the four-year ‘straight’ LLB, any one of our ten double degree options, or the three-year graduate LLB program, in your first year as a law student at UOW you will enrol in a suite of 10 integrated subjects spread over two sessions. These subjects introduce the foundational knowledge, values, qualities and skills needed for successful completion of the LLB degree. The first-year subjects are taught in an integrated way, with key material in each subject built upon in other subjects, as appropriate to the overlapping, but different, learning objectives in each case. The first-year teaching team has carefully selected and timetabled assessment tasks to ensure your study commitments complement each other. We are confident that the UOW first-year immersion program gives you the best possible transition into University studies and offers an excellent foundation for the remainder of your studies in law.

   The prescribed first-year subjects are:

   **AUTUMN SESSION**
   - Foundations of Law A
   - Legal Research and Writing
   - Law of Contract A
   - Criminal Law and Process A
   - Communication Skills

   **SPRING SESSION**
   - Foundations of Law B
   - Law of Contract B
   - Criminal Law and Process B
   - Lawyers and Australian Society
   - Advocacy Skills

   In order to help students develop the confidence and skills necessary to fully realise the benefits of the UOW Faculty of Law’s approach to teaching and learning (see below), seminar groups in all first-year subjects are limited to 20–25 students.

2. **STUDENT-CENTRED & SEMINAR-BASED LEARNING**
   As you’ll discover at UOW, there is much more to studying law than simply learning legal rules. You will be compelled to think critically about the nature of the world around you, and law’s place in it, and to solve problems analytically. You will discover not only how the law ‘is’, but how it changes, and what criteria might best be used for evaluating the merits of proposals for law reform. Because we think they are the best vehicles for approaching the study of law, small group seminars are at the centre of the UOW Faculty of Law’s approach to teaching and learning.

   A weekly 2-hour seminar is the centrepiece of all compulsory and most elective LLB subjects. We design our seminars to develop your ability to work co-operatively with others in creating and maintaining an interactive learning environment. You will, of course, have plenty of opportunities to ask and answer questions. More importantly, you will enhance your ability to work within groups by taking part in group problem-solving exercises, negotiations, class moots and other joint projects. Seminar groups are kept to a size that makes it realistic for all students to actively participate in seminar discussions and activities (maximum 25 in first year; approx 30 in later years).
Weekly seminars are supported in a variety of ways, including weekly lectures, eLearning sites, email communication and opportunities for one-on-one consultation with your lecturers. The UOW Faculty of Law’s academic staff enjoys an excellent reputation for being accessible and enthusiastic about supporting the learning of their students.

3. THE SKILLS PROGRAM
Since the first LLB students enrolled at the UOW Faculty of Law in 1991, we have encouraged our students to appreciate that the theory and rules of law operate in a practical environment. Of course, emphasising the link between theory and practice is hardly unique to UOW, but we have taken things a step further. The UOW law degree includes a specific program of skills subjects as part of the core curriculum.

The Skills Program is a 12-credit-point program, delivered throughout the degree, starting in the first session of first year. It comprises five subjects, which introduce the principles and techniques of:

- Legal Research and Writing
- Advocacy Skills
- Communication Skills
- Drafting Skills
- Dispute Management Skills

These subjects are not designed to appeal only to budding legal practitioners. Rather, they allow all law students to develop and demonstrate proficiency in practical skills that will be valued by all employers. We are proud of our Skills Program and regard it as an important contributor to the reputation which UOW law graduates enjoy for their ‘real world readiness’.

4. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (PEP)
Many law schools have rightly recognised the value of clinical legal education and the importance of creating opportunities for students to put their knowledge and skills into practice in the ‘real world’ before they graduate. However, the UOW Faculty of Law is unique in that it requires all LLB students to complete a work placement as part of their LLB studies. Our view, strongly supported by feedback from our students and alumni, is that the Professional Experience Program is an invaluable component of our academic curriculum. Work placements fulfill an important element of both academic and practical education in law. The integration of professional experience into the learning process is highly effective in developing students’ understanding of the law in action, as they are able to observe and perceive the relevance and application of theory to practice. Our PEP is not simply ‘work experience’ but a significant learning tool. It affords UOW students the opportunity to develop an understanding of the human, social and policy contexts of law and legal practice that can never be fully replicated in the classroom.

Many UOW graduates credit their PEP experience with having opened their eyes to the sort of career destination that suited them best, and with allowing them to develop the networks that have generated job opportunities both prior to and after graduation.

5. GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN LEGAL PRACTICE
Whether you already know you want to be a legal practitioner, or come to this realisation during the course of your LLB studies, one major advantage of studying at UOW is the availability of Practical Legal Training (PLT), which is required to be formally admitted to practice. Only four law schools in NSW offer a Legal Practice Course (LPC), and UOW is one of them.

Our Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice is accredited by the NSW Legal Profession Admission Board to deliver the practical legal training stipulated in the National Competency Standards. Better still, you don’t need to wait until you have finished all of the requirements of your LLB before commencing the LPC. Final-year LLB students can apply to commence the LPC (full-time or part-time, depending on how many LLB subjects you have left to complete).

The Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice is delivered flexibly in a blend of face-to-face intensive workshops, and a strong online component delivered via the UOW eLearning system. As part of the PLT you also need to complete a period of professional experience. UOW graduates will receive credit for the PEP completed as part of their LLB studies, saving you further time before being able to embark on your post-university career.
CBD PRACTICE

You may have your heart set on a career in private practice in one of the big commercial firms in Sydney, interstate or overseas. As the following grad stories reveal, we know from experience that a UOW law degree can take you there.

ASHLEY TSACALOS
PARTNER, DEACONS
BCOM/LLB (1999)

“I am proud to be a former student of the University of Wollongong and to be a partner in one of Australia’s largest law firms.”

I am a Partner in the Commercial Dispute Resolution business unit at Deacons in Sydney. My practice involves acting on behalf of various government departments and private sector clients and providing them with advice in relation to contractual issues, insurance issues and dispute resolution generally. This includes providing them with advice in relation to all forms of alternative dispute resolution as well as advice in relation to litigation strategies and civil procedure and representing them in various alternative dispute resolution forums and/or in court. I have also acted on behalf of various insurers and provided them with policy advice and dispute resolution advice in relation to claims brought by third parties against insureds in relation to professional indemnity insurance, director and officers liability insurance, public liability insurance, product liability insurance and statutory insurance.

It fills me with enormous pride and a sense of achievement to have been elevated to the partnership at Deacons. It is satisfying to be recognised within the firm and amongst clients as achieving a certain level of expertise that warrants such a promotion. It also has special significance as Deacons was the firm where I started my legal career as a summer clerk while studying at the University of Wollongong in 1998/1999. I am proud to be a former student of the University of Wollongong and to be a partner in one of Australia’s largest law firms. I obtained a strong legal education at UOW. The Faculty of Law equipped me to be an independent learner with the confidence to confront any legal issues that I encountered.

I chose to study at the University of Wollongong because of its emerging reputation at the time and its innovative approach to education. The student-centred learning approach adopted by the Faculty of Law was also very attractive to me as I knew that it would allow me to study at my own pace and to the extent that I wanted. As it turned out, this approach really worked for me.

The benefits of a double degree are substantial. It teaches you two separate disciplines and each one assists your understanding of the other. My commerce background has assisted me greatly with all aspects of legal practice. It assists with understanding the commercial environment in which clients function as well as their concerns, needs and expectations. It also assists in providing clients with practical and commercially sound legal advice.

TIM CASTLE
PARTNER, GILBERT + TOBIN
BA/LLB (1995)

“My UOW law degree equipped me well for a career practising commercial law. It gave me a sound theoretical base, and the skills-based subjects allowed me to enter practice with skills I would not otherwise have had.”

I am a Partner in the Litigation Group at Gilbert & Tobin Lawyers in Sydney. Gilbert + Tobin is a large commercial law firm and currently has 51 partners and around 200 lawyers. I joined the firm in 1999, and have practised as a commercial litigator specialising in insolvency, construction and defamation.

I primarily act for large corporate clients in relation to commercial disputes in the Supreme Court of NSW and the Federal Court of Australia. These cases typically involve a diverse range of legal issues including contract, tort, trade practices, competition and insolveney. My day-to-day work involves advising clients of their legal position and strategies to be employed to resolve disputes—whether through litigation or negotiation; the preparation of legal correspondence and Court documents such as pleadings, affidavits and submissions; and some Court appearances.
I've acted on a number of complex commercial disputes during my time at Gilbert + Tobin, including as part of the team that acted for Consolidated Media Holdings Limited (formerly Publishing and Broadcasting Limited) and Nine Network Australia in their successful defence of the C7 proceedings, one of the largest civil claims ever heard in Australia.

My UOW law degree equipped me well for a career practicing commercial law. It gave me a sound theoretical base, and the skills-based subjects in areas such as advocacy allowed me to enter practice with skills I would not otherwise have had. I was a member of the first combined-degree intake of students to the Faculty of Law in 1991. There was a real sense of excitement, and a desire to build something new and successful among the students and staff. It is a great endorsement of the quality of the UOW law school that its graduates are now starting to be appointed as partners in major commercial firms such as Gilbert + Tobin, as traditionally the partners in these firms have come from a small number of long-established law schools.

Since 2001, I am also a registered migration agent. In this role I typically obtain businesses visas for managers and skilled employees of my overseas clients who are sent to Australia to establish the business or fulfil contracts with Australian customers. I am also a notary public, which is useful when my clients need certified documents for use overseas, as certifications by a JP or solicitor are not usually recognised outside Australia.

I work as a commercial lawyer at TressCox Lawyers, a mid-tier firm in Sydney. In this role I assist businesses from Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and other countries establishing business in Australia. This typically involves advising on and implementing an appropriate corporate structure, distribution and agency agreements, joint ventures, acquisition of companies and businesses, employment law, tax advice, property law, protection of intellectual property and much more (for example, how to bring a dog into Australia on a boat!). Because most of my clients are from Europe, they rely on my assistance not just with respect to legal issues, but also general advice regarding life in Australia—such as choice of schooling, or how the health system works.

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I enjoy my work very much as it is rewarding, legally and culturally diverse and often involves trips to Europe where I visit my clients' headquarters and to give seminars about Australian law in English and German. Having studied law in Germany I am able to move between civil and common law systems and advise using technical legal terms of both systems.

Although my time at UOW was tough—particularly the vast amount of reading, as I was learning English at the same time—I enjoyed it very much and have recommended the University to other potential students since I graduated. I still have contact with former students and we actively refer work to each other where appropriate.

UOW's emphasis on small-group seminar based learning with active student participation enabled me to learn the English language quickly, connect with other students and teachers and generally enjoy the subjects in an active way. Having studied law the traditional method (lectures with a few hundred students) before coming to Australia I really enjoyed and appreciated the attention of the teachers in the smaller groups at UOW. Despite the fact that English is not my first language, I think I benefited more from the years of studies at UOW more than I did during the 4 years of law studies prior to that in Germany.
“UOW provided a much more personal learning environment. For me, this encouraged a much higher level of engagement, interest and learning outcomes. I always found the teaching staff to be approachable, available and very supportive.”

I am working as a solicitor in the Employee Relations practice group at Freehills in Sydney. I practise in a range of areas of employee relations law including discrimination and equal opportunity, human resources practices, industrial regulation, privacy, termination of employment and general contract of employment issues.

My typical work includes advising on and drafting employment contracts and workplace policies, and I have experience representing clients in employment litigation in State and Federal courts and tribunals. I currently work 3 days a week in a job-share arrangement with another solicitor in the Employee Relations group. On my days out of the office, I care for my young son.

During a leave of absence from Freehills, I also spent six months working in a large German law firm, advising on a range of commercial matters and undertaking a review of the firm’s English precedents. During my 2-year stay in Germany, I also provided training in business and legal English, and consulting and translation services for the establishment of the website for a new German law firm.

My main area of work is advising clients on the competition aspects of mergers and acquisitions, and acting for them in seeking clearance from the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC).

What I enjoy most about competition law is becoming familiar with a diverse range of industries and businesses. I have worked on projects in the retail, transport, manufacturing, agriculture, mining and health sectors.

In 2005 I completed the ACCC graduate program, rotating through three different areas. Following this, I worked in the Adjudication branch assessing applications for immunity from the Trade Practices Act, and then in the ACCC’s Mergers branch. In Mergers I worked in some interesting deals including the sale of Coles; Video Ezy’s acquisition of Blockbuster; and Angus & Robertson’s acquisition of Borders.

I think the smaller classes at UOW—which encouraged group discussions and teacher/student interaction—simulated what work environments are like. They were great preparation for developing relationships with colleagues, and knowing how to act in different work situations.

Also, UOW’s Professional Experience Program is fantastic. Even if you do not end up in a job related to your placements just having worked in a professional environment is an advantage. I recall my experiences were highly regarded by employers when I was applying for graduate positions.
“The availability of a PLT course at UOW is extremely valuable. The fact that workshops are offered intensively on weekends allowed me to work during the week, and being in the workplace as I was completing the course assisted in completing many of the required tasks.”

I’m an Equity Partner at Russell McLelland Brown Lawyers, a 10-partner firm with 15 employed lawyers and two licensed conveyancers. I started with RMB Lawyers in January 2000 after graduating from UOW in 1999, and was admitted as a partner in 2006. I supervise a team of 5 with respect to personal injury litigation and industrial disputes.

My experience in personal injury litigation in cases ranging from simple work injuries to catastrophic injury cases has seen me conduct extensive litigation in the District Court, the Industrial Relations Commissions of both NSW and Australia, the NSW Dust Diseases Tribunal, the Supreme Court, the NSW Court of Appeal and the High Court of Australia.

My work in industrial disputes covers a number of areas. I advise and appear for employers with respect to termination issues, transmission of employment entitlements, redundancies, unfair dismissal applications, unlawful dismissal applications and common law breach of contract claims. I also deal with occupational health and safety matters, drafting and implementing workplace agreements, and discrimination.

UOW has been a valuable asset to firms such as RMB Lawyers by providing skilled young lawyers. Our firm employs 10 UOW graduates, all of whom are progressing well towards being highly competent lawyers in their respective fields.

“The small group seminar-based approach … definitely helped me learn more readily than a traditional lecture-focused format. I felt encouraged to speak up and wasn’t afraid of asking ‘dumb’ questions.”

In 2007 I was made a partner at Kells The Lawyers, where I head the local government, planning and environment law team. Kells is a firm of 8 partners with offices in Wollongong, Sydney, Shellharbour and Dapto.

After graduating with a Bachelor degree in town planning UNSW in 1990, I worked as a town planner in various NSW local government authorities for 10 years, during which time I developed an interest in law. This desire to study law was fulfilled when I graduated with a LLB (Honours) from UOW in 2001. Since that time, I have practised almost exclusively in the area of local government, planning and environmental law.
My principal clients are local government authorities. I provide various services to these authorities ranging from representing them in the NSW Land and Environment Court to providing written advice on their obligations and duties under the law. In the Land and Environment Court I have acted for government and private clients. My work for government clients includes prosecuting for environmental offences and defending the refusal of development applications. I also advise the occasional home owners who find themselves trapped in the swamp that is town planning law in New South Wales.

The small group seminar-based approach to learning which I experienced at the UOW Faculty of Law definitely helped me learn more readily than a traditional lecture-focused format. I felt encouraged to speak up and wasn’t afraid of asking ‘dumb’ questions.

The compulsory practical experience program is invaluable. It is a way of getting to observe how the law operates in practice, at an early stage in your studies. It also opens opportunities for employment, which gives UOW students a head start on other institutions.

I am currently a principal with Warren McKeon Dickson Lawyers, after ten years with the firm—in which time we have grown from offices in Miranda and Engadine to being the biggest firm in the Sutherland Shire with offices also in Wollongong and Batemans Bay. My legal career has included many highlights in all areas of my personal practice—criminal, employment and family law—as well as in my firm’s main practice area of commercial litigation.

I have found that outcomes such as obtaining a second chance for young offenders who would otherwise have faced a gaol sentence, or recovering a kidnapped child can be as memorable and rewarding as receiving thanks from an elderly couple whose minds were put at ease through the preparation of a will, or advising a client on how to transmit a family business to the next generation.

My duties across all areas of my practice are diverse. Among other things, I conduct Family Law matters and Care Applications in the Children’s Court; I appear in Local and District Courts on the NSW south coast (Eden, Narooma, Batemans Bay, Kiama, Wollongong) and all across Sydney on criminal matters; I draft employment contracts and advise on industrial relations claims; and for each area of practice, supervise a team of lawyers.

I am proud to have been instrumental in the development of the first scholarship program from private legal practice with the University of Wollongong, and proud to have provided employment to numerous UOW Law Graduates—many of whom remain with us, and many others who have gone on to work in every avenue of the legal profession from Judge’s Associates or in-house legal advisers with corporations, to recruitment and marketing.

The contacts I made at university remain some of the closest friends and colleagues I have to this day and are still some of the first people I turn to for a second opinion on a point of law—or indeed a recommended course of action in any number of avenues of my life.
Running my own firm has enabled me to focus on the areas of law that I enjoy most (criminal and family law) rather than having to do the matters thrown on your desk by one of the partners a few weeks before a hearing—or even less—or being given a matter which you subsequently discover has been given to you because the clients are particularly difficult.

There are unique challenges in having your own firm, like managing relationships with staff and your partner or partners; however, the most dramatic difference is that you must develop skills in terms of running your own business including meeting overheads, networking and advertising, and adapting your business to the changing needs of the market. You also learn that by far the best way to get work is to do a great job for your existing clients and then new work will flow regularly by way of referral.

The flexibility and freedom associated with running your own firm and satisfaction obtained out of seeing the firm grow into a success is very gratifying. It does generally mean that you are very unlikely to ever want to be an employed solicitor again!

The PEP course has added weight and credibility to the UOW Faculty of Law and the LLB itself. I found the PEP course very beneficial and highly relevant.

The emphasis on seminar-based learning is essential, as it is more reflective of what happens in the profession (e.g. settlement negotiations). It is far more personal and encourages active participation.

After 6 years of undergraduate studies it certainly was rewarding to be embraced in an environment where I could put all my knowledge and skills into practice. Being thrown into a small/medium tier law firm and getting to see how the law really operates on the coal-face was for me the most eye-opening way to figure out whether or not I wanted to practise. It turns out I actually do, but I would never have known had the PEP not given me an opportunity to experience legal practice and what it is really about.

As an aside, one of my favourite things about UOW was the diverse and friendly campus community. I think that as a legal practitioner—or for anyone working in a law-related job, really—people skills are absolutely invaluable.

I can honestly say that the University offers a fantastic tertiary learning experience. I feel that in terms of degree structures and courses, teaching staff and their methods, equipment and facilities, my education at UOW was always contemporary, relevant, and rewarding.
Ever noticed how many politicians are lawyers? Whether or not you dream of being elected to Parliament, public service is a popular career destination for law graduates. Many UOW grads find that they are particularly well suited to the blend of policy formulation and law-making that is at the heart of working in government.

Rachel Young
Third Secretary, Australian High Commission, Vanuatu BA/LLB (2004)

"UOW’s emphasis on student-centred learning puts the UOW law school in a different category to many other universities. I found the level of support provided by lecturers and the interactive class-structures created an excellent learning environment."

I’ve been working for Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as the Third Secretary at Australia’s High Commission in Port Vila, Vanuatu for the last two and a half years. I joined DFAT as a Graduate Trainee in 2005 and was posted to Vanuatu in July 2006. I’m a junior diplomat, representing the Government of Australia in Vanuatu.

My work is very diverse, but mainly I work with my counterparts in the Vanuatu Government, NGOs and other Foreign Missions on a variety of different issues of interest to Australia.

I had expected when I left university that I would end up working in the community legal sector or in native title law. However, during the DFAT Graduation Trainee selection process, I realised that this was an opportunity I couldn’t turn down—there was just so much potential within DFAT to work and live overseas, to learn from a practical perspective about development, human rights, the UN, trade and the dizzying array of international relations issues that DFAT covers.

The allure of travelling and working overseas was one of the reasons I applied for a Graduate Position within the Department. Having studied international and human rights law as part of my law degree at UOW, I also wanted to gain some practical experience in working in international relations.

UOW’s emphasis on student-centred learning (as opposed to relying heavily on large lectures) puts the UOW law school in a different category to many other universities. I found the level of support provided by lecturers and the interactive class-structures created an excellent learning environment. On a very basic level, I found it made learning much more engaging and interesting—and it is much easier to perform well academically if you are engaged and interested in your subject matter. It also promoted critical thinking, debate and recognition of diverse views/interpretation of the law, which was very important to me.

The Professional Experience Program is an invaluable aspect of the course. Aside from the practical benefit of often leading to ongoing paid employment, the placements kept me grounded in the ‘reality of law’. In other words, that law was not simply rules and big fat textbooks, but about real people and real conflicts.

Damien Bond
Senior Policy Officer, Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry BCom/LLB (2005)

“My placement was one of the best experiences of my degree. It gave me an excellent opportunity to be involved with Children’s Court matters and really shaped my view of welfare issues.”

I entered the public service via the department’s graduate program. As part of the program I completed three rotations: one with the North Asia section advising on policy matters involving China, Korea and Taiwan; one with the Planning, Reporting and Risk Management section developing the department’s annual report; and one with the Drought and Exceptional Circumstances team implementing the former Government’s drought policy and assessing areas in Australia for exceptional circumstances. I also completed a Diploma of Government as part of the graduate program.

With the change of government in 2007 the department has embraced a strong commitment to helping producers deal with the challenge of climate change. I’m now working in the department’s Policy Development section, with responsibility for project management and development of portfolio policies relating to youth, women and Indigenous Australians.
As a member of the public service, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the development of a concise writing style underpinned with strong analytical ability. The Faculty of Law's tough word limits, combined with the focus on student-centred learning has been central to my development of these attributes, and I receive strong positive feedback from my supervisors on my writing style and analysis.

After working in the public service and working on the development of legislation, it is clear that the technical skills gained at University must be linked to an ability to use them in the real world. UOW's 'law in context' approach assists this because a legal problem is never separated from its economic, social and political realities.

My placement at Cox, Wiseman and Davidson was one of the best experiences of my degree. It gave me an excellent opportunity to be involved with Children’s Court matters and really shaped my view of welfare issues.

Studying Law at UOW prepared me well in terms of strong research and analytical skills, particularly as course assessment was based on written essays as well as exams. The nature of Indigenous affairs is that information is continually changing, and the capacity to keep abreast of what is current is important, along with well-developed research skills to access this information. Strong analytical skills are also needed to embed this information in a context that is meaningful to the work of the Department. I also took a specialised elective subject (Indigenous People and Legal Systems), which gave me strong subject matter foundations for my work in Indigenous policy.

The Professional Experience Program is an excellent component of the Law degree at Wollongong. I completed my placements at the DPP in Sydney and also the DPP in Suva, Fiji. My placements provided an opportunity for me to get practical experience and also to travel overseas and experience the administration of justice in the Pacific region. Placements also provide an opportunity to reflect on career options, and to make contacts with practitioners working in the field. I would rate it as the best part of the law program at Wollongong.

I place great value in the ‘law in context’ approach to studying law. Studying at Wollongong encouraged me to think about the nature of the law and to obtain a broader perspective about the way in which the law operates. This kind of reflexivity is particularly important in the legal profession and as a student at UOW I felt encouraged to embrace the law in this fashion.”

As a legal officer, I assist with developing strategic policy and providing high-level advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law and justice issues. This includes support and advice to the Attorney-General, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Secretary and other Departmental officers. My section is also consulted by and advises other Commonwealth departments.

I am responsible for drafting and coordinating briefings on Indigenous law and justice issues in forums such as the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. Current projects I am working on include policy development and research around the Government's 'Closing the Gap' initiatives, briefing the Australian Government for its appearance in front of the UN Committee Against Torture, Senate Estimates and researching restorative justice projects. My section is also driving the development of a National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework.

"I place great value in the ‘law in context’ approach to studying law. Studying at Wollongong encouraged me to think about the nature of the law and to obtain a broader perspective about the way in which the law operates. This kind of reflexivity is particularly important in the legal profession and as a student at UOW I felt encouraged to embrace the law in this fashion.”
NICOLE MURPHY  
PROCURMENT MANAGER, AUSTRALIAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
BCA/LLB (1999); GDLP (2000)  
“The style of teaching at UOW (emphasis on small seminar-style classes rather than large lectures) was unique and very productive.”

I am a Procurement Manager in the Procurement Policy Group for the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). AusAID implements international aid programs, particularly throughout the Pacific.

This involves a great deal of policy development and research across a very broad range of development issues, often collaborating with other international donors. The ability to work ‘in-country’ on postings and missions is an extremely interesting experience. I have also worked in the PNG Law & Justice program, which is a $150 million program focusing on strengthening and developing capacity in the PNG law and justice system and increasing access to justice for those in PNG.

I’ve worked for a number of interesting employers. As a graduate solicitor at Minter Ellison, I worked across a range of commercial areas, including IP, trade practices, construction, bankruptcy and insolvency litigation.

In Vietnam for PWC Legal, I practised primarily in the area of foreign investment—including IP and industrial relations law and guidance to foreign investors and government officials in these areas. This work was very interesting and dynamic, particularly with Vietnam’s burgeoning economy.

Working as a criminal solicitor with the NSW Legal Aid Commission was equally dynamic and demanding, involving a great deal of litigation/court work, advocacy and client advice. It was a privilege to contribute and work with those who are disadvantaged in our community.

I also worked as a performer across South East Asia with Walt Disney Special Events—a great experience in an entirely different way.

I was fortunate enough to be able to study music and theatre and complete a law degree at UOW. I was therefore able to pursue two areas that I was passionate about and have consequently worked in professionally. I think this combination—while unusual—has provided me with unique skills and experiences that have left me in good stead for a competitive employment market.

The style of teaching at UOW (emphasis on small seminar-style classes rather than large lectures) was unique and very productive. I felt this style certainly developed students’ confidence and ability to engage in robust discussion around issues. The relationships and networks I formed have been very important and lasting.

ELIZABETH FAVALORO  
SOLICITOR, CRIMINAL LAW PRACTICE GROUP, NSW CROWN SOLICITOR’S OFFICE  
BSC/LLB (2005); GDLP (2005)  
“My professional experience placement with the Legal Branch of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change was invaluable. Not only did the placement result in my exposure to the workings of a government legal office, I was also offered a full-time legal position with the Department.”

I provide legal advice and conduct litigation in criminal law for the State Government of NSW. Some of my responsibilities in this position include: summary prosecutions of regulatory offences such as fisheries laws, traffic laws, taxation laws etc; statutory interpretation of criminal legislation; assisting the Coroner or representing interested parties at inquests; crown representation of police and public sector employees in criminal matters; and assistance and representation at various inquiries including Royal Commissions.

I’ve had some diverse and interesting work experience since studying at UOW. I completed an internship with the United Nations (Office of Legal Affairs), New York (2008), an internship with the Australian Law Reform Commission (2007), a Tipstaff position with The Honourable Mr Justice DH Lloyd in the Land and Environment Court of NSW (2007) and a Solicitor position with the Department of Environment and Climate Change (2006–2007).

The seminar-based learning at UOW was ideal for me. I enjoyed actively participating in discussions with other class members and I consider this approach to learning to be much more effective than lecture-based teaching.

My professional experience placement with the Legal Branch of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change was invaluable. Not only did the placement result in my exposure to the workings of a government legal office, I was also offered a full-time legal position with the Department. This position enabled me to apply the knowledge and skills that I had gained from my combined Environmental Science and Law degrees at UOW.

While studying at UOW, I also had the opportunity to go on exchange to a university in the United Kingdom. I was fortunate enough to receive a travel grant from UOW, and received credit towards my degree at UOW for my overseas studies.
Most lawyers spend far less time in court than the TV dramas would have us believe. Nonetheless, direct involvement in court-room litigation and the administration of civil and criminal justice is the perfect career fit for many law graduates.

The flexibility of the UOW Faculty of Law’s PLT course allowed me to complete it part-time over my final year of LLB study. This allowed me to be admitted as a Lawyer and obtain my Solicitor’s Practising Certificate 6 months before my peers.”

I am a Senior Deputy Registrar at the Supreme Court of NSW—the youngest ever to have been appointed.

A Registrar of a Court (whether a Local Court, District Court or Supreme Court) is basically the head of the administrative side of the Court. A Registrar in the Supreme Court has a dual role. Firstly, we are involved in administrative tasks. The most exciting role of a Registrar arises by virtue of the fact that some of the judicial functions of the Court are delegated to Registrars. In more simple terms, some of the powers of the Judges are given to Registrars.

For example, when someone commences a case in the Supreme Court their case will come to Court a number of times before the final hearing. For most cases, those court events will be controlled by a Registrar who will make orders in relation to what evidence needs to be filed and what the parties should do to get their case on for hearing.

The most interesting aspect of my job is presiding over and considering interlocutory applications. The majority of applications I consider are those that seek to set aside subpoenas. Those applications might be argued before me with both a barrister and solicitor appearing for each party. In some instances I choose to reserve my decision, in others I deliver a decision on the spot. Of course, a decision in a court case is not a matter of “yes” or “no”, but with it must come a logical explanation of the reasons behind the decision.

My experience as a LLB student at Wollongong equipped me with so much more than a law degree. Its focus on student-centred learning places the responsibility on students to identify the relevant issues in a given scenario, and obtain the appropriate information effectively and accurately. This is the same responsibility I exercise in gathering information to make decisions in cases before me in the Supreme Court.

I am presently a Barrister after having worked as a Solicitor for Clayton Utz (3 years) and for Toomey Pegg Dreviskovsky (5 years). I’ve also worked for the Crown Solicitor of New South Wales, as a Legal Clerk in the Constitutional and Native Title Team.

As a Barrister, I prepare and present cases in Court. All of my professional legal roles have involved litigation of one form or another—constitutional litigation while working for the Crown Solicitor and commercial litigation while working for private sector legal employers.

Litigation is portrayed as being ‘sexy’ in TV legal dramas, but it is not particularly so. Litigation is building up a case from beginning to end. The best part of litigation work for me is thinking beyond mere procedure and process (tactics) and developing an overall direction of where the matter should go and how it should develop and be completed (strategy). Like chess, litigation has an opening, middle game and end game. It is these phases of litigation which are interesting, not the process (i.e. moving the pieces in about the board).

I enjoy relating to the law, colleagues and the courts as a barrister. I should have done it years earlier.
OLIVIA HARRIS
SOLICITOR, ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE (NSW/ACT) LIMITED
Bcom/LLB (2006); GDLP (2007)

“I've only done one law degree and it was completed entirely at UOW, but it's hard to imagine a better law experience.”

I work as a solicitor for the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited in criminal law out of the Wollongong office. I manage our children’s criminal practice at the Illawarra Children’s Court and attend Wollongong Local Court up to four days per week. I am in court about 70% of my working week. My role involves general defence applications such as for bail, upon sentence, applications under the mental health act and defended hearings. Out of court, my role focuses on client interviewing/taking instructions, writing representations to prosecuting authorities, and liaising with other professionals such as psychologists, officers from the Community Offenders Service and Juvenile Justice, and other lawyers. I also have something of a mentoring role to the volunteers that are now doing their PEP/Professional Experience Placements with our organisations!

The emphasis at UOW on small group seminar-based learning with active student participation is a great feature. Knowing that you’ll be missed is motivation enough to go to law seminars at the beginning, and the learning that you experience from going is more than enough motivation to continue to attend. Studying law is tough and without a forum whereby everyone can participate, and teachers have time to teach everyone, it would be completely unviable.

I think the placement experience was especially valuable from a ‘career preparation’ point of view. I was always interested in criminal law and I conducted placements, assisted by the University, with the ODPP, Legal Aid and finally my PLT placement with the Aboriginal Legal Service, where I now work. The practical experience gained from these placements is invaluable for career preparation, particularly in relation to careers where the focus is on Court etiquette and practice. And let’s face it—all the mooting in the world doesn’t prepare us for the strips that will be torn off us from time to time by a Magistrate!

Now that I am in practice I have come to appreciate the value of UOW’s program of skills subjects. I have to admit, I found them less than exciting at the time, but they have armed me with essential knowledge and I think including them as compulsory subjects is doing everybody a huge favour.

I’ve only done one law degree and it was completed entirely at UOW, but it is hard to imagine a better law experience. The UOW campus is fantastic—beautiful, peaceful and well resourced. I would recommend UOW to all prospective law students and would encourage current and prospective LLB students to consider themselves privileged to be involved with the UOW Faculty of Law, and to use the fantastic human resources available.
COMMUNITY & PUBLIC INTEREST

Many people are drawn to study law because they have a commitment to human rights and facilitating access to justice. This motivation can really bring the study of law to life—particularly at UOW, where we emphasise law’s connection with the local and global communities we live in—and can lead graduates to some very satisfying career destinations, such as a community legal centre or a non-government organisation (NGO).

**HELEN DALLEY**
Solicitor, Welfare Rights and Legal Centre
BA/LLB (1998); GDLP (1999)

“The practical skills emphasis of the UOW law course has proven to be particularly useful in community law, where you sometimes have to pick up new areas of practice and new skills on the run.”

I work for the Welfare Rights and Legal Centre in Canberra, which is a community legal centre. I am a solicitor specialising in Disability Discrimination law, but also working in the areas of tenancy, administration and social security law. The job involves providing free advice, advocacy and litigation services to people on a low income, developing and presenting community legal education programs and liaising with government and community groups about legislative reform.

I started with a clerkship at Minter Ellison at the end of my second-last year of study. I then worked as a part-time paralegal during my final year and entered the Minter Ellison graduate program. I completed the UOW PLT course while working in Minter Ellison’s insurance litigation and corporate departments. I finally settled in the employment law group, which allowed me to practice in my preferred area—discrimination law. After several years I decided that I really wanted to pursue my interest in human rights law, so I left Minters and started volunteering at the NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre (NSW DDLS). By lucky coincidence, they were restructuring and I was appointed to job share the principal solicitor’s position.

A highlight has been participating in the drafting process for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In 2003, I was part of the NSW DDLS’s delegation to the Asia – Pacific Regional Workshop in Bangkok. At the workshop, disability advocates from all over the Asia – Pacific region negotiated a local draft of the Convention. In 2004, I attended the third session of the UN Ad Hoc Committee in New York which agreed an international draft of the text. I sat in on the negotiations for two weeks and assisted in the drafting of proposed amendments.

The practical skills emphasis of the UOW law course has proven to be particularly useful in community law, where you sometimes have to pick up new areas of practice and new skills on the run. Often the most useful things I learned in the skills courses were not the legal skills per se, but lessons acquired as a by-product of learning the skills (such as knowing that if you make a mistake before a judge, you should always admit it and correct it as soon as possible rather than panicking, dithering or trying to save face). You only learn these things by having a go—and the skills courses are a safe forum in which to do this.

**KEELY BOOM**
Legal Officer, Australian Climate Justice Program
Bcom/LLB (2006); GDLP (2006)

“UOW’s compulsory Professional Experience Program was of immense benefit to me, and a major factor in the development of my career. This real life experience was invaluable in my development and has been valued highly by subsequent employers.”

As the Legal Officer for the Australian Climate Justice Program I assist in the development of legal responses to the climate crisis, particularly in providing access to justice for those affected. The Australian Climate Justice Program is based on the fundamental premise that the law can be a powerful and effective tool in the campaign for climate protection. This position allows me to combine the roles of lawyer and campaigner and to act as a positive force in our troubled world.

I also teach Law of Business Organisations as well as Law, Business and Society at the University of Wollongong. It has been very interesting to delve into teaching and see things from the other side! I particularly find it interesting understanding the role of a legal education for a diverse range of people: for those who will be business people, to those who will be lawyers, campaigners, journalists and politicians.
One of my first positions after graduation was volunteering in Vietnam. I was researching statelessness amongst illegitimate children. My research took me into the slums of Ho Chi Minh City, where I worked with homeless children, children who had been prostitutes or trafficked as well as adults who are marginalised in Vietnamese society (especially veterans from the South).

I also spent time as a Legal Intern in the international office of Greenpeace (Amsterdam). In this position I helped formulate international and national legal strategies to respond to the climate crisis and other environmental challenges. To travel from my placement in Vietnam to Amsterdam I decided to take the low-emissions route: by train. This 16,000 km journey covered three weeks and took me through China, Mongolia, Russia, Belarus, Poland and Germany.

UOW’s compulsory Professional Experience Program was of immense benefit to me, and a major factor in the development of my career. This real life experience was invaluable in my development and has been valued highly by subsequent employers. The Faculty of Law supported my internship in Italy with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, and the UOW exchange program enabled me to study at Utrecht University and attend the International Student Symposium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution at The Hague.

Since graduating, I’ve also worked for Blake Dawson, Freehills and The Honourable Justice Young AO, Chief Judge in Equity, Supreme Court of NSW. As tipstaff for Justice Young I was present at a wide range of equity and court of appeal judgments. I also undertook legal research and assisted in the preparation of judgments. Most judges take their tipstaff/associate on for one year only—applications are due early in your final year of study. It’s a fantastic job, particularly if you have an interest in becoming a barrister or academic.

Blake Dawson and Freehills were both excellent places to work due to the very detailed work, fantastic resources, excellent training and the opportunity to work with some of the best lawyers in the country. The downside to working in corporate law was I didn’t have enough time to be a lawyer and a composer. Moving to Arts Law I have a little more time, but it is still a juggling act to fit both in.

I chose UOW because of the combined degree it offered—law and music composition. It was a great course and I feel very fortunate to have studied such interesting subjects at such a great university. I am proud of the fact that I continue to balance music and law and maintain an interest in both. In 2004 I took a year out from law to work as a freelance composer. During that year I was a composer in residence at The Illawarra Grammar School, ABC commissioned me and I had work performed by the Song Company, one of the world’s leading vocal ensembles.

"I enjoyed the ‘law in context’ aspects of my UOW law studies. This teaching style helped me apply the law to practical situations, has strengthened my problem-solving skills and improved my ability to explain the effect of laws upon specific communities …”

The Arts Law Centre of Australia is the national community legal centre for artists and arts organisations across all disciplines. My responsibilities as a Legal Officer are varied. I provide free legal telephone advice to artists and arts organisations across all disciplines: I most frequently advise in the areas of intellectual property, business structures, governance, contractual issues and employment law. I also advise on tax issues, trade practices, insurance law, classification and censorship, privacy and defamation. I make submissions to government and non-governmental agencies—for example, to the NSW Law Reform Commission and the Australian Law Reform Commission on their reviews of privacy laws and how these would affect practising artists (photographers, filmmakers, writers, etc).

SERENA ARMSTRONG
LEGAL OFFICER, ARTS LAW CENTRE OF AUSTRALIA
BCA/LLB (2002)

“I enjoyed the ‘law in context’ aspects of my UOW law studies. This teaching style helped me apply the law to practical situations, has strengthened my problem-solving skills and improved my ability to explain the effect of laws upon specific communities …”

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Since graduating, I’ve also worked for Blake Dawson, Freehills and The Honourable Justice Young AO, Chief Judge in Equity, Supreme Court of NSW. As tipstaff for Justice Young I was present at a wide range of equity and court of appeal judgments. I also undertook legal research and assisted in the preparation of judgments. Most judges take their tipstaff/associate on for one year only—applications are due early in your final year of study. It’s a fantastic job, particularly if you have an interest in becoming a barrister or academic.

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Photograph by Benjamin Millar.
Many of our graduates, particularly (but not only) those who also studied a Bachelor of Commerce, are drawn to careers in banking and finance, or other parts of the corporate sector. Whether they are formally practising as lawyers or not, their legal training makes them valuable assets in the commercial world.

Our transactions in the Middle East have been groundbreaking, including the first public private partnership transactions in the UAE.

From 2000–2005 I was a founding member and director in Macquarie Capital’s business in the Republic of Korea.

I also worked as a tax adviser in Ernst & Young Sydney in their International Tax Group between 1997 and 1999, before joining Macquarie.

I still draw on what I learned during my UOW law studies in my daily work. The course gave me fantastic grounding in the practical application of the law to commercial arrangements. The interesting thing is that I have worked now in a number of countries, but the principles I learned during my degree hold true and have allowed me to tackle complex legal problems and at least identify the key issues, regardless of the jurisdiction. An example is private international law and conflicts—I still go through the steps which I learned at UOW whenever I encounter a cross-jurisdictional problem.

I currently work as a lawyer at UBS Investment Bank based in Australia. I cover the legal work for the Debt Capital Markets Group and Structured Finance, providing the legal coverage and services for the DCM team in the investment bank. The core focus for this team is the issuance of bonds and notes for Australian and international institutions both in Australia and overseas. Clients include Australia’s major banks and financial institutions, Government entities, Australian corporate entities as well as international banks and governments.

I also have worked on a variety of transactions including initial public offerings (IPOs), capital raisings including convertible bonds and syndicated finance transactions. I have also provided legal coverage for various securitisation transactions.
I previously worked for Allens Arthur Robinson. While there, I worked on some of Australia’s largest transactions, including the internalisation of the General Property Trust (GPT) and the establishment of its stapled entity.

I was also a member of teams which successfully completed numerous capital raisings, the largest of which was the Telstra 3 Share Offer.

In my view, university teaching should focus on how to find and interpret the law as opposed to what the law specifically states at a point in time. This is because legislation and case law is constantly evolving. The teaching approach of UOW (especially the skills subjects) was beneficial in skilling graduates for the changing legal environment, especially through smaller seminars and a focus on student centred learning and problem solving. The small group seminar format was an excellent way of learning. It allowed students to share their ideas and generate lively discussion and engaging study. It also permitted students to interact and some of my best friends today are people that I met at UOW almost 10 years ago.

The Professional Experience Program was valuable career preparation. I used my summer clerkship as one of the work experience stints which assisted in preparing to work in a legal firm.

I am currently a Legal Counsel for Telstra Corporation Ltd in the Enterprise & Government unit, on long term secondment from Blake Dawson. I’ve been here at Telstra for 12 months now. Prior to that, I was at Blakes for 10 years.

I draft and negotiate large telecommunications contracts, for products such as IPMAN, Business IP, Telepresence, and Global Internet services. I also recently negotiated a mobile satellite agreement so people in Australia can use satellite mobile phones in the bush and out at sea.

At Blakes, I was a senior associate in the Intellectual Property & Communications group. I worked on a variety of trade practices and copyright cases. I defended Network Ten in The Panel case, which eventually went to the High Court. There were 7 decisions all up, involving ‘fair dealing’, ‘substantial part’ and ‘what is a television broadcast?’ It was a true test case examining these major concepts in copyright law.

I also travelled to the US twice, a month each, to interview witnesses for a large software litigation. The witnesses were spread across 7 US states, but I mainly spent time in South Carolina where my client was located. I still have a longing for Iced Tea and BBQ (pulled pork that has been roasted for 36 hours) that I had in South Carolina!

I also carried out or supervised Anton Piller orders for the music and software industries in various locations from Cairns to Melbourne. I also reviewed TV and radio advertising for everything from tummy tucks to magnetic underlays! Winning The Panel case in the High Court was a personal highlight of my time at Blakes. Working Dog gave me a Panel mug and Molvania book to say thanks.

I really enjoyed the Professional Experience Program component of my UOW law studies. My placements confirmed what I didn’t want to do. I think it is a good idea to force people to try out these things before they commit to working there.

Karen Gettens
Legal Counsel, Telstra Corporation Ltd
BMATHS/LLB (1996)

“I really enjoyed the Professional Experience Program component of my UOW law studies. My placements confirmed what I didn’t want to do. I think it is a good idea to force people to try out these things before they commit to working there.”
For many people who study law, 3–5 years at university is enough! Others discover during the course of their studies that they have a real passion for research and policy, or tertiary teaching. For these graduates, a career in universities, research organisations or law reform bodies is intellectually and professionally satisfying.

“I think the compulsory Professional Experience Program at UOW is invaluable. I completed two placements, and was lucky enough to be offered ongoing employment after both … the experience I gained in these positions really got me started professionally.”

I am the deputy director of the Human Security Report Project (HSRP) at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. I manage the research and development for the Human Security Report and other HSRP publications. My responsibilities include framing research questions, writing and editing, developing relationships with funders and collaborators, speaking at conferences and dealing with the media.

The HSRP conducts research on political violence around the world. We look at the global and regional trends in armed conflicts, genocides and terrorism, as well as the deaths associated with these phenomena. We also study trends in human rights abuse and population displacement. Our work spans the academic/policy divide and is used not only by researchers, but also by governments, the UN, NGOs, and others working in the field of conflict prevention, development and humanitarian intervention.

My previous roles include two years as the associate to Justice Jane Mathews, then president of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and judge of the Federal Court of Australia (1997–1999); an internship with Ambassador David Scheffer, then Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, US State Department in Washington D.C. (2000); and working as research assistant to Professor Peter Rosenblum, then Associate Director of the Harvard Law School Human Rights Program (2001).

Duties included helping prepare speeches for Ambassador Scheffer to deliver before Congress, at media briefings and to the academy; and undertaking research for Professor Rosenblum on United Nations dispute resolutions mechanisms, with particular focus on the work of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General.

I think the compulsory Professional Experience Program at UOW invaluable. I completed two placements, and was lucky enough to be offered ongoing employment after both—the first was with the legal adviser to Randwick City Council and the second was with Tim Robertson SC. The experience I gained in these positions really got me started professionally.

“The emphasis on small-group seminar teaching and learning at UOW … is absolutely invaluable. Having experienced my share of American law school classes with 120 students per class (and no discussion groups), I have a renewed appreciation for the benefits of small-group participatory learning.”

I’m currently Assistant Professor at the University of Texas School of Law. I teach legal theory, constitutional law and criminal law, and I’m researching legal theory, comparative constitutional law and the philosophy of criminal law.

I’ve worked for a number of interesting employers. I spent a year with the Sydney office of Mallesons Stephen Jaques. I clerked for the legendary Judge Benjamin Kaplan on the Massachusetts Court of Appeal in Boston—Judge Kaplan was 90 years old when I clerked for him, having previously been a Harvard Law School professor from 1947. I also interned at the Georgia Indigent Defence Council, which is
responsible for capital defence at both trial and appellate levels for the state of Georgia, and was a teaching assistant with the Department of Philosophy at the University of Texas. In addition, I also spent several years as a lecturer with the University of Wollongong Faculty of Law.

I received a Fulbright Award and attended Harvard Law School, where I received my LLM, and was one of six LLM students out of about 180 students to be offered a place in the doctoral program. I was also offered a position as Justice Hayne’s associate on the Australian High Court, which I had to turn down for personal reasons. In addition to my LLM, I completed a Masters in Philosophy at the University of Texas, and was recently awarded a place in UT Law School’s Emerging Scholars Program.

The aspect of the Wollongong LLB program that I regard as especially valuable was the context-rich, theoretically sensitive and interdisciplinary approach to teaching law. This gave me an early appreciation of, and understanding of, the theoretical, cultural and social underpinnings of law, and prepared me for my present career in law and philosophy—something a more doctrinal “black letter” approach could not have done.

The emphasis on small-group seminar teaching and learning at UOW, while resource-hungry, is absolutely invaluable. Having experienced my share of American law school classes with 120 students per class (and no discussion groups), I have a renewed appreciation for the benefits of small-group participatory learning.

I commenced my studies at the University of Wollongong in the year that the Faculty of Law was first established and offered the LLB course. After a fun five years studying law and completing a first class honours in politics, I started working with the National Archives of Australia. A year later I was seconded to the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) to work on a project reviewing the Archives Act 1983 (Cth). More than 11 years on, I am still at the ALRC.

In that time I have worked on a huge variety of reform projects, including a review of the federal civil justice system, the protection of human genetic information, sentencing of federal offenders, and privacy law. I have developed a speciality in legal issues affecting children, an aspect that has arisen in many of the ALRC inquiries. I have also written a book, published by the Victoria Law Foundation, entitled Representing Children and Young People: A lawyers practice guide. To complement my work, I completed a Master of Public Policy through Deakin University in 2001.

My current role as Research Manager involves overseeing the resource and information side of the ALRC. This involves a lot of nitty-gritty work, like taking care of bibliographic databases and monitoring the organisation’s publication style. However, I’ve also have fantastic opportunities to mix with the stakeholders involved in ALRC inquiries, including judges, lawyers at all levels, businesses, government officials, and the general public affected by the law in practice. Some of the most memorable aspects of the job have involved meeting and collaborating with representatives from overseas law reform bodies, or law officers interested in law reform, particularly from Africa and South-East Asia. I have met with the Attorney-General of India, and presented training courses to law reform officers from the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea—including one unforgettable training trip to Port Moresby.

Part of my role at the ALRC has been to oversee the Internship Program. As well as helping students gain an interesting insight into the law reform process, I am able to provide career advice for students in their penultimate and final years. This has been a fantastic way to keep in touch with current law students, including many UOW students that have gone on to successful careers of their own.

What has amazed me is the number of UOW alumni that I have crossed paths with in the policy world, including a number that have worked alongside me at the ALRC. I put this down to the strong policy approach that is taught at Wollongong, and the socratic method of teaching in seminars groups that encourages students to think outside the square.
“I strongly recommend the University of Wollongong to anyone wishing to study law. The academics are qualified to the highest level and are very capable teachers.”

I completed my undergraduate studies at Wollongong in 2003 whereupon I joined the Faculty of Law as an Associate Lecturer. In 2005–2006 I clerked for the Hon Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG, Justice of the High Court of Australia. In this capacity, I undertook research for the Judge and performed a wide range of administrative tasks. My work for Justice Kirby was exciting and rewarding. It provided me with an internal view of one of the world’s great courts. In 2006–2007 I studied for a masters degree in law at the University of Oxford on an Oxford-Australia Scholarship and a Clarendon Scholarship. I am presently in Oxford reading for a research degree in law. In addition to my studies, I teach torts and trusts to undergraduate students.

I strongly recommend the University of Wollongong to anyone wishing to study law. The academics are qualified to the highest level and are very capable teachers. I found them generous with their time, interested in my academic development and eager to support me in pursuing my ambitions.

A Wollongong legal education has many merits. However, two of these merits deserve special mention. The first is that Wollongong students are encouraged to think critically about the law, that is to say, to ask whether the law as it presently stands is satisfactory. Legal education in Australia (and elsewhere) typically goes no further than teaching students the content of the law. Such an education is, for obvious reasons, extremely limiting. The emphasis that Wollongong places on critical analysis is therefore one of its best qualities. The second is that tuition at Wollongong is usually delivered by way of seminars. The small size of these seminars opens the door to class discussions and allows students to engage with the teachers. In contrast, teaching at other Australian law schools is normally provided by way of lectures, often to several hundred students at a time. In such an environment it is impractical to achieve a bilateral exchange of ideas.

WORKING OVERSEAS

Traditional legal education tended to limit graduates to working in the jurisdictions where there were trained—how things have changed! At UOW we are committed not only to preparing graduates for the ‘real world’ but for the world beyond our borders. A career overseas, whether in legal practice or in other roles, is a genuine option for UOW law graduates.

After graduating from UOW, I spent a year as a graduate lawyer at Blake Dawson in Sydney, before completing a Master of Laws course at the University of Cambridge in 2007/08. Members of the Faculty in Wollongong were very supportive in my applications for a place and for funding for postgraduate study. It shows that a degree from Wollongong can take you to the world’s top universities, and that the staff of the Faculty of Law will make every effort to help you get there.

There were people from all parts of the world in the LLM at Cambridge, including from renowned universities in the United States and Europe, but I’m proud to say that my LLB from Wollongong gave me as good a foundation as anyone else on the program. In particular, the coverage of policy questions alongside more fundamental topics throughout the LLB has left me with a skill set that can be applied to the wider-ranging topics covered at postgraduate level. Students from some jurisdictions, particularly in Europe, aren’t pushed to think critically about the law, but it is something every Wollongong graduate is familiar with.

As an undergraduate, I was given opportunities to explore things outside of the regular curriculum, and that flexibility has been very valuable to me. Since graduating...
from Cambridge I have recently moved to Zürich, Switzerland, to take up a commercial role with Google. Some people might wonder what that has to do with my experience as a UOW law student, but the truth is that the willingness of my honours supervisor to allow me to research on law and the Internet, and the availability of less black-letter experiences such as the UOW Faculty of Law’s annual negotiation competition, meant that I never felt limited to a vanilla private practice job. Wollongong isn’t caught up in the rat race, and I think that the freedom and flexibility that you find in the lifestyle is reflected in the outlook of the law program, and hence of its graduates.

“I think that my employers in London were impressed with the diversity of subject areas that I had studied in my double degree program at UOW.”

In July 2008, shortly after completing my UOW Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice, and four days after being admitted as a solicitor in NSW, I flew to the UK to start a new life and a new career as a solicitor with the London office of multinational law firm, White & Case.

During the two-year contract I will be rotated through four different practice areas or ‘seats’. One of those seats must be taken at an overseas office. Currently I am hoping to do my overseas seat in the Moscow office—however, I recently found out that Almaty in Kazakhstan is also an option. What an interesting experience that would be! Two of the other seats will need to be in a contentious and a financial area respectively, and the third can be in any available area of law. The options are endless, and choosing the area of law that I want to ‘settle down’ in is going to be difficult.

The Study Abroad & Exchange program at UOW was an invaluable addition to my degree. Many students have a misconception that law students cannot study overseas given the different legal systems that exist, but nothing can be further from the truth. Overseas experience develops a lot of the skills that employers look for in graduates, including independence, flexibility, confidence, cultural awareness and sensitivity and (sometimes) another language.

Also, the opportunity to study a double degree has been highly valuable. Studying in two different disciplines gave me a great level of variety in my studies. If I felt Property Law was becoming a bit cumbersome, I could read about the economic crisis in South East Asia, or practice for my French classes instead. It was wonderful having such a range of subjects to study—and have them all count towards my degrees at the end. Additionally, I think that my employers in London were impressed with the diversity of subject areas that I had studied in my double degree program at UOW.

The UOW LLB course includes compulsory professional experience of four weeks. I originally thought this was a standard component of any LLB, but a friend of mine from another law school was surprised to hear about it. I think it helps to sets UOW graduates apart.

The Practical Legal Training course at UOW was an intensive and extremely valuable experience. It was such a relief to know that I could finish off my legal studies in Wollongong, rather than having to travel up to Sydney. The online components of the course make it easy to slot in around family and work commitments.

“I think the Professional Experience Program is possibly the best thing about a UOW law degree. It gives Wollongong students an edge over students from other universities by exposing them to the law in operation.”

I started with Qantas Airways in Sydney in March 2004 and moved to a new role in London last year. My current role is Manager, People Relations UK, Ireland, Europe, Middle East and Africa. The role involves managing all human resources functions for the Qantas Group across this region, so it encompasses a broad range of work including HR strategy, employment law and contracts, industrial relations, remuneration and benefits, supplier engagement and management, management coaching, training and development, recruitment and terminations etc.

My team and I support all Qantas businesses which operate in this region (e.g. Qantas Airlines, Qantas Freight, Qantas Engineering), so we get a great variety of work and the challenging complexity of operating in a number of very different legislative environments with very different approaches to the employment relationship.

After finishing university, I worked as a paralegal and then a lawyer for several years at Harmers Workplace Lawyers in Sydney. As a lawyer at Harmers I practised employment and industrial law, with an emphasis on the NSW unfair contracts jurisdiction. When I moved across to Qantas in 2004, I took a role in their Corporate HR department, managing HR policy and
programs across the Qantas Group. This role involved a variety of work with all Qantas Group businesses across Australia, becoming very familiar with state and federal employment law and Qantas Group awards and certified agreements. I also worked with third parties—for example, acting as Qantas’ liaison delegate to the Business Council of Australia.

Seminar-based learning is a very effective way to study the law—much more so than simply attending lectures. As you are in a small group where participation is critical, you can’t get away with just skim-reading the materials—you really need to fully understand them. It’s probably a more time intensive mode of learning than that on offer at some other universities, but in the long run I think it is more beneficial and rewarding.

I think the Professional Experience Program is possibly the best thing about a UOW law degree. It gives Wollongong students an edge over students from other universities by exposing them to the law in operation.

I currently work at Latham & Watkins LLP (a US law firm) in Singapore. My legal practice is of a transactional nature, representing international clients in corporate, financial and project financing transactions in Asia. I am particularly enjoying working in the area of project finance. Current projects include advising on power projects in Vietnam and Bangladesh.

After graduating from UOW I spent 6 months backpacking and exploring Europe. I then worked for one year at Ashurst, London, in the professional development department. Before commencing full-time work as a solicitor in Sydney I spent another 6 months travelling in China and South East Asia. In Sydney, I worked as a solicitor with Mallesons Stephen Jaques for two years starting February 2005, in the mergers & acquisitions, private equity and finance teams.

The Faculty of Law was a very positive and friendly environment. The lecturers, tutors and support staff were very supportive and did everything to help us achieve our various goals. Although I was somewhat aware of how fortunate I was to be at a law school that focused on seminar-based learning, my appreciation grew after hearing colleagues who studied at lecture-based universities compare their far more impersonal law school experiences.

I would encourage UOW Law students to get involved in the faculty and participate in the various practical courses available (e.g. negotiation skills, mooting). Getting involved in the Law Society is also an enjoyable way to get to know your peers and the UOW staff. It will also allow you the opportunity to develop useful skills and contacts that will provide a solid foundation for your future career path—whatever that may be!

The Faculty of Law at UOW offered me an excellent opportunity to not only study under dedicated teaching staff, but to gain practical legal experience along the way.

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The Faculty of Law at UOW offered me an excellent opportunity to not only study under dedicated teaching staff, but to gain practical legal experience along the way. The compulsory professional experience program allowed me an insight into several different legal environments. This meant that when I graduated I had valuable firsthand knowledge and experience from which to base my early career choices. The inclusion of ‘skills’ subjects meant that we developed the necessary practical skills of being a lawyer in the context of the legal subjects that we studied, providing additional relevance and practical application to the skills learned.

MAREE MYERSCOUGH LAWYER, LATHAM & WATKINS, SINGAPORE BA/LLB (2002)

“UOW law students are not told what to think, they are encouraged to do the thinking themselves. One of the most valuable lessons I learned at UOW was independent thought and expression.”


I’m currently working at Holman Fenwick Willan, an international law firm, in their London office. I specialise in dispute resolution, commercial litigation, advisory work and regulatory issues for clients in the international trade, commodities, insurance and sports/leisure sectors.

This role involves handling large commercial disputes, predominantly those with an international flavour. I enjoy the challenge of resolving disputes. I’ve also more recently developed a practice in advising clients at the contract negotiation and formation stage.

Before moving to London at the start of 2008, I worked for a number of years as a lawyer at the Sydney office of Ebsworth & Ebsworth Lawyers, a national Australian law firm known for its expertise in the insurance and shipping practice areas. In this role,
I practised in large commercial litigation and dispute resolution primarily for Australian and London insurance clients in directors’ liability, financial institutions, professional indemnity, TPA and regulatory cases. These cases required the ability to keep one eye on the underlying dispute and the other on insurance issues.

At Ebsworth & Ebsworth, I also participated in the successful LEAPS program, acting as a mentor to a high school student over the course of a school year, was active in Ebsworths’ pro bono program, providing advice to homeless persons at ‘the Station’ in Sydney and authored many insurance publications.

My UOW law degree prepared me very well for legal practice. I attribute this to the structure, flexibility and quality of the law degree and how it was taught. UOW law students are not told what to think, they are encouraged to do the thinking themselves. One of the most valuable lessons I learned at UOW was independent thought and expression; the ability to talk up, take a position and be able to argue it. In the real world, this is what matters. Having now come across many graduates in the profession, I believe that this approach to learning really sets UOW’s law school ahead of the field.

MORE UOW LAW GRADUATE SUCCESS STORIES
For more profiles on graduates from the University of Wollongong’s LLB program, go to www.uow.edu.au/law and click on the link for ‘Where a UOW Law Degree Can Take You’.
EARLY ENTRY

Imagine being rewarded for your hard work at school before you even sit the HSC. The Early Entry program at UOW does exactly that—it allows current Year 12 students the chance to apply and be selected for entry into their chosen degree at UOW before sitting the HSC. You’ll be assessed based on your past academic record, including Trial HSC results.

If you are successful you will receive either an unconditional offer or an offer conditional upon the results your HSC subjects.

To find out more, including application deadlines, call 1300 367 869, email uniadvice@uow.edu.au or go to www.uow.edu.au/prospective/earlyentry

POINTS TO UOW

Under the Points to UOW program you may be eligible for bonus UAI points on the basis of your performance in selected HSC subjects.

No separate application is required, it all happens automatically through the UAC preferences systems.

To find out more, including information on the HSC subjects for which applicants to the UOW Faculty of Law may be eligible for bonus points, go to www.uow.edu.au/prospective/pointstouow
The University of Wollongong attempts to ensure that the information contained in this booklet is correct at the time of production (July 2008). However, sections may be amended without notice by the University in response to changing circumstances or for any other reason. Applicants should check with the University at the time of application/enrolment whether any later information is available.

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