LAWS12072 *Legal Research*
Term 2 - 2024

Profile information current as at 15/07/2025 05:57 am

General Information

Overview
Legal Research builds upon your existing legal research skills acquired in Introduction to Law to enhance your ability to locate, analyse and apply legal and interdisciplinary sources in a range of contexts in preparation for your future law studies and legal practice. In this unit, you will engage in authentic research exercises you would be expected to complete as a trainee or newly qualified lawyer and carry out related skills-based tasks, such as conducting a client interview and drafting a letter of advice. You will also prepare a research portfolio in response to authentic research tasks.

Details
Career Level: *Undergraduate*
Unit Level: *Level 2*
Credit Points: *6*
Student Contribution Band: *10*
Fraction of Full-Time Student Load: *0.125*

Pre-requisites or Co-requisites
Pre-requisite: LAWS11057 and a minimum of 24 credit points.
Important note: Students enrolled in a subsequent unit who failed their pre-requisite unit, should drop the subsequent unit before the census date or within 10 working days of Fail grade notification. Students who do not drop the unit in this timeframe cannot later drop the unit without academic and financial liability. See details in the [Assessment Policy and Procedure (Higher Education Coursework)](#).

Offerings For Term 2 - 2024

- Online

Attendance Requirements
All on-campus students are expected to attend scheduled classes – in some units, these classes are identified as a mandatory (pass/fail) component and attendance is compulsory. International students, on a student visa, must maintain a full time study load and meet both attendance and academic progress requirements in each study period (satisfactory attendance for International students is defined as maintaining at least an 80% attendance record).

Website
[This unit has a website, within the Moodle system, which is available two weeks before the start of term. It is important that you visit your Moodle site throughout the term. Please visit Moodle for more information.](#)

Class and Assessment Overview

Recommended Student Time Commitment
Each 6-credit Undergraduate unit at CQUniversity requires an overall time commitment of an average of 12.5 hours of study per week, making a total of 150 hours for the unit.

Class Timetable

Regional Campuses
Bundaberg, Cairns, Emerald, Gladstone, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville

Metropolitan Campuses
Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney

Assessment Overview
1. **Practical Assessment**
Weighting: 60%
2. **Portfolio**
Weighting: 40%

Assessment Grading
This is a graded unit: your overall grade will be calculated from the marks or grades for each assessment task, based on the relative weightings shown in the table above. You must obtain an overall mark for the unit of at least 50%, or an overall grade of 'pass' in order to pass the unit. If any 'pass/fail' tasks are shown in the table above they must also be completed successfully ('pass' grade). You must also meet any minimum mark requirements specified for a particular assessment task, as detailed in the 'assessment task' section (note that in some instances, the minimum mark for a task may be greater than 50%). Consult the University's Grades and Results Policy for more details of interim results and final grades.

CQUniversity Policies

All University policies are available on the CQUniversity Policy site.
You may wish to view these policies:

- Grades and Results Policy
- Assessment Policy and Procedure (Higher Education Coursework)
- Review of Grade Procedure
- Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
- Monitoring Academic Progress (MAP) Policy and Procedure – Domestic Students
- Monitoring Academic Progress (MAP) Policy and Procedure – International Students
- Student Refund and Credit Balance Policy and Procedure
- Student Feedback – Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Information and Communications Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure

This list is not an exhaustive list of all University policies. The full list of University policies are available on the CQUniversity Policy site.

Previous Student Feedback

Feedback, Recommendations and Responses

Every unit is reviewed for enhancement each year. At the most recent review, the following staff and student feedback items were identified and recommendations were made.

Feedback from SUTE comments, feedback from students to tutor.

Feedback

Some students suggested the assessment weight for the components of the research portfolio be revisited (presentation - 20%, collection of weekly workshop tasks - 10%) given the amount of work involved in learning about the research topic and preparing for the presentation.

Recommendation

Review the assessment weightings for all assessment tasks, including the components of each assessment task.

Feedback from Feedback from students to tutor.

Feedback

Feedback students received on their client interview helped students to understand the importance of this skill and the need to practise and enhance their skills in this area. Students also noted that the presentation incorporated into the portfolio enhanced their oral communication skills.

Recommendation

Retain the focus on oral communication skills, and in particular the oral presentation on a current research topic and the client interview exercise.

Unit Learning Outcomes

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

1. Strategise and conduct a client interview to obtain relevant information from a client and provide advice to a client in an effective and professional manner.
2. Locate and evaluate relevant and credible legal and interdisciplinary sources.
3. Communicate effectively both orally and in writing in a range of professional and academic contexts.

Alignment of Learning Outcomes, Assessment and Graduate Attributes

— N/A Level ∘ Introductory Level • Intermediate Level • Graduate Level ∘ Professional Level ∘ Advanced Level

Alignment of Assessment Tasks to Learning Outcomes

Assessment Tasks	Learning Outcomes		
	1	2	3
1 - Practical Assessment - 60%	•	•	•
2 - Portfolio - 40%	•	•	•

Alignment of Graduate Attributes to Learning Outcomes

Graduate Attributes	Learning Outcomes		
	1	2	3
1 - Communication	•		•
2 - Problem Solving	•	•	
3 - Critical Thinking		•	
4 - Information Literacy		•	
5 - Team Work			
6 - Information Technology Competence		•	
7 - Cross Cultural Competence			
8 - Ethical practice	•		
9 - Social Innovation			
10 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures			

Textbooks and Resources

Textbooks

There are no required textbooks.

IT Resources

You will need access to the following IT resources:

- CQUniversity Student Email
- Internet
- Unit Website (Moodle)
- Microphone
- Webcam

Referencing Style

All submissions for this unit must use the referencing style: [Australian Guide to Legal Citation, 4th ed](#)
For further information, see the Assessment Tasks.

Teaching Contacts

Alexandra McEwan Unit Coordinator
a.mcewan@cqu.edu.au

Schedule

Week 1 - 08 Jul 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Client Interviewing	Ross Hymans, Susan Campbell and Adrian Evans, *Practical Legal Skills: Developing Your Clinical Technique* (Oxford University Press, 5th ed, 2021), Chapters 2 and 3.	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 2 - 15 Jul 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Legal Writing: Drafting Letters	Nichola Corbett-Jarvis and Brendan Grigg, *Effective Legal Writing: A Practical Guide* (LexisNexis Butterworths, 3rd ed, 2021), sections 6 – 6.92.	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 3 - 22 Jul 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Project Management	David B Resnick, 'What is ethics in research and why is it important' (1 December 2015) https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/ Nichola Corbett-Jarvis and Brendan Grigg, *Effective Legal Writing: A Practical Guide* (LexisNexis Butterworths, 3rd ed, 2021), sections 8.5 - 8.40.	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 4 - 29 Jul 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Analysing Legal Issues	Nichola Corbett-Jarvis and Brendan Grigg, *Effective Legal Writing: A Practical Guide* (LexisNexis Butterworths, 3rd ed, 2021), sections 5.73 - 5.94.	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 5 - 05 Aug 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Focus on Rules	The University of Queensland et al, *Legal Research Skills: An Australian Law Guide* (2024 Edition) pages 44-78 Michael Kirby, 'Statutory Interpretation: The Meaning of Meaning' (2011) 35(1) *Melbourne University Law* Review 113.	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Vacation Week - 12 Aug 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic

Week 6 - 19 Aug 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Focus on Cases	The University of Queensland et al, *Legal Research Skills: An Australian Law Guide* (2024 Edition) pages 28-44.	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 7 - 26 Aug 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Focus on Secondary Sources	The University of Queensland et al, *Legal Research Skills: An Australian Law Guide* (2024 Edition) pages 78-87.	Weekly online Zoom workshop. **Practical Assessment** Due: Week 7 Friday (30 Aug 2024) 11:59 pm AEST

Week 8 - 02 Sep 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Focus on Data and Other Sources	No reading this week.	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 9 - 09 Sep 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Legal Writing: Drafting an Argument	Nichola Corbett-Jarvis and Brendan Grigg, *Effective Legal Writing: A Practical Guide* (LexisNexis Butterworths, 3rd ed, 2021), sections 5.95 – 5.125.	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 10 - 16 Sep 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Presenting Research to an Audience	Chris Anderson, 'How to Give a Killer Presentation' (*Harvard Business Review,* 2013) https://hbr.org/2013/06/how-to-give-a-killer-presentation	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 11 - 23 Sep 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
Professional Practice and Reflection	Nichola Corbett-Jarvis and Brendan Grigg, *Effective Legal Writing: A Practical Guide* (LexisNexis Butterworths, 3rd ed, 2021), sections 5.165 - 5.183 (available as an e-book in the library).	Weekly online Zoom workshop.

Week 12 - 30 Sep 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic

Building a Professional Portfolio	Sixtus Ozic, '7 Reasons Why You Need a Career Portfolio in the 21st Century' (15 March 2023) https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/7-reasons-why-you-need-career-portfolio-21st-century-sixtus-ozic/	Weekly online Zoom workshop. **Research Portfolio** Due: Week 12 Friday (4 Oct 2024) 11:59 pm AEST

Review/Exam Week - 07 Oct 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic

Exam Week - 14 Oct 2024

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic

Term Specific Information

My contact details: a.mcewan@cqu.edu.au
Consultation Hours: I am generally available for consultation on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 12 noon (Eastern Standard Time). The best way to contact me is by email. I check my emails regularly and will get back to you to arrange a time to talk.

Assessment Tasks

1 Practical Assessment

Assessment Type
Practical Assessment

Task Description
This unit is designed to enhance a range of practical legal skills, and this is achieved through your work on a 'client file' as part of this practical assessment. You will be required to conduct a client interview with another student in order to ascertain relevant information and you will then use your legal research skills to construct a letter of advice to the client. For this assessment, all students will therefore be required to work in groups of two and perform the role of lawyer and client. Note: As students are reliant upon each other to conduct the client interviews, extensions are not permitted for this assessment.

Assessment Due Date
Week 7 Friday (30 Aug 2024) 11:59 pm AEST

You must submit a recording of your client interview and your letter of advice by the due date. You must comply with the task instructions regarding the uploading of the video recording to Echo360.

Return Date to Students

Estimated return is 2 weeks

Weighting
60%

Assessment Criteria
The client interview assesses your:

- ability to open the client interview in a courteous, professional and informative manner;
- ability communicate effectively with the client in a professional manner;
- interview technique;
- ability to respond to a client's questions and address areas of ambiguity;
- ability to close a client interview;

The letter of advice assesses your ability to:

- communicate in accordance with the needs of the reader and apply the principles of plain English drafting;
- conduct legal research on the legal issues;
- provide legal and practical advice on the legal issues;
- adopt a suitable structure in the letter and present information in accordance with drafting convention;
- communicate in writing in an effective and professional manner.

A criteria rubric is available under the 'Assessment tile' in Moodle.

Referencing Style

- [Australian Guide to Legal Citation, 4th ed](#)

Submission
Online

Submission Instructions
Extensions are not permitted for this assessment as students must work in pairs (and are therefore reliant on each other) to conduct the client interviews. Students must include a link to the video recording of their interview with a client (in which they acted as the lawyer) and their letter of advice with their submission. To facilitate the provision of feedback, please upload a Word document.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

- Strategise and conduct a client interview to obtain relevant information from a client and provide advice to a client in an effective and professional manner.
- Locate and evaluate relevant and credible legal and interdisciplinary sources.
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing in a range of professional and academic contexts.

2 Research Portfolio

Assessment Type
Portfolio

Task Description
As part of your portfolio, you will be required to undertake research exercises similar to those you might be expected to perform as a newly qualified lawyer working or volunteering in a Community Legal Centre or other not-for-profit organisation. These authentic exercises will require you to use advanced research techniques to locate relevant primary and secondary sources to formulate an oral presentation detailing your position on a particular project. You must produce an oral presentation on the research topic and also compile your weekly workshop tasks from weeks 3 - 11 to form the portfolio.

Assessment Due Date
Week 12 Friday (4 Oct 2024) 11:59 pm AEST

Both the oral presentation and portfolio must be submitted by the deadline (and the oral presentation must therefore be uploaded to Echo360 by the deadline).

Return Date to Students

Results may be withheld until the certification of grades.

Weighting
40%

Assessment Criteria
This task assesses your ability to:

- Locate and critically analyse suitable sources;
- Engage in self-evaluation and critical reflection;
- Communicate effectively in writing;
- Present arguments in a logical and persuasive manner;
- Present information orally in an effective manner;
- Critically analyse legal and interdisciplinary sources and adopt an evidence-based approach; and
- Reach logical, informed conclusions grounded in the arguments presented.

Referencing Style

- [Australian Guide to Legal Citation, 4th ed](#)

Submission
Online

Submission Instructions
You must upload your recording of your oral presentation to Echo360 in accordance with the task instructions. You must also submit your research portfolio as a Word document.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

- Strategise and conduct a client interview to obtain relevant information from a client and provide advice to a client in an effective and professional manner.
- Locate and evaluate relevant and credible legal and interdisciplinary sources.
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing in a range of professional and academic contexts.

Academic Integrity Statement

As a CQUniversity student you are expected to act honestly in all aspects of your academic work.

Any assessable work undertaken or submitted for review or assessment must be your own work. Assessable work is any type of work you do to meet the assessment requirements in the unit, including draft work submitted for review and feedback and final work to be assessed.

When you use the ideas, words or data of others in your assessment, you must thoroughly and clearly acknowledge the source of this information by using the correct referencing style for your unit. Using others' work without proper acknowledgement may be considered a form of intellectual dishonesty.

Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in your university study ensures the CQUniversity qualification you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

As a student, you are responsible for reading and following CQUniversity's policies, including the **Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure**. This policy sets out CQUniversity's expectations of you to act with integrity, examples of academic integrity breaches to avoid, the processes used to address alleged breaches of academic integrity, and potential penalties.

What is a breach of academic integrity?
A breach of academic integrity includes but is not limited to plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, cheating, contract cheating, and academic misconduct. The Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure defines what these terms mean and gives examples.

Why is academic integrity important?
A breach of academic integrity may result in one or more penalties, including suspension or even expulsion from the University. It can also have negative implications for student visas and future enrolment at CQUniversity or elsewhere. Students who engage in contract cheating also risk being blackmailed by contract cheating services.

Where can I get assistance?
For academic advice and guidance, the Academic Learning Centre (ALC) can support you in becoming confident in completing assessments with integrity and of high standard.

What can you do to act with integrity?

Be Honest

If your assessment task is done by someone else, it would be dishonest of you to claim it as your own

Seek Help

If you are not sure about how to cite or reference in essays, reports etc, then seek help from your lecturer, the library or the Academic Learning Centre (ALC)

Produce Original Work

Originality comes from your ability to read widely, think critically, and apply your gained knowledge to address a question or problem