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Conveyancing – Law and Practice

Student Handbook 2022

Conveyancing – Law and Practice

This Student Handbook forms part of the Conveyancing – Law and Practice course, offered by the Macquarie Law School, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University

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WELCOME TO CONVEYANCING – LAW AND PRACTICE

Welcome to the *Conveyancing – Law and Practice* course. This *Student Handbook* is also available online at www.mq.edu.au/conveyancing and should be used for reference throughout your enrolment in the course.

The purpose of the *Conveyancing – Law and Practice Student Handbook* is to provide you with the essential information you need regarding the administrative and academic policies and practices applicable to the *Conveyancing – Law and Practice* course.

You will find information about assignment submission, examinations, as well as information on academic standards and requirements. Answers to any questions you have, may be contained in this *Student Handbook*. Please use it as your first reference source.

The Macquarie Law School, Faculty of Arts, hope that you find your studies in the course fulfilling and successful.

Every student must be aware of the Student Code of Conduct:
http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/student_conduct/conduct.html

Course Overview

The course is offered online and is divided into the following eight units, which may be completed in a minimum of two years (four sessions). Currently the Conveyancing course is offered over 2 sessions per year.

Units **must** be taken in the following order:

1. Foundation Legal Knowledge (PDCV101)
2. Contracts (PDCV102)
3. Vendor and Purchaser 1 (PDCV104)
4. Revenue Law (PDCV103)
5. Vendor and Purchaser 2 ((PDCV105)
6. Professional Skills 1 (PDCV107)
7. Finance and Security (PDCV106)
8. Professional Skills (PDCV108)

You may enrol in a maximum of two units per session and are required to complete a minimum of two units per year. Students are expected to allocate **at least ten hours a week study time for each unit** in which they are enrolled.

The New South Wales Office of Fair Trading issues licenses to practice as a Conveyancer, after the Office is satisfied that an applicant has an approved educational qualification and approved relevant practical experience and training with a licensed Conveyancer or a legal practitioner. Completion of the *Conveyancing – Law and Practice* course will provide you with the educational qualification necessary for a Conveyancers Licence. The approved practical experience with a licensed Conveyancer or legal practitioner may be gained before, during or after completion of the course.

Further information is available on the [Department of Fair Trading website](#). Or [Conveyancers licensing Order 2006](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Most of your contact with the University will be with staff from Faculty of Arts Student Centre or Macquarie Law School. The Student Support Officer (Conveyancing) deals with all administrative matters relating to the course and the relevant staff in Macquarie Law School deal with academic matters. You should use the following information as a guide to which section of the University to contact for a particular enquiry.

Hours of Operation

The Student Centre is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Conveyancing Administration

You should email the Conveyancing Support officer if you have any questions about administrative policies and procedures, in particular:

- Enrolment/re-enrolment procedures
- Tuition fees and refunds
- Withdrawal from a unit
- Change of name or contact details
- Extensions or unavoidable disruption for assignments/ exams
- General Enquiries
- Graduation

Contact Information for Conveyancing Student Support Officer

Phone: (02) 9850 6829
Email: conveyancing@mq.edu.au
Enquires: <http://ask.mq.edu.au>
Website: mq.edu.au/conveyancing

Mailing Address:

Conveyancing – Law and Practice
Faculty of Arts, Arts Student Centre
Building 25WW, Building B, Ground Floor
Macquarie University NSW 2109

Macquarie Law School

Macquarie Law School offers the Course.

The Director of the *Conveyancing – Law and Practice* course oversees the academic matters relating to the course. The Director, Dr Henry Kha (henry.kha@mq.edu.au), is located in Macquarie Law School.

You will be notified of the name and contact details for your tutor early in the session, usually by way of an introductory announcement on the university's online learning management system (iLearn). You should contact your tutor in the first instance if you have any questions about the following:

- the content of your unit materials or textbook/s
- the content of an assignment or other assessment work
- feedback about an assignment or other assessment work.

Contact with Tutors and other Students

In order to facilitate contact with tutors and other students, you have access to an iLearn space for each unit you are studying. **iLearn** facilitates online discussions and dialogue between students enrolled in the same unit. It is also an important point of contact with your tutor, submission and distribution of assignments and receiving information.

You **must** log onto iLearn at the beginning of each session. Make a note of any important information from your tutor about the unit you are taking. You should then log in **at least once** a week, but it is recommended that you do so more often, as this is the source of important information from your tutor and the Conveyancing administration staff.

You are encouraged to make contact with the other students enrolled in your course through iLearn. You may wish to organise an online study group or clarify issues about the unit you are studying. This can be done through the "Forums" within iLearn.

Changes of Contact Details

It is very important that you notify the university of changes to your contact details, including your name, postal address, email address, and phone numbers.

If we do not have your current contact details, we may be unable to contact you to discuss important matters relating to your studies or enrolment. You must email conveyancing@mq.edu.au with your name, address, and telephone/email changes in writing. We cannot accept changes of contact details over the phone.

Please Note: You cannot notify a change to your contact details or name by simply indicating the new information on an assignment.

Change of Name

If you wish to change the name under which you are enrolled, you must provide official change of name documentation or statutory declaration regarding the change of name.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your contact details and name are up to date

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES AND RULES

Confirmation of Enrolment/Re-enrolment

You must enrol/ re-enrol each session. You will receive a confirmation email for that session indicating the unit/s in which you have been enrolled. The email will also show your *Conveyancing – Law and Practice Student Number*, which is an eight-digit number. You should indicate your student number, as well as your name, in all correspondence to the University. Other documents containing important information may be attached to this confirmation email and you should ensure that you read these documents carefully.

Receipt for Tuition Fee Payment

As of 2021 receipts / Tax invoices will be automatically emailed to you once you make payment via the online payment gateway.

Recognition for prior learning

Documented work experience is taken into consideration as an entry requirement for the course. If any previous studies (relevant to conveyancing) successfully undertaken are equivalent to the units in the Macquarie Conveyancing Program, a maximum of 2 units may be exempt. No exemption will be given for PDCV101 Foundation Legal Knowledge. Please provide relevant transcripts and equivalent unit outlines for assessment at the time of your first enrolment.

Adding a Unit

You may enrol in a maximum of two (2) units per session. If you have submitted an application for enrolment in one (1) unit and decide that you wish to enrol in a second unit, you may apply to add a unit to your enrolment before the Closing Date for Applications for that session (the applicable date varies depending on whether you are a new or a re-enrolling student).

If you wish to confirm you are eligible to add a unit you should email conveyancing@mq.edu.au

You cannot add a unit to your enrolment for a particular session once that session has commenced.

Cancelling your Application and Refund conditions

If you need to cancel your application for enrolment/re-enrolment before a Session commences, you must notify the University in writing. This email must be sent to conveyancing@mq.edu.au by 5pm Friday of Week 1 for a refund. A refund of 80% of the tuition fees paid for your enrolment in that session's unit/s will be considered.

Students are not eligible for the 80% refund of tuition fee/s, after 5pm Friday of Week 1.

Withdrawing from a Unit

You may still withdraw from a unit or units after Week 1 of the Session and before the Withdrawal Closing Date, approximately eight (8) weeks after the start of Session. (The Withdrawal Closing Date is specified each Session and you are advised on the Important Dates document provided with your enrolment/re-enrolment confirmation).

If you wish to withdraw from a unit, you should notify the University by email: conveyancing@mq.edu.au. It is not sufficient to only inform the tutor that you are not continuing with a unit.

If you wish to undertake, in a subsequent session, a unit from which you have previously withdrawn, you will have to apply to re-enrol in the unit and will be required to pay the full tuition fee again. **No refund of the tuition fee is given if you withdraw from a unit after 5pm Friday of Week 1.**

If you withdraw from a unit before the Withdrawal Closing Date you will be given a “W” (Withdrawn) grade for the unit from which you have withdrawn, and you will not be considered as having failed the unit.

- If you discontinue your studies and do not notify the University in writing of your withdrawal from that unit you will be given a “F” (Fail) grade for that unit.
- If you discontinue your studies after the Withdrawal Closing Date has passed you will be given a “F” (Fail) grade for that unit.
- If you do not successfully complete all course requirements you will be given a “F” (Fail) grade for that unit.

It is not possible to defer your examination for a unit from one session to another, or to carry over marks for assignments or other assessment work from your enrolment in one session to another session.

Procedures for Re-enrolling

You will be notified online of information and dates for re-enrolling at the end of each Session.

On-line re-enrolment link is available on the Conveyancing website at: mq.edu.au/conveyancing

You may enrol in a maximum of two (2) units per session and **units must be studied in the order listed on the Re-enrolment Form.**

In the event that a “F” (Fail) grade has been awarded, you must re-enrol in the failed unit only, the next time you enrol. When you repeat the failed unit you are permitted to enrol only in that unit and no other. (See under the heading “Failing a Unit” later in this *Handbook*).

To re-enrol for the next session you must complete the on-line re-enrolment form, along with payment of the tuition fees and submit by the Closing Date for Re-enrolment Applications. (The Closing Date will be specified in the Important Dates document).

NB: There is a short turn-around time between receiving your Session 1 results and re-enrolling in Session 2. You can submit your Re-enrolment Application for Session 2 before you have received your results for Session 1.

Minimum Rate of Progress

Students must enrol in at least *one unit per session consecutively*. Failure to comply with the Minimum Rate of Progress, or an extended absence from study may mean that a student is ineligible to re-enrol or may be required to repeat units previously completed.

If you enrol in a unit but withdraw from the unit after the Closing Date for Re-enrolment Applications, you will be considered to have been enrolled for that session for the purposes of meeting the Minimum Rate of

Progress. However, if you cancel your application for enrolment before the Closing Date for Re-enrolment Applications, you will be considered as not having been enrolled for the purposes of meeting the Minimum Rate of Progress. If there is any difficulty (e.g. illness or serious unavoidable disruption), which may affect your ability to comply with the Minimum Rate of Progress, you must notify the University by emailing conveyancing@mq.edu.au, requesting a leave of absence for that session. Outline the reasons for your inability to re-enrol, attaching supporting evidence. In exceptional circumstances, and if your disruption is after the census date, it may be possible to defer your studies, this opportunity will be to swap your enrolment to the next study session **only**. **No fee refund** is possible in the event you cannot meet the requirements of this deferral and undertake studies in the following session.

If you are given a “Fail” grade for a unit you may enrol only in that unit the next time it is offered. If you intend to re-enrol in a failed unit, no other unit can be undertaken at the same time unless extenuating circumstances are shown to exist. You will be required to pay the full tuition fee for the second enrolment. If you fail the same unit a second time, you may be excluded from continuing in the course.

In some very exceptional circumstances, you may be given the opportunity to indicate why you should be allowed to repeat the unit for a third time. If you are allowed to repeat the unit for a third time you will be required to pay the full tuition fee for the third enrolment.

Scholarships

One Merit and one Equity Scholarship is available to Conveyancing students, in each study session. Each of the Merit and Equity scholarship is a refund of tuition fees in the upcoming session (up to 2 units per scholarship). Students must have previously completed at least two units, and therefore at least one Session, to be eligible to apply. In some sessions, a scholarship may be shared amongst 2 students i.e 2 students receive a tuition fee refund of one unit each. A student is only eligible to receive the Merit and/or Equity scholarship once (a maximum of 2 units in total) to ensure that all students can benefit.

Applications will close approximately 3 weeks before the commencement of the next study session. The online application form is located on [the Conveyancing website](#)

The Merit scholarship will be awarded to the student who applies with the highest average mark as at the previous Session. The student must have attempted a minimum of two units in their studies.

The Equity Scholarship is for students who can demonstrate hardship, which may become a barrier for them to continue their studies. To apply for the Equity scholarship, you will need to provide supporting documentation.

The Equity Scholarship application will also require a 200-word personal statement explaining your circumstances and how this support will assist your path to a Conveyancing Career. Applications are encouraged from students who are experiencing educational disadvantage including:

- Disability or long-term/recurrent medical disadvantage
- Financial hardship
- Indigenous Australian background
- Refugee status

- Regional or remote location
- Carer or sole parent responsibilities

STUDY MATERIAL AND RESOURCES

Textbooks

It is recommended that students in the *Conveyancing – Law and Practice* course purchase their textbook/s directly from the publishers (as indicated in the Textbook List each session).

The Macquarie University Library

Conveyancing students are eligible to use the library resources. Please contact the library for further information

<https://www.mq.edu.au/about/campus-services-and-facilities/library>

Studying Online

The *Conveyancing – Law and Practice* course uses the University's online learning management system (**iLearn**). iLearn will be used to:

1. Access your course materials
2. Introduce and give you contact details of your tutor
3. Distribute assignment details
4. Deliver examination papers
5. Give you an opportunity to correspond with your tutor and other students in your unit/s

You **must** log on to your unit by the first week of session and then at least once a week, but more often if possible, to check if there is any new information for your unit/s.

Please note the Acceptable use of IT Resources policy that you have read and accepted on the application form: http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/acceptable_use/policy.html

Try out the technology

You will have access to iLearn one week prior to the start of each session. Find out what technical skills are assumed and what new ones you may need to acquire. Students will be provided with a 8 digit student ID which will be used to login to ilearn. New students will be advised in their confirmation of enrolment of their 8 digit student ID and instructions on how to setup their password for their first time login as well as instructions for accessing **iLearn** by email.

For instance, you will need to know:

- Your username and password;
- How to navigate around the site;
- How to manage messages on the Forum's section;
- How to logout of the online learning management system so that no one else can use your password.
- How to upload and download Assignments to your online unit.
- About the email notifications from the online learning management system;

Please [contact the University](#) if you experience difficulties logging on iLearn.

Time Management

iLearn may sound a bit daunting at first, but it is manageable, and generally students learn very quickly. Log on to the website regularly and allow room in your schedule in case there are difficulties. For example, if you forget your password and have trouble logging on, or you find you cannot print when you need to, or your internet is down when you have planned to use it. The more you use the website, the more proficient you will become in accessing information and troubleshooting problem

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments **MUST** be submitted via TURNITIN. **Do not send your assignment/s directly to your tutor unless directed to do so.**

Turnitin is an online plagiarism software tool that compares submitted papers to databases of academic publications as well as other papers that have been submitted to Turnitin.

Assignment Submission Procedure

It is your responsibility to ensure that the correct assignment is submitted. You must ensure your assignment has the required information (e.g. your name, correct unit code, assignment title) before you submit.

Please click on the Turnitin link in your online unit. Click on the specific assignment and upload document.

Please refer to the [quick guide](#) if you have any problems.

Receipt of Assignments

The Turnitin screen will show that your assignment has been successfully submitted.

An assignment received by the due date and time, will be allocated that day's date. To avoid possible network issues, which may delay your submission, we recommend that you upload your assignment no later than 1 hour prior to any due time set by the tutor.

Failure to Submit Assignments

You must submit all items of assessment for each unit. Failure to submit any of the prescribed assignments for a unit means you will not be allowed to sit the examination for that unit, which will result in a fail grade being awarded for the unit.

Computer back-up copy of all work

You must keep a back-up copy of all work produced. Problems with the operation or retrieval of work produced on a computer will not be accepted as an excuse for late submission of an assignment, or for inability to produce a copy of an assignment when requested by the tutor or University staff.

It is your responsibility to contact the university if you think your assignment has not been submitted and received online.

Marked Assignment

You should allow a reasonable time for the assignments to be marked. It is the aim that assignments will be marked and feedback visible via the Turnitin link within 3 weeks from the assignment due date.

Assignment Marks

Any enquiry about your grade must be made to the appropriate tutor.

Review of marked assignments or exams

Tutors and students may disagree about the worth of an assignment. No mark is necessarily correct, but it will normally represent the best judgment the tutor can make in a process that is complex and subjective. Assignments are marked fairly and consistently, and if a student believes correct process has not been followed in relation to an assignment then there is a method for review.

A review must be supported by evidence. Grounds for a review are limited to:

- a clerical error occurred in the determination of the final grade
- due regard was not paid to an illness or misadventure that had been found to be eligible for special consideration
- the student had been disadvantaged in some way due to a variation of assessment task requirements or feedback provisions laid out in the Unit Overview.

Requests for review of a mark must be made by email within one week of your having received the marked assignment. Your written request should state clearly the grounds on which you consider a re-mark to be justified. **You should be aware that a re-mark may result in a lower mark being awarded.**

EXAMINATIONS

At the end of each session final examinations are held for units in the *Conveyancing – Law and Practice* course. With the enrolment/re-enrolment information you will receive an Important Dates notice giving the dates and times of the examination release.

You must ensure that you will be available for examination/s for the unit/s in which you apply to enrol, before submitting your application for enrolment/re-enrolment. An examination dates reminder announcement will also be placed in your iLearn unit.

All final examinations in the Conveyancing – Law and Practice course are Take Home Examinations. **Examination papers are available for downloading from iLearn at 9.30am on the day before the due date.** Examinations **must** be submitted online **via Turnitin by 11.45pm on the due date.**

It is your responsibility to ensure that you know the date/s of the examination/s for the unit/s in which you are enrolled.

Failure to submit an examination by the due date and time will mean that a student is given a F (Fail) grade for the unit, unless the student can satisfactorily demonstrate that a serious or unavoidable disruption prevented them from submitting the examination, all such claims must be supported by documentary evidence as per the [Special Consideration Schedule of Evidence](#)

Special Consideration for Illness or Unavoidable Disruption of an Exam

If you have experienced a serious and unavoidable disruption to your ability to submit the examination, you can apply for Special Consideration for your examination paper.

Any request for special consideration must be submitted by email to conveyancing@mq.edu.au **no later than one week after the due date of the examination for the unit**, giving details of the circumstances which you believe affected your performance.

You should include documentary evidence to support your claims. All special consideration requests are considered, but are NOT automatically granted.

Special consideration will only be granted where it is apparent that the stated circumstances substantially disrupted previously satisfactory work. If a student's work in a unit has previously been unsatisfactory, then no amount of subsequent misadventure will overcome the fact that earlier work was unsatisfactory. If the disruption is an ongoing concern, please refer to the Student Disability Support policy procedure:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disability_support/policy.html

You must give reasons why you did not sit/submit the examination and include documentary evidence in support of your claims. Each case of failure to sit/submit an examination will be assessed and you will be contacted in writing regarding the outcome.

Examination Papers

Sample and past examination papers are not available for the *Conveyancing – Law and Practice* course. **Once your examination has been marked you will find your released result in the iLearn Gradebook. This is usually within 4 weeks of the due date.**

Review of marked assignments or exams

Tutors and students may disagree about the worth of an assignment. No mark is necessarily correct, but it will normally represent the best judgment the tutor can make in a process that is complex and subjective. Assignments are marked fairly and consistently, and if a student believes correct process has not been followed in relation to an assignment then there is a method for review.

A review must be supported by evidence. Grounds for a review are limited to:

- a clerical error occurred in the determination of the final grade
- due regard was not paid to an illness or misadventure that had been found to be eligible for special consideration
- the student had been disadvantaged in some way due to a variation of assessment task requirements or feedback provisions laid out in the Unit Overview.

Requests for review of a mark must be made by email within one week of your having received the marked assignment. Your written request should state clearly the grounds on which you consider a re-mark to be justified. **You should be aware that a re-mark may result in a lower mark being awarded.**

Results

At the end of each session your final result/s will be made available on iLearn. At any time you can request a copy of your academic record via email to conveyancing@mq.edu.au. Results for Session 1 are usually available by mid to late July and results for Session 2 are usually available in mid to late December.

Your final result on your transcript for each unit will be given as follows:

0-49	Fail
50-64	Pass
65-74	Credit
75-84	Distinction
85-100	High Distinction

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Assignment due dates and penalties

It is important that students demonstrate an ability to complete assignment tasks within the specified time allocated and all students are expected to submit assignments by the due date.

NB: Penalties as follows will apply to assignments not submitted by the due date.

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – 10% late penalty per day (up to 7 days) assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline.

Once a penalty has been applied it will not be reversed except in the case where a Special Consideration application has been approved. In particular, penalties will not be reversed simply to enable a student to pass a unit.

Legibility and Presentation

Assignments should be typed, using space and a half or double line spacing with sufficient margins for comment.

Word Limit

It is important to keep within the word limit set for assignments; the tutors have considered this and expect that the subject can be dealt with adequately within the recommended word limit. Limits applied to all work allow true judgment of the merit of each student's work since those who make their points concisely and clearly will gain higher marks.

Tutors may penalise or refuse to mark an assignment that exceeds the word limit.

Markers easily recognise when the writer is waffling around the subject; you will not get credit for irrelevance or repetition. If you can answer the question in fewer words than allowed, then do so. In short, these are not opportunities to simply write all that you can recall on a subject whether or not it has any relevance to the assignment question.

Referencing

Students are expected to observe proper standards of referencing and acknowledgements of sources in their written work.

You must always acknowledge any words or ideas which are not your own.

You must indicate, with indentation or quotation marks, any quotations from other sources. Adequate referencing is a factor in the assessment of any piece of written work, and also protects against a charge of academic misconduct.

You will learn this skill in the unit Foundation Legal Knowledge. Correct referencing must be applied to all assignments and other written work undertaken in all units of this course. You should read carefully the information on referencing in Foundation Legal Knowledge.

The best referencing is the Australian Guide to Legal Citation, which you can download free from <http://wwwlib.murdoch.edu.au/find/citation/lawcite.html>

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct

Please refer to the Academic Honesty Policy:

<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/academic-honesty>

Tutors assess written work on the assumption it is the student's own work. Any practice, which tends to subvert that assumption, can be a form of academic misconduct.

Examples of plagiarism and dishonest academic behaviours are:

Plagiarism: Using the work or ideas of another person and presenting this as your own without clear acknowledgement of the source of the work or ideas. This includes, but is not limited to, any of the following acts:

- copying out part(s) of any document or audio-visual material or computer code or website without indicating their origins
- using or extracting another person’s concepts, experimental results, or conclusions
- summarising another person’s work
- submitting substantially the same final version of any material as another student in an assignment where there was collaborative preparatory work
- use of others (paid or otherwise) to conceive, research or write material submitted for assessment
- submitting the same or substantially the same piece of work for two different tasks (self-plagiarism).

Deception: Includes, but is not limited to, false indication of group contribution, false indication of assignment submission, collusion, submission of a work previously submitted, creating a new article out of an existing article by rewriting/reusing it, using the same data to form the same arguments and conclusion, presenting collaborative work as one’s own without acknowledging others’ contributions, cheating in an examination or using others to write material for examination.

Fabrication: Includes, but is not limited to, creating fictitious clinical data, citation(s), or referee reports.

Sabotage: Includes, but is not limited to, theft of work, destruction of library materials.

The Dangers of Plagiarism and How to Avoid it

The integrity of learning and scholarship depends on a code of conduct governing good practice and acceptable academic behaviour. One of the most important elements of good practice involves acknowledging carefully the people whose ideas we have used, borrowed, or developed. All students and scholars are bound by these rules because all scholarly work depends in one way or another on the work of others.

Therefore, there is nothing wrong in a student using the work of others as a basis for their own work, nor is it evidence of inadequacy on the student’s part, provided they do not attempt to pass off someone else’s work as their own.

To maintain good academic practice, so that a student may be given credit for their own efforts, and so that their own contribution can be properly appreciated and evaluated, they should acknowledge their sources and they should ALWAYS:

- state clearly in the appropriate form where they found the material on which they have based their work, using the system of reference specified by the Faculty.
- acknowledge the people whose concepts, experiments, or results they have extracted, developed, or summarised, even if they put these ideas into their own words;
- avoid excessive copying of passages by another author; even where the source is acknowledged.

Find another form of words to show that the student has thought about the material and understood it, but stating clearly where they found the ideas.

If a student used the work of another person without clearly stating or acknowledging their source, the result is falsely claiming the material as their own work and committing an act of PLAGIARISM. This is a very serious violation of good practice and an offence for which a student will be penalised.

Students must comply with the systems, rules, and expectations for academic honesty in all matters. Cases of academic misconduct will be treated seriously; the sanctions vary from failure (either in the submitted work or in the unit) to exclusion from the University.

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE STUDY SKILLS

<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills-development>

As an online student you must study effectively because you will not have the opportunity for close contact with the university environment, and to be successful you need to develop independent learning skills. These techniques include strategies associated with study routines, effective reading, assignment writing, learning through note-taking, participation in tutorial discussions and preparation for examinations. This section contains some basic advice related to these independent learning strategies and refers to other sources of information for you to consult if you wish to improve your skills. The resources listed at the end of this section are particularly useful.

For those of you who have never studied online, you should be aware that this will probably be quite a different experience to study you have previously undertaken. You will not have a regular schedule of lectures nor constant contact with other students unless you can set up an informal network with other students enrolled in the course. The pressure of your work and/or family life can easily overwhelm your study commitments and you should be especially careful to organise your study program so that all aspects of your life are reasonably balanced.

A Plan of Study

You must be methodical if you are to succeed in this course. You should use a study planner to display assignments, on-line participation and examination dates in a prominent place so you will be constantly aware of them. If you are a regional student make sure you order any textbooks well in advance.

You should develop clear and realistic goals. You must identify both short-term and long-term goals that can give urgency to all your work.

You will also need support from those close to you. You will no doubt have many roles besides that of a student – spouse, partner, parent, friend, or employee. As an adult returning to study, it can be a difficult time for your family. Any necessary re-allocation of duties and responsibilities needs to be openly discussed and decided. If the family shares your goals, your progress will be much easier.

You will be least anxious about your studies if you have a business-like approach. Plan what you want to achieve in the next day, week, month and stick to your plans as far as possible. If unforeseen situations arise you may need to modify your plans, although it is important to realise that you may need to sacrifice some aspects of your personal life in order to find time for your study.

You will enjoy your studies more if you have a positive attitude and desire to learn. You should open your mind to new, and perhaps conflicting, ideas and experiences. As you begin your online studies you should establish links between the new subject matter and your own previous knowledge and practical experience of the world.

Study Routines

If you have enrolled in one Conveyancing – Law and Practice unit you must have decided already that you can spare at least 10 hours a week for study or at least 20 hours if you are taking two units. At the beginning of the session, it is a good idea to plan out the entire study session, then each weekend you should make out a study timetable showing where you plan to fit in each of your study sessions for the week ahead.

Try to do some study nearly every day and get into the habit of using odd half-hours as well as longer spells. You can do a lot of background reading, or preliminary scanning on a train journey or in a lunch break. It is important to tackle your toughest work at times when you are at your best, whether this is first thing in the morning, later in the day, or even the middle of the night. You should also leave enough free time for recreation (including sleep) and leisure activities because these are important too.

There are various places suitable for study. You should try to find a place which is free from the distraction of television, radio, and telephones. Wherever you decide to work, try to study in the same place. Not only does this mean there will be fewer new things to distract you from your work, but as you build up the habit of sitting in that place, you will find you can switch into a learning mood the moment you sit down. However, you should not let this “place-habit” get so strong that you are incapable of studying in other places.

The only equipment you need, apart from a computer, text books and unit materials, is a table, a chair, and a good light. Make sure you sit up at a table, because it is not possible to concentrate for long if you are lounging back in a comfortable armchair.

You should let it be known that you cannot be interrupted during study sessions. Clearly you will need the goodwill and co-operation of your family in this, and let your friends know your study hours as well, so they can respect your work.

Reading Improvement

In this course, you will spend a great deal of time reading. You should vary your reading speed according to the complexity of the material and the purpose for which you are reading. If you are simply trying to get an overall understanding of a piece of writing you should be able to read two or three times faster than when you are trying to unravel the detailed development of a complex argument. But even when the material is very difficult you may benefit from scanning through it quickly first before you get down to read it more intensively.

Do not expect every piece of text to yield up its full meaning the first time you read it, as you may have to go through it several times. But several rapid readings will probably give you a greater understanding, and take less time, than a single, painstaking perusal trying to assimilate all the points made. It is suggested that you do not make notes the first time you read a section of the materials or readings.

While you are reading:

- Look for the author’s framework of ideas, or the plan upon which the material was constructed.
- Select a main idea in each paragraph, which is usually contained in the first or last sentence.
- Look for more important details that support the main ideas.
- Do not ignore the author’s diagrams and illustrations because they may make important concepts clearer than in the text.
- Be skeptical. Do not take the author’s word on trust. Look for justification of each statement.
- Do not be afraid to skip paragraphs and whole sections if you can see that they are not relevant to your purpose. There is no law that says you have to read every page of a book.

If you still find a section difficult to understand, take a break, try to discuss the difficulty with another student or a tutor; or find another author’s treatment of the topic, and then come back and read it again- two or three times if necessary.

Note taking

You should take careful notes as you study because it helps you concentrate and understand your work. Your notes should also provide a clear written record for revision and be filed together by topic, rather than in the order in which they happen to be written.

When you are writing notes from texts you should use your own wording and not just copy chunks of textbook. Your notes should not be too lengthy, or you might as well reread the original. For example, you might need only two or three sides of A4 paper to summarise a section of 30-60 pages. Diagrams or mind-maps are useful for summarising.

It is important to record the source of your notes and the date on which you wrote them. Take care to clearly identify any quotations from reference books that you include in your notes. Plagiarism can occur accidentally but can nonetheless be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

Use logical and memorable layout for your notes. You should begin a new page for each set of notes which should be labelled clearly, with plenty of space and wide margins. It is useful to work out a set of abbreviations for words common in your subjects and you can make use of standard abbreviations such:

- e.g. for example
- ie that is
- cf compare, remember in this context
- NB Note well, important

Writing Assignments

Essays and answers to problem questions form an important basis of your assessment in this course. When you begin planning an essay you should be sure that you know the precise subject, that you have identified the keywords in the question and that you are, in fact, answering the question. You should also note any restrictions in length, e.g. 500 words or 1,500 words. *Make sure you understand what the question or essay requires you to do.*

In this course, most of the time you will be required to answer problem questions rather than essays. When answering this type of question, you are usually asked to advise one of the parties. This requires a thorough examination of the facts, which are then applied to the case law and any relevant legislation.

Below are some commonly used words that you may find in your assignment questions.

Advise - give information and an opinion as to a course of action based on a thorough examination of the facts and the strengths and weaknesses of the claim.

Analyse - consider the various components of the whole and try to describe the inter-relationships between them.

Compare - examine the characteristics of the objects in question with a view to demonstrating their similarities.

Contrast - examine the characteristics of the objects in question for the purpose of demonstrating differences.

Define - give a definition or state terms of reference.

Describe - give an account of.

Discuss - present the different aspects of a question or problem.

Enumerate - give a listing.

Evaluate - examine the various sides of a question and try to reach a judgment.

Examine critically - act as a judge or critic, appraise

Illustrate - give an example, explain, draw a figure.

Prove - demonstrate or show by logical argument.

Summarise - examine the main points briefly.

It is important to investigate all probable sources of information before beginning your essay. Books, journal articles, unit materials, radio, television, newspapers, magazines may all provide useful material. You should always pay careful attention to the date of the material and question whether the material is of a populist or scholarly nature. You should also ask yourself if the author has a strong point of view that needs to be balanced by alternative approaches.

If you are asked to write an essay rather than answer a problem question, you should write a logical outline for your essay based on three major components:

Introduction – comment on subject and the treatment you propose.

Main body – your argument in three or four main ideas.

Conclusion – summary and final comment.

Some students find it helpful to write a preliminary draft of the final paragraph at this point to give the essay a clear target. When you write the first draft of your essay you should:

- Write simply and directly, remembering that someone else has to understand what you are trying to say.
- Use graphs or diagrams if they will save words, but remember the guidelines for essay writing given by your tutor and the form of bibliography and referencing required.
- Take care to acknowledge the ideas borrowed from other authors. List the sources you have referred to for information.

Finally, rewrite the essay to eliminate any weaknesses. Some students like to leave themselves a few days break before returning to the draft to complete the final copy.

Examinations

As well as written assignments, examinations usually form an important part of your assessment. There is no reason why you should not do well in an examination if you have worked conscientiously. Success depends partly on technique at the examination time, but more largely on preparation in the months leading up to the examination. The exams are usually open book, and questions are problem based (similar in nature to the assignment questions), but this still requires that you prepare thoroughly.

For effective examination preparation:

- Study systematically from the time you begin each unit.
- Begin revising at the end of the first week. Every time you attempt to recall what you have learned you will be making future learning easier.
- Space out your revision so that you do a little each week.
- Revise in such a way that you have an emphasis on recalling ideas rather than merely recognising them in your books. Work to understand the significance of the cases cited as examples.
- Criticise and re-write your old notes looking for all possible memory links between subjects and topics.
- You may be able to form a study group and work with other students taking the same unit.

Upon completion of the Conveyancing Law and Practice Program at Macquarie University, you will receive a Certificate which is recognised by the Australian Institute of Conveyancers, NSW, and the Department of Fair Trading as having successfully completed the academic requirements for obtaining a licence.

Study Skills Resources

Any large bookshop and many local libraries have a range of useful resources in the study skills area. The following titles are also recommended reading:

Brogan M. & Spencer D., *Becoming a Lawyer: Success at Law School* 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2014.

(formerly known as *Surviving Law School*)

Crosling, Glenda M. and Murphy, Helen M., *How to Study Business Law*, 4th ed., LexisNexis Butterworths, 2009.