Programme Specification: Postgraduate Diploma/LLM International Human Rights

Date of Publication to Students September 2011

NOTE: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found (1) at http://www.bcu.ac.uk/elss, (2) in the Module Specifications and (3) in the Student Handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

The information from this specification may be selectively extracted and included in documents that are more appropriate for students, prospective students and employers.

Awarding Institution / Body:	**Birmingham City University**
Teaching Institution:	**Birmingham City University**
Interim Awards and Final Award:	**PgDip or LLM International Human Rights**
Programme Title:	**PgDip/LLM International Human Rights**
Main fields of study:	**International Human Rights**
Modes of Study:	**Full time and Part time**
Language of Study:	**English**
UCAS Code:	**n/a – This course does not recruit through UCAS**
JACS Code :	

Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external reference points used to inform programme outcomes:

- Law QAA Benchmark

Programme Philosophy and Aims

The LLM International Human Rights programme provides an opportunity for the advanced study of the substantive, procedural and practical aspects of International Human Rights. The programme provides both the theoretical underpinnings as well as an in-depth exploration of various aspects of international human rights law including how social, economic and political forces, at the global, international and regional levels influence developments in human rights law. While covering the main aspects of substantive law in a number of key subject areas through structured taught sessions, the programme looks to retain flexibility both in terms of the variety of assessment methods used and in terms of full and part time delivery modes and it aims to equip students with the advanced learning skills necessary for continuing professional development in a wide spectrum of employment.

The programme aims to provide learners with:

- A curriculum that provides the opportunity to acquire a deep, critical and coherent knowledge and understanding of aspects of substantive and procedural law that are fundamental to International Human Rights and its processes.
- A curriculum that promotes an appreciation of the political, economic and social issues and discourses that form the context of International Human Rights law.
- A curriculum that encourages critical engagement in research and investigation, across disciplinary boundaries, leading to exploratory and creative interpretations and constructions of knowledge that contribute to a wider and deeper understanding of Human Rights law and systems of justice than generally available in undergraduate programmes.
- A staged and progressive learning structure, offered in two alternative study modes, which encourages and supports deep learning, critical analysis and advanced research.
- An opportunity to participate in learning activities that emphasise active and participative education.
- The means to apply their abilities developed at undergraduate level in taking responsibility for their own learning and engaging in study with self-reliance and self-confidence in their intellectual competencies.
- An opportunity to engage with learning activities that develop their competence in a range of high level academic and intellectual skills.
- An opportunity to acquire, or build upon, skills required for lifelong learning.
- Transferable and marketable skills and knowledge, enhancing employment opportunities in the legal profession and a range of other careers.
- A basis for progression to doctoral studies.
- An opportunity to apply legal skills and knowledge in a practical context.

Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated:

Knowledge and understanding of:

- The principal features of public international law, including its major concepts, values, principles and rules, and its main institutions and procedures.
- A range of substantive human rights law with an in-depth knowledge and critical understanding of selected areas.
- The political, historical and economic contexts within which international human rights law develops and operates and the inter-relation of law with social forces.
- The moral, ethical and human dimensions of legal problems and solutions within the context of human rights.
- The techniques of advanced research methodology, including their relative strengths, values and ethics.

Intellectual / cognitive skills:

- Problem definition and solution.
- High-level conceptual thinking.
- Analysis, evaluation and application of critical thinking.
- Ability to analyse and synthesise complex legal issues, argument and discourse.
- Rapid assimilation of complex information and concepts to enable a deep application of theoretical knowledge to legal problems.
- Management of systematic enquiry and learning at an advanced level and taking responsibility for the conclusions drawn.
- Handling uncertainty and ambiguity in the application of knowledge.

Practical, research and independent learning skills:

- Dealing with complex and abstract concepts and ideas relevant to their programme of study.
- Using, with limited guidance, advanced skills and techniques in methodological study and systematic enquiry, including skills in collecting and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data.
- Planning, setting up and writing up a research project.
- Skills essential to the development of paths to the acquisition of knowledge in new and emerging areas of the discipline.
- Exploiting the potential of IT (including electronic data bases world-wide-web) as a tool for acquisition of knowledge.
- Understanding and use of conventional standards of referencing.

Transferable / key skills:

- Working independently, organising and managing work schedules.
- Communicate complex and abstract ideas in an articulate and confident manner using the

English language with sophistication.

- Working with and relating effectively to others in co-operative and constructive engagement with their peers in group activity.
- Present well formulated arguments by both verbal and written means.
- Self-motivation, independence, confidence and self-reliance in acquisition and analysis of knowledge.
- Taking responsibility for judgement and opinion.
- Effective use of IT as a means of acquisition of knowledge and communication of information, including www and word packages.
- Acquisition of the core skills essential to progression to doctoral studies.

Teaching, learning and assessment methods used

Knowledge and understanding:

- At Diploma level, knowledge and understanding are acquired through student-led seminars and tutor-led group tutorials and other directed learning activities. All students engage in the study of core principles, concepts and systems underpinning the law and the economic, political and social contexts of international human rights in which they are set. Students select specific aspects of human rights law for in-depth study.
- All learners acquire knowledge of advanced research methodologies through a core programme of workshops, using active learning techniques that provide a platform for acquisition of knowledge of developing areas of the discipline through negotiated research projects at Diploma and Master's level.
- At Master's level, some students acquire knowledge and understanding through in depth enquiry using both traditional and innovative research methods. A supervisor guides students research planning and execution at personal tutorials. These personal tutorials are used to periodically to gauge student progress and provide formative feedback. Other students develop their knowledge and understanding through reflective learning and the application of legal skills and knowledge to practical human rights projects either in the US or elsewhere.
- Knowledge and understanding is assessed at Diploma level by a number of methods, including research essays and projects, seminar papers and research proposals, and at Master's level assessment is by means of a thesis (for the Dissertation module) or by reflective journal/report and essay (for the placement modules)
- The assessment criteria are published and include as a major component demonstration of accurate knowledge and critical understanding of the principles, concepts and theories of the discipline.

Anonymous marking systems apply to all written forms of assessment. All assessment is on a percentage scale

Practical, research and independent learning skills:

- Theoretical case studies are used in most of the specialised option modules so that all course participants will be exposed to the techniques of problem definition and solution.
- All modules engage learners in the study of conceptualised knowledge that requires sophisticated skills of analysis and synthesis for discussion and presentation in seminars.

The curriculum engages students in enquiry and learning in the developing areas of the discipline.

- At Master's level a large-scale investigation is undertaken following approval of a research plan.
- The published assessment criteria include as a major component demonstration of skills of analysis, evaluation and synthesis of the discourse, scholarship and research on the topics of investigation. At Diploma stage assessment of the core Research Methods module include as a key component demonstration of understanding and application of high-level research skills. At Master's level the assessment criteria incorporate demonstration of creative and rigorous research techniques. The ability to analyse and evaluate knowledge and information from a wide range of varied sources is essential to successful realisation of the programmes learning objectives.

Practical, research and independent learning skills:

- Emphasis throughout the programme is on self-directed and self-managed learning. There are no lecture sessions. Effective participation in seminars and workshops requires self-directed and managed research and knowledge acquisition.
- Independent learning is achieved via library resources (electronic and paper), web-based resources and external agency contacts.
- Independent learning progress is monitored at dissertation supervision meetings and also through weekly journals for placements students.
- Assessment tasks and criteria reflect the ability of learners to engage in independent learning. The published assessment criteria include adherence to conventional standards of referencing.

Transferable / key skills:

Although not necessarily explicitly or formally assessed, transferable skills are core to the learning strategy of the programme.

- A sophisticated standard in oral and written English is pervasive to the learning activities (seminar discussions, presentations and written assessments).
- Strict deadlines are set for the completion of assessment tasks.
- Peer group learning is developed through seminars, and workshops.
- Confidence and self-reliance is fostered through seminar debate.
- The use of IT is encouraged and supported throughout the course.
- Assessment methods include seminar presentations, coursework and research dissertations.
- Oral presentation and defence of a topic in seminar conditions.

Regulation of assessment:

Details of the mechanisms and criteria for assessment in individual modules, and the means of determining final degree classifications, are published widely. Students are referred to the University's Standard Postgraduate Assessment Regulations on starting the course, and individual and collective guidance is given by academic staff on their operation at appropriate times throughout the course. Criteria for assessment of individual modules are described in

the Student Handbook.

To qualify for a Postgraduate Diploma a student must successfully complete all required assessments and obtain a minimum of 120 credits. The pass-mark in all modules is 50%. The award of Postgraduate Diploma with Commendation is made to students who achieve an average mark of 60 to 69% in their Diploma modules. The award of Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction is made to students who achieve an average mark of 70% or above in their Diploma modules.

To qualify for a Master's Degree a student must successfully complete all required assessments and obtain a minimum of 180 credits. The pass-mark in all modules is 50%. The award of Master's Degree with Commendation is made to students who achieve an average mark of 60 to 69% in their Diploma modules and Master's module combined. The award of Master's Degree with Distinction is made to students who achieve an average mark of 70% or above in their Diploma modules and Master's module combined.

In modules with more than one element of assessment, in addition to the 50% pass mark a student must also obtain a minimum of 40% in each item of assessment.

External Examiners are appointed. Their work includes:

- Approving coursework assignments and assessment criteria.
- Approving examination papers.
- Monitoring standards through moderation of completed assessments.
- Attending Examination Boards.
- Participating in the review and validation processes.

Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The programme is offered on a one year, full-time basis (in three study periods) and 18 months, part-time basis (in five study periods). A study period is approximately 15 weeks in duration. All students follow a scheme of compulsory study and have a choice of elective studies. The programme comprises modules that have the value of 15 level 7 credits (or multiples of 15). Students complete 120 level 7 credits for the Postgraduate Diploma award and a further 60 level 7 credits for the master's level award. There is no differentiated Postgraduate Certificate award. Each 15 credit module represents 150 study hours.

The structure of the programme, the core modules, levels and credit ratings and awards that can be gained are shown below.

Postgraduate Diploma Stage

Module number	Module name	Credits
No module numbers are specified	Advanced Legal Research Methods	15 level 7
	Critical Perspectives on Rights	15 level 7
	Globalisation and Justice	15 level 7
	Public International Law	15 level 7
	Either Human Rights Standards in the USA or Rights, Liberties and the European Convention on Human Rights	15 level 7
	AND	45 level 7
	Either three 15-credit options or one 15 credit option and Amicus Briefs	
	Options Refugees and the Law Rights and the Environment International Children's Rights The Right to Life and the Value of Life International Criminal Justice Amicus Briefs	

Award: Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits)

LLM Stage

Module number	Module name	Credit
No module numbers are specified	Either Dissertation	60 level 7
	Or US Placement	60 level 7
	Or Human Rights Internship	60 level 7

Award: LLM Degree (180 credits)

Support for Learning

Students are encouraged to identify and, with guidance, to reflect on their own learning needs and are offered the following support as appropriate to those needs:

- The programme operates in an experienced and successful academic environment with appropriate resources in equipment and personnel.
- An induction programme that deals with orientation and dissemination of essential information and an introduction to the technical resources of the Faculty.
- Access to the library, University Learning Centres, IT workrooms and a personal e-mail address.
- A course in legal research methods at postgraduate diploma level, including information retrieval and advanced library research skills to underpin the core and option modules at this stage.
- A course in advanced research methods that underpins the preparation for the dissertation at master's level.
- Guidance on the choice of option modules.
- The support of a tutor during the research and preparation of the master's stage dissertation.
- Access to the programme director, personal tutors, subject tutors, Head of School and course administrator at reasonable times.
- Access to the services of a Faculty librarian.
- Access to students services, including careers, job bureau, financial advice, counselling, disability services, chaplaincy and nursery.
- A Faculty programme of careers advice that includes sessions run by local employers.
- A Student Handbook that sets out module specifications, including assessment methods and criteria.
- Assistance and support for study and learning skills from the University's Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching and the University’s Academic Skills Centre.

Criteria for admission

Candidates must satisfy the general admission requirements of the programme.

The current admission requirements can be found under the 'Entry Requirements' tab of the web page for this course.

Evaluation and improvement of quality and standards

Committees:	**Mechanisms for review and evaluation:**
Board of Studies Examination Board Academic Standards Committee Faculty Board Senate	Individual module evaluation by students Review and Validation events Annual Course Monitoring Reports and Action Plans Annual Review of modules by staff Student feedback questionnaires External Examiners' reports and comments Course team review and development meeting Consideration of the minutes of Board of Studies by Academic Standards Committee and Faculty Board Annual course development days