



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
Type of study	Full-time
Mode of Learning	In-Person
Total UK credits	225
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 BVS or SPP 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 revalidated in 2023.

Upon successful completion of this 1-year programme you will have achieved a total of 225 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.

Registration Period

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

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

Learning Outcomes

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

Knowledge

- Evaluate 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;
- Use effectively 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;
- Be sensitive while 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.

Graduate Attributes

The graduate attributes you can demonstrate on completion of your programme are key to your future employment. It is therefore central to every programme that there will be opportunities in the learning, teaching and assessment activities for you to engage with these on all modules.

Further detail of this will be provided for you by your module leader. The graduate attributes are:

- Always learning
- Engaged in the world
- Technical and digital
- Connected Professional
- Creating Impact

WHAT WILL I STUDY?

Taught modules

Module Title	SITS Code	Module Credits	Core / Compulsory / Elective	Compensation	Level
Foundations of Law	LD3011	15	Compulsory (Co)	No	6
Public Law	LD3001	30	Compulsory (Co)	Yes	6
Contract Law	LD3002	30	Compulsory (Co)	Yes	6
Criminal Law	LD3003	30	Compulsory (Co)	Yes	6
Equity & Trusts	LD3004	30	Compulsory (Co)	Yes	6
European Union Law	LD3005	30	Compulsory (Co) – barristers' route only	Yes	6
Land Law	LD3006	30	Compulsory (Co)	Yes	6
Tort Law	LD3007	30	Compulsory (Co)	Yes	6
European Union Law*	LG3201	15	Compulsory (Co) – solicitors' route only	Yes	6
Introduction to the Solicitor's Professional Qualification*	LU3137	15	Compulsory (Co) Compulsory (Co) – solicitors' route only	Yes	6

*Solicitors' Route

You will find this route of interest if you wish to be introduced to the solicitor's profession and its qualifying examinations. You do not of course need to choose this pathway to go on to qualify as a solicitor, but the subject matter can help in demystifying the procedural aspects of the law. If you choose this route LD3005 European Union Law will be replaced by the following two 15 credit modules:

LG3201 European Union Law

LU3137 Introduction to the Solicitor's Professional Qualification

HOW WILL I LEARN?

The GDL Programme is taught by activities equivalent to lectures (nine per subject per term) and tutorials (four per subject per term, designed to give a guide to the seven foundation subjects and a basis for further private study. Contract Law has lectures in the form of pre-recorded materials that you will access via Moodle. In Term 1 you will also have a 1-hour lecture each week on the Foundations of Law.

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. Tutorials are 50-minute sessions; each group has about 13-16 members. There are no tutorials for Foundations of Law.

Average teaching time in the week is 2 hours of online lectures, 13 hours of on campus lectures in Term 1, and 12 hours in Term 2, and either 3 or 4 hours of tutorials. The total is therefore 17-18 hours a week. Time spent on private study brings the commitment required by the GDL in line with the demands of a full-time job.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

Assessment and Assessment Criteria

You will be assessed by two elements of assessment for each of the 7 Foundation of Legal Knowledge Modules. With the exception of Public law, the first assessment will be coursework that counts towards 25% of the final grade and the second assessment will be an online examination of 6 hours duration where you will be required to answer 2 questions out of four. Public law will be examined by two pieces of coursework – one valued at 25% to be submitted in the course of the year and the second one – valued at 75% - to be submitted at the end of the academic year. Foundation of Law module will be assessed by three separate forms of assessments.

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.

Assessment Criteria are descriptions, based on the intended learning outcomes, of the skills, knowledge, or attitudes that you need to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully. Grade-related Criteria are descriptions of the level of skills, knowledge, or attributes that you need to demonstrate in order to achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment. Assessment Criteria and Grade-related Criteria will be made available to you to support you in completing assessments. These may be provided in programme handbooks, on the virtual learning environment or attached to a specific assessment task.

Feedback on assessment

Coursework is marked and returned to students with an overall percentage mark and the marker's detailed comments. 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. In particular, you will normally be provided with feedback within three weeks of the submission deadline or assessment date. This would normally include a provisional grade or mark. For end-of-module examinations or an equivalent significant task (e.g. an end-of-module project), feedback will normally be provided within four weeks. The timescale for feedback on final-year projects or dissertations may be longer. The full policy can be found on the [Student Policies and Regulations page](#).

Assessment Regulations

In order to be awarded the GDL, you must pass all assessment components set out below; please note LD3011 Foundations in Law does not count towards the overall award classification.

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 modules totalling 195 credits.

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

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)

By the end of this programme, you will have developed a systematic understanding of key aspects of the legal areas that you have studied, including how to acquire a coherent and detailed knowledge of your legal studies, at least some of which, will be at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of the legal studies. In addition, you will have developed the ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline and conceptual understanding that would enable you to (1) devise and sustain arguments, and / or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which at the forefront of the legal field, and (2) describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship. You will also have developed an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge, and the ability to manage your own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.

Programme stage level, credits and weighting

Programme Stage	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)
1	6	15	0
1	6	210	100

Classification requirements

Class	% required
With Distinction	70
With Commendation	60

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); or, for students on the Solicitors' route, in at least four of the 30 credit modules (LD3001 to LD3004 and LD3006 and LD3007), or in at least three of the 30 credit modules (LD3001 to LD3004 and LD3006 and LD3007) and also both of LG3201 and LU3137; counting towards the final award; AND
- You have obtained an overall average of at least 67% not including LD3011; 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); or, for students on the Solicitors' route, in at least four of the 30 credit modules (LD3001 to LD3004 and LD3006 and LD3007), or in at least three of the 30 credit modules (LD3001 to LD3004 and LD3006 and LD3007) and also both of LG3201 and LU3137; counting towards the final award; AND
- You have obtained an overall average of at least 58% not including LD3011; 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.

EMPLOYABILITY AT CITY

WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ONTO?

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 (BVS or SQE) 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>.

For more information on the Careers support available at City St George's, please go to: <https://www.city.ac.uk/careers/your-career>

WILL I GET ANY PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION? (Remove this sub-section if N/A)

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.

Version: 8.3

Version date: 17/01/2025

For use from: 2025/26

Information is provided subject to Terms and Conditions for study at City St George's, University of London.