

Student newsletter London Connection



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www.londonexternal.ac.uk

Redeveloping the LLB

2007 saw two major landmarks for the External Undergraduate Laws Programme.

Firstly, the Qualifying Law Degree status of the University of London LLB by External study was revalidated by the Joint Academic Stage Board of the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board¹. As a result there will be some extra attention paid to 'skills'.

Skills

A large amount of the Laws curriculum is focused on the content of law, learning what the law says (including the contradictory things it says!) and how the legal system works.

Increasingly today, university education also focuses on skills. Skills are about 'how' a task is performed, and not just the outcome. One of the most important skills for a law student is legal research. You may provide a good legal answer to a question but how did you get to that answer? Being able to search for cases, check whether a statute has been amended or track down relevant legal academic articles in journals is a key part of 'thinking like a lawyer'.

It's also important to be able to communicate effectively about legal issues to different types of audience. If you go into practice, your clients need to be able to understand you, as well as your legal colleagues.

Other, more general, skills are a key to employability inside or outside the legal professions: the ability to use the internet, produce word-processed materials, balance working well on your own with working in a team with other people.

From 2007, the Law Programme is providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills:

- The 'Common law reasoning and institutions' exam will have a compulsory Part on legal research.

For those students seeking a **Qualifying Law Degree**, it will be necessary to undertake research and complete a Skills portfolio. This can be done either:

- in association with the new final-year Dissertation option (being introduced in 2008)
- doing a separate mini-project.

Please note: The above only applies to students with an effective registration date of September 2007 and after.

Online resources and support

The second major development is that it is now a requirement of the programme for all new students to have internet access. This development supports the building up of skills in legal research. The Laws Gateway of the **Online Library**² is the hub of more resources than could ever likely be found in any one single land-based library.

'The VLE and the Athens password to the Online Library opens into a vast array of legal literature – that was honestly the thing that gave me the extra edge in winning the scholarship. And I used the exercises and formative assessments from the VLE!'

Rani Preatarshini Subassandran, 2007 winner of Malaysia Scholarship to study at King's College London

Finally, the **Laws VLE**³ 'went live' in October 2006. Now it covers all the compulsory subjects. Course material grouped together in a very convenient way – but, even better – there are regular newsletters from legal academics associated with the Laws Programme discussing the law subjects. The online discussion forum offers students a chance to air their views, ask questions and compare their experiences of studying. Feedback on these resources is always welcome. Please contact: lawsvle@london.ac.uk

¹ Previously known as the Law Society and the Bar Council respectively.

² <http://external.ucl.ac.uk/pdf/laws-gateway-help.pdf>

³ <http://vle.londonexternal.ac.uk/laws/gateway.nsf>

⁴ For reactions of recent graduates to general transferable skills please visit: <http://www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/ldn/graduates.html>



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Photos: (left) students at MBA plenary session at Royal Holloway, UK; (above) at a plenary session in Hong Kong.

First MBA plenary sessions a success

The first face-to-face plenary sessions for Royal Holloway's new AMBA-accredited MBA and MSc programmes in International Management were held earlier this year in London and Hong Kong.

Held at Royal Holloway in June, the London plenary attracted 23 students from 15 different countries ranging from Austria to Zimbabwe. Students came from industries and organisations as varied as government agencies, the UN and IT.

In addition to sessions on teamworking and leadership issues, plus lectures on strategy, marketing and information systems, students were given practical tips on steering a successful course through the MBA dissertation. Students also had the

opportunity to bond – and share different kinds of tips – during a trip to Royal Windsor Racecourse.

The Hong Kong plenary held at HKU SPACE in July attracted 18 students – two of whom

'Overall, both plenary sessions were a great success in the levels of constructive interaction achieved amongst students'

flew in from Austria and Japan – working in careers as varied as accounting, real estate, and retail. Representatives from companies including Culturecom, HK Commercial Broadcasting, JobMarket and Merrill Lynch

gave presentations, while the Programme Director provided academic guidance on writing the case study. Students were able to network informally over a glass or two of wine at a wine tasting session.

Dr Harindranath commented: 'Overall, both plenary sessions were a great success in the levels of constructive interaction achieved amongst students, engagement with academic and practical issues raised by both academic and guest speakers, and the enthusiasm demonstrated by the two groups.'

For more information on the MBA please visit: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/mba



Student Ambassadors

The Alumni Relations Office has received an overwhelming response to its newly proposed initiatives – the Student Ambassador Programme and International Chapter Leader network.

They received over 400 applications from our alumni community to fulfil these roles proving that our alumni are an enthusiastic group who are keen to support the University of London External System.

Our 65 appointed Student Ambassadors will allow us to connect people at different stages of the student lifecycle.

Ambassadors will offer invaluable advice to new and prospective students on issues relating to studying in their country and can give accurate descriptions of what to expect when undertaking a degree through the External System.

Chapter Leaders also have an important role to play in connecting people. Unfortunately, the Alumni Relations Office can't hold alumni reunions in all countries, and that's where the newly appointed Chapter Leaders can help.

Chapter Leaders are responsible for arranging activities and events for alumni in their city or country. They will offer opportunities for alumni members to meet each other and network more frequently through a range of social, professional and intellectual events.

Profile on: Student Admissions

Part of the Registry Services directorate that deals with the entire student lifecycle from enquiries through to graduation, the 21-strong Student Admissions department is organized into four sections: undergraduate and postgraduate admissions, data input, and the University Entrance Requirements Office.

While postgraduate Admissions officers have programme-specific responsibilities, their undergraduate counterparts work in teams across the whole suite of programmes. Data input officers create, and subsequently update, student records when applications are first received. The University Entrance Requirements Adviser plays a key, university-wide, role: investigating qualifications that haven't been submitted previously and advising Colleges of the University, as well as the External System, on the status and value of individual qualifications.

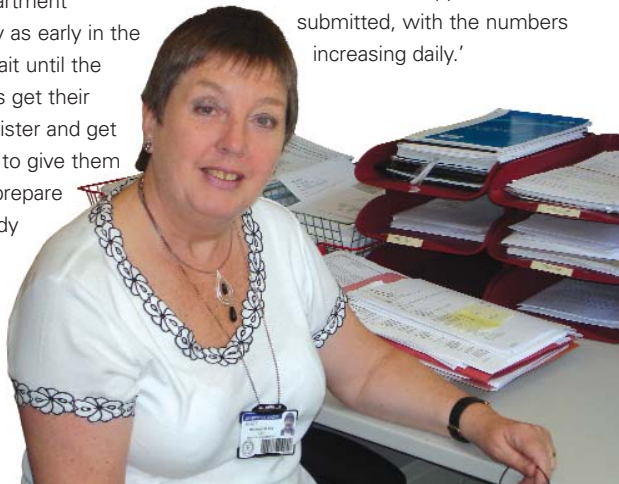
For most postgraduate programmes there's normally one application and registration deadline date, and the team work very much towards those dates, processing applications throughout the year. As there are different application deadline dates across programmes, they're busy virtually 12 months of the year. With undergraduate programmes students can apply throughout the year.

According to Marion McNeill, Head of Student Admissions, the department 'encourages students to apply as early in the year as possible and not to wait until the deadline. The sooner students get their offer, the sooner they can register and get their study materials, in order to give them as much time as possible to prepare for their first exams. Somebody submitting their application in September or October is not going to get a decision as quickly as someone who applies in April or May, because of the sheer volume of applications. Last year we

processed over 14,000 applications and made more than 12,000 offers.'

A vital aspect of Marion's role is ensuring that both the information and advice that the department provides is as full and relevant to the needs of the individual applicant as possible. 'We encourage applications from students who don't meet the normal entrance requirements, and offer them a unique service – advising them what they can do in order to become eligible. The role of the Admissions Department is to widen access, without lowering standards. So we'll consider all the qualifications students have in support of their application, and look at the package as a whole when considering whether or not they satisfy the minimum requirements. We also encourage applications from students with disabilities and other special needs, and those with legally-imposed travel restrictions, for example people in prison.'

Set up to give students an alternative means by which they can apply, a recent development has seen the introduction of online applications. As one of the key people who lead on the project, Marion is clearly pleased with the take-up rate. 'It's working very well. We started rolling out postgraduate programmes in February and undergraduate programmes in May, and so far we've had over 1,000 applications submitted, with the numbers increasing daily.'



Focus on



Birkbeck, University of London

Birkbeck has forged its own path in higher education since 1823, reaching out to people traditionally excluded by other universities. Birkbeck is unique in its special mission to enable mature students to gain higher education qualifications via part-time study. Today, Birkbeck is ranked among the leading UK university institutions for its excellence in research in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.

Birkbeck provides the academic direction for three programmes offered through the External System: Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management at postgraduate level, plus Philosophy at undergraduate level.

Birkbeck's Department of Organizational Psychology is the oldest and largest department of its kind in the UK, and makes a major contribution to research in the field of behaviour at work. It's one of the principal providers of academic and professional training in occupational psychology within the UK.

Birkbeck's School of Philosophy is one of the leading philosophy departments in the UK, achieving excellence in both practical and theoretical philosophy, and the history of these subjects. The School provides internationally recognised standards of expertise across a diverse range of philosophical specialisms. In the latest edition of the Leiter Report – a ranking of philosophy departments throughout the English-speaking world – the School ranked fourth in the UK, receiving special mention for research excellence in 11 separate subjects.

For Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management please visit: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/ophrm

For Philosophy please visit: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/humanities

Find a Friend

Since the launch of 'Find a Friend' we have connected many University of London External graduates who had lost touch with one another over the years.

'Find a Friend' is an online networking tool that allows you to get in touch with old friends or classmates that you studied your University of London qualification with.

Go to www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni and

click on 'Find a Friend', complete as much information as possible and submit your form. Please ensure that you provide us as much information as possible about the person(s) that you are trying to locate. The more information you give us, the better are our chances of being able to put you in touch with them.

When we have located the person(s) that you're looking for, we'll forward your message to them on your behalf and facilitate you getting back in touch!



On 1 August 2007 the University of London postgraduate distance learning programmes formerly taught by Imperial College joined the Department of Financial and Management Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

The seven postgraduate programmes (in Agribusiness for Development, Agricultural Economics, Applied Environmental Economics, Biodiversity Conservation and Management, Environmental Management, Managing Rural Development and

'CeDEP aims to increase professional understanding of development, the environment, and related subjects by advanced research and by high quality postgraduate degree programmes'

Sustainable Development) currently have 900 part-time students enrolled worldwide.

The seven Imperial DLP programmes, together with the MSc Public Policy and Management already offered by SOAS, have now transferred to the newly created Centre for Development, Environment and Policy (CeDEP). CeDEP aims to increase professional understanding of development, the environment, and related subjects by advanced research and by high quality postgraduate degree programmes.

Professor Laurence Harris, Head of the Department of Financial and Management Studies, welcomed the merger: 'With our new colleagues and students we have increased the number of postgraduate distance learning students from the Department's current 1,500 to 2,400. It makes the Department the largest provider of fully structured postgraduate distance learning in the University of London and one of the world's largest and strongest'.

Norman Flynn, the Department's Director of Studies (Distance Learning), and Greg Wood, acting Deputy Registrar (Distance Learning), added: 'This exciting development enables us to improve further the strong support we give to our world wide students and take advantage of the benefits new technology can offer them'.

www.cefims.ac.uk/cedep

2008 is the 150th anniversary of the External System

In what promises to be a very momentous year, the University of London External System will be celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2008. Since the External System was established in 1858, tens of thousands of students have graduated worldwide. The anniversary provides the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to the achievements of all our graduates, as well as honouring the work of tutors and administrative staff who have helped make the External System such a success.

A number of activities, exhibitions and competitions have been planned throughout 2008, and we do hope that you'll be able to join us in celebrating this exciting milestone.

We'll keep you informed about the various celebrations, and the most up-to-date information will also be on our website: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/150

The People's University

As part of the anniversary celebrations, the External System is publishing a limited edition, illustrated book entitled *The People's University: 150 years of the University of London and its External Students*. A number of graduates kindly supplied memories of their student days which provided valuable background material for the book – many thanks to you all. For further information and details on how to purchase the book, please contact: anne.cronin@london.ac.uk

The 150th Anniversary Campaign

We are launching a fundraising campaign to ensure that the University of London maintains its leading position as a provider of academic excellence and innovation worldwide.

The campaign will focus on providing further learning opportunities for students and alumni, while also developing the External System for the benefit of future students. For further information about the campaign please visit our website:

www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni

or contact the Alumni Relations Office on: +44 (0)20 7664 4809



The Careers Group



C2 is part of The Careers Group, University of London and has been helping graduates develop professionally for over 10 years. It is a specialist careers consultancy for people at any stage in their career. C2 works with individuals for a wide variety of reasons but everyone they meet is seriously thinking about making some form of change in their working life.

Everyone that the Careers Service sees is different; some people feel like they have made a wrong turn, others feel that they never even started on the right path. C2 staff have the right experience and expertise to identify the appropriate solution for you. This may involve an individual session with a consultant, attending a group workshop,

having your CV reviewed online (e-Advice service) or making use of the information resources in our dedicated careers library.

For more information visit our website www.c2careers.com

International JobOnline

International JobOnline is the UK's first online vacancies and careers information site which aims to bring students and employers together all around the world. International JobOnline is a one-stop-shop where you can search graduate vacancies, find out information on working in the UK and look through specific careers information in countries all around the world. For more information, please visit www.careers.lon.ac.uk/ijo

For more information about job vacancies, careers events and a selection of our online publications covering a variety of careers, please visit the careers service website.

Institution snapshot



St Martin's Institute of IT is a private tertiary education institution in Malta, offering a range of diploma and degrees in computer and social sciences conferred by the University of London External System. St Martin's was set up in 1985, and began offering support to University of London External System students in 2000. Around 350 students are currently reading for one of nine degrees and four diplomas, both as evening students and full-time students.

St Martin's has established itself as a unique college in Malta, based upon a commitment of quality education. This has been confirmed through a track record of excellent results in these past years, culminating in 70% of graduating students of 2006 attaining First Class Honours, with two students receiving three academic awards between them. The previous two years were also a success story with 50% graduating with First Class Honours.

It's imperative to put things in perspective. Malta is the smallest member country of the European Union, with a total population of just over 400,000, although with one of the oldest Universities established by the Knights of St John in the 16th century. The competition for students is thus very arduous and the success gained by St Martin's graduates is having a marked effect on opening up the tertiary education sector in Malta, from being a veritable monopoly into a pluralistic environment which will have a positive effect on the population.

Thousands of international students are attracted to Malta every year to study English, and a number of these students are choosing to study University of London programmes at St Martin's rather than go back to their home country. This augurs well both for the future of the college and for the External System in Malta.

www.stmartins.edu

External System witness seminar

The first activity to mark the 150th anniversary of the External System was a witness seminar hosted by the Vice-Chancellor on 21 June 2007 at King's College London.

The witness seminar was part of an ongoing programme of seminars organised by the Centre for Contemporary British History (CCBH) which aim to explore different episodes of recent history through the testimony of people who have lived through them. Professor David Cannadine, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Professor in British History, chaired a round table discussion involving 20 people from the UK who had completed their study through the External System themselves or had a family member who had done so. These included Gisela Stuart, Labour MP for Edgbaston in Birmingham; Lewis Elton, father of the

British comedian Ben Elton and honorary Professor of Higher Education at UCL; and Mary Stopes-Roe, daughter of Sir Barnes Wallis (1887-1979).

Among the themes covered were experiences of life as an External student, reflections on the value of the External System to individuals and society, and how access to higher education is attained across generations. The seminar was filmed and transcribed, and the final transcript will be developed into an academic paper by Dr Michael Kandiah of CCBH at the Institute of Historical Research, to be made available on the University's websites and as a publication for the anniversary year in 2008. A second witness seminar, focussing on the history of the External System overseas is planned for July 2008.

Come and meet us

Below is a list of forthcoming exhibitions we'll be attending:

RSA Conference Europe 2007, UK	22 – 24 October 2007
Qualifications Fair, Dhaka, Bangladesh	8 November 2007
Qualifications Fair, Chittagong, Bangladesh	11 November 2007
Postgraduate Fair, UK	21 November 2007
Careers Fair 2008, Singapore	28 February – 2 March 2008

For full details please visit our website: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/news_events/exhibitions.shtml

SENATE HOUSE LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Senate House Library refurbishment news

The second phase of the Senate House Library, University of London refurbishment programme began in August. This involved temporarily re-locating the entrance to the Library to the North Block of Senate House and moving some of the collections.

The refurbishment is necessary to allow for library space to be rewired and redecorated, with the shelving respaced to become more disability-friendly.

While every effort is being made to keep materials on open access, on occasion some will be temporarily re-shelved in the closed-access stack. These will remain available on request.

We apologise for any inconvenience the moves cause and we hope to keep disruption to a minimum.

Please check the website www.shl.lon.ac.uk, newsletter and notices in the Library for the latest information about further moves.

Ban cars in London to hit CO₂ targets

London must become car-free if it's to substantially cut carbon dioxide emissions, according to a new report. Researchers from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Oxford University claim the Greater London Authority's target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 60% by 2025 is unlikely to succeed without drastic measures. The report says emissions could be cut by 72% by 2030 if cars were banned from the city.

James Woodcock, who led the team of researchers at LSHTM, commented: 'Only the car-free greater London scenario is close to achieving the emission reductions required by 2030. Even then we need to reduce carbon fuel use on our public transport. Car-free streets could transform the quality of our urban environment, while improving health. Although London has made small improvements, achieving a car-free city would require a dramatic move in favour of walking and cycling.'

The findings of the report, first published in the medical journal *The Lancet*, revealed that London is on course to reduce land transport emissions by only 10-23%.

www.lshtm.ac.uk

UCL scientists develop 3D face scan

Scientists at UCL have developed a technique which uses three-dimensional scans of children's faces to detect signs of rare genetic conditions. The technique works by picking up tiny changes in the shapes of noses, jaws, ears and head shape of children and comparing them to the faces of healthy youngsters.

The technology has a 90 percent success rate, according to Professor Peter Hammond, a researcher at University College London's Institute for Child Health. "A lot of genes do a lot of different things in the body," Hammond said. "Some may affect your liver or lungs, and bone structure, but may also contribute to the face. Genes that affect the face may also affect other parts of the body. It's a complex picture." Around 700 genetic disorders are known to have an affect on the face and Hammond's team has investigated 30 so far.

www.ucl.ac.uk/news



Understanding emotions



A study from the Institute of Education demonstrates that children who understand and deal with their emotions perform better at school. They also have better relationships with teachers, parents and each other. As a result, they experience greater self-esteem than children who lack awareness of their emotional reactions.

Professor Susan Hallam evaluated the impact of the 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' strand of the government's Primary Behaviour and Attendance Strategy pilot programme,

which took place in a sample of primary schools from 25 local authorities.

Teachers found that the programme helped them appreciate the importance of social, emotional and behavioural skills for children, enabling staff to understand their pupils better. The programme appeared to be particularly successful in enhancing children's well-being. Children learned how to express their feelings, manage their anger and were more willing to interact with those from different backgrounds and cultures.

Feedback

We would welcome your feedback on this issue and letters/comments for future publication. Please email us at: newsletter@london.ac.uk This issue (and back issues) of the newsletter are available to download in the 'Current Students' area of our website. You can also choose to receive them via email by visiting www.londonexternal.ac.uk/newsletter