

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION****KEY FACTS**

Programme name	Graduate Diploma in Law
Award	Graduate Diploma in Law/CPE
School	The City Law School
Department or equivalent	Academic Programmes
Programme code	LAGDCPE01 (Programme Route: GSCPED)
Type of study	Full time
Total UK credits	230
Total ECTS	115

**PROGRAMME SUMMARY**

The Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) is a law conversion course allowing able non-law graduates from any discipline to fulfil the academic stage of legal training in preparation for further vocational study leading to qualification as barrister or solicitor (the BPTC or LPC courses).

The GDL consists of one year's full-time study of the seven foundations of legal knowledge. In addition, you must demonstrate legal research ability, knowledge of the English Legal System, and will be introduced to an eighth area of legal knowledge (currently Legal Ethics).

The City Law School at City University has offered the GDL since this route into law was created in 1977. The City GDL is widely respected for its academic character and the excellence of its students. The course was unconditionally revalidated in 2012, receiving six commendations.

Upon successful completion of this 1-year programme you will have achieved a total of 230 credits made up of 10 level 5 credits and 220 level 6 credits.

By the end of this programme, you should have developed a systematic understanding of key aspects of your area of study, including how to acquire coherent and detailed knowledge of your chosen subject. In addition, you will have developed the skills and analytical techniques to apply your knowledge to many types of employment as well as continue your own learning and development.

**Aims**

- to impart and consolidate a sound working knowledge of the recognised foundation subjects in law;
- to encourage critical assessment of the law's development in each subject;
- to develop analytic skills appropriate to law;
- to stimulate discussion of the practical and professional issues arising in each subject;
- to develop a capacity to extend basic principles through further research and independent thought;

- to encourage students to relate confidently to the culture, standards and technologies of modern legal practice.

### **WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?**

**On successful completion of this programme, you will be expected to be able to:**

#### Knowledge and understanding:

- demonstrate knowledge of the principal features of English and EU law;
- explain the major concepts, values, principles and rules within the seven foundation subjects;
- explore ethical challenges intrinsic to the practice of law.

#### Skills:

- synthesise information from a variety of sources;
- display effective oral and written communication skills;
- legally analyse legislation, case law and academic texts;
- compare and evaluate alternative doctrines and policies and make reasoned choices between them;
- work independently to design and implement a research strategy in preparation for producing work of scholarly competence;
- advise in writing on the potential and best solutions when applying law to facts.

#### Values and attitudes:

- show an understanding of the duties of lawyers to clients, the courts and the public;
- demonstrate sensitivity in learning as part of a team (in small group teaching);
- explain the demands of justice and fairness in evaluating legal solutions to practical problems;
- show integrity in handling and producing academic work.

This programme has been developed in accordance with the QAA Subject Benchmark for Law.

### **HOW WILL I LEARN?**

The GDL Programme is taught by lectures (one per subject per week) and tutorials (one per subject per fortnight). Lectures are designed to give a guide to the subject and a basis for further private study. Tutorials are designed to test understanding, provide clarification when necessary, practise legal analysis, prepare for the final assessments, and develop proficiency and confidence in discussing the law.

Lectures in six of the seven foundation subjects are two-hour sessions attended by the whole GDL cohort – up to 190 students. In the seventh foundation subject (Contract), they are given in electronic form. Tutorials are 50-minute sessions; each group has about 13 members. Average face to face teaching time in the week is therefore 15-16 hours. Time spent on private study brings the commitment required by the GDL in line with the demands of a full-time job.

The eighth area of legal knowledge (Introduction to Legal Ethics) is taught by a short course of lectures, both face to face and electronic. There are no tutorials in this subject.

Students are offered the choice to undertake up to four formative courseworks over the year. These four pieces are chosen by students from the seven foundational subjects. Formative coursework is optional and the results do not count towards the award of the GDL. This is to avoid the disadvantages of a culture of continuous assessment and the risk of distracting students from studying and experimenting to find a style of legal writing which serves them best individually.

Formative coursework provides practice in legal analysis and writing, gives a measure of students' progress, and constitutes training for the final assessments. Legal research skills are tested by students researching a legal scenario and then answering a multiple choice test relating to that scenario under timed conditions.

## **WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?**

### Assessment and Assessment Criteria

The final GDL assessment consists of 2.5-hour, unseen, closed book exams in each of the seven foundation subjects. There are resit exams in August for those who require them. The pass rate following the resit exams is normally in the region of 90%.

This style of assessment reflects the fact that accurate preparation, recall and deployment of large quantities of information is a central requirement of much legal practice.

### Feedback

Coursework is marked and returned to students with an overall percentage mark and the marker's detailed comments. In keeping with the formative purpose of coursework and the values of the GDL programme, coursework is not marked anonymously.

Feedback on exams consists of the examiners' guides to what was expected in answer to each question, in combination with their notes on students' performance.

Feedback will be provided in accordance with our Assessment and Feedback Policy.

The full policy can be found at:

[https://www.city.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/68921/assessment\\_and\\_feedback\\_policy.pdf](https://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/68921/assessment_and_feedback_policy.pdf)

### Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are set out in the Programme Handbook, and indicate how levels of performance in assessments translate into marks. They are supplemented by guidance given by staff throughout the year.

### Assessment Regulations

In order to be awarded the GDL, you must pass all assessment components set out below.

The assessment components are: the English Legal System test;; the research requirement; the eighth area assessment; and the seven final exams. The pass mark in all elements is 40% save for the English Legal System test in which it is 50%.

The Assessment Board has discretion to compensate one marginal examination fail if:

- The mark actually attained in the subject to be compensated is not less than 35%.
- There is evidence of the student's academic strength across the entire programme.
- You have taken and passed all six of the other examinations.

Where you are eligible for compensation at the first attempt, this will be applied in the first instance rather than offering a resit opportunity.

If you receive a compensated pass in a module you will be awarded the credit for that module. The original component marks will be retained in the record of marks and your original module mark will be used for the purpose of your Award calculation.

Resit: where you are not eligible for compensation at the first attempt, you will be offered one resit attempt.

If you are successful in the resit, you will be awarded the credit for that module. The mark for each assessment component that is subject to a resit will be capped at the pass mark for the module. This capped mark will be used in the calculation of the final module mark together with the original marks for the components that you passed at first attempt.

If you do not meet the pass requirements for a module and do not complete your resit by the date specified you will not progress to the next Programme Stage and the Assessment Board will require you to be withdrawn from the Programme.

If you would like to know more about the way in which assessment works at City, please see the full version of the Assessment Regulations at:

[http://www.city.ac.uk/ data/assets/word doc/0003/69249/s19.doc](http://www.city.ac.uk/data/assets/word_doc/0003/69249/s19.doc)

### Exemptions

The maximum period of registration is three years, inclusive of resit, repeats and any periods of interruption of studies.

The Common Professional Examination regulations permit students to apply prior to enrolment to be credited Common Professional Examination subjects by the SRA or BSB, on the basis of relevant study previously undertaken. Students who obtain such exemptions are then only required to take the remaining subjects in order to satisfy the Common Professional Examination requirements. The School permits such students to undertake only the relevant parts of its Graduate Diploma in Law/CPE programme. However, where students have enrolled with exemptions, they will only be certified on successful completion of the requisite subjects as having satisfied the Common Professional Examination requirements (a CPE pass).

### WHAT AWARD CAN I GET?

#### Graduate Diploma:

Programme Stage	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)	Class	% required
1	5	10	0	With Distinction	70
1	6	10	0	With Commendation	60
1	6	210	100	Without classification	40

You **may** also be awarded a distinction where:

- You have obtained a mark of at least 70% in at least four of the modules (LD3001 to LD3007) counting towards the final award; AND
- You have obtained an overall average of at least 67%; AND
- The examination board considers that it is not inappropriate to award a distinction.
- You have passed all examinations at the first attempt and have not been compensated in any examination.

You **may** also be awarded a commendation where:

- You have obtained a mark of at least 60% in at least four of the modules (LD3001 to LD3007) counting towards the final award; AND
- You have obtained an overall average of at least 58%; AND
- The examination board considers that it is not inappropriate to award a commendation.
- You have passed all examinations at the first attempt and have not been compensated in any examination.

**WHAT WILL I STUDY?**Programme Stage 1

Module Title	SITS Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
English Legal System	LD2001	10	Core	No	5
Public Law	LD3001	30	Core	Yes	6
Contract Law	LD3002	30	Core	Yes	6
Criminal Law	LD3003	30	Core	Yes	6
Equity & Trusts	LD3004	30	Core	Yes	6
European Union Law	LD3005	30	Core	Yes	6
Land Law	LD3006	30	Core	Yes	6
Tort Law	LD3007	30	Core	Yes	6
Research requirement	LD3009	5	Core	No	6
Eighth area – Legal Ethics	LD3010	5	Core	No	6

**TO WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ON?**

The majority of students undertaking the GDL intend to practise as lawyers in England and Wales. The GDL enables them to complete the academic stage of legal training, after which they study on the appropriate vocational course (BPTC or LPC) before going on to pupillage or a training contract. The course is equally suitable for intending barristers and intending solicitors. An increasing proportion of GDL students consider further postgraduate legal study in order to enhance their prospects in today's highly competitive legal services market. The City Law School also offers the opportunity to convert the GDL to an LLB honours degree through a course of further part-time study.

If you would like more information on the Careers support available at City, please go to: <http://www.city.ac.uk/careers/for-students-and-recent-graduates>.

**WILL I GET ANY PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION?**

The award of the GDL certifies that you have completed the academic stage of legal training as required by the Bar Standards Board and the Solicitors Regulation Authority as a pre-condition to qualifying as a lawyer in this jurisdiction.

**HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?**

Application is made through the Central Applications Board. A degree of at least second-class honours standard is normally required, as well as a good knowledge of the English language (written and spoken). Students whose first language is not English must demonstrate that they have met the University's English language requirements. Further information can be found on the University's website:

<http://www.city.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying-to-city/tier-4-english-language->

[requirements](#)

The City Law School funds a variety of scholarships and bursaries. Further details are available on request.

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