

ADVOCATE'S GUIDE TO LAW

The University of Nottingham
School of Law Magazine

A photograph of the University of Nottingham's main building, a large white neoclassical structure with a central portico and a tall clock tower. The building is set behind a green lawn, with a stone wall and a river in the foreground. A paved path leads towards the building. The sky is blue with some clouds.

**A Fresher's Guide to
Getting Ahead in
First Year**

EDITORIAL



Dear Freshers,

Welcome to the Freshers Edition of Advocate Magazine. I would first like to congratulate you on gaining a place at the University of Nottingham Law School and embarking on an exciting chapter of your life. Rest assured that these three - or four, if you are thinking of doing an exchange abroad - years will be the most fulfilling years of your life as you explore the plethora of opportunities that university has to offer. The Freshers Edition is written precisely to get you a head-start on exploring what law school has to offer.

In this edition you will find introductions to the various law modules and how best to approach the academic rigour that is law. You will also find an introduction to the various law societies and how to get involved, as well as insights on other aspects of legal education.

Here at Advocate we seek to engage the diversity of student voice on wider issues of law. We believe that a fulfilling legal education must be well informed by an interplay of societal and economic understanding and an awareness of how law is connected to current events. We welcome your opinions and we have accepted articles from all students on a wide range of topics. If you would like to write an article on a particular topic, or attend an event and write about it, we encourage you to communicate with us and we will aid you if at all possible.

If you are wondering how you can contribute to Advocate, both as a writer and a team member, please contact us at uonadvocate@gmail.com.

Finally, we would like to thank all our contributors for their support. We look forward to your contribution!

Best wishes for the upcoming academic year.

Best Regards,
Trina Tan
President

Editorial Board:
Trina Tan President
Lucinda Chow Vice-President
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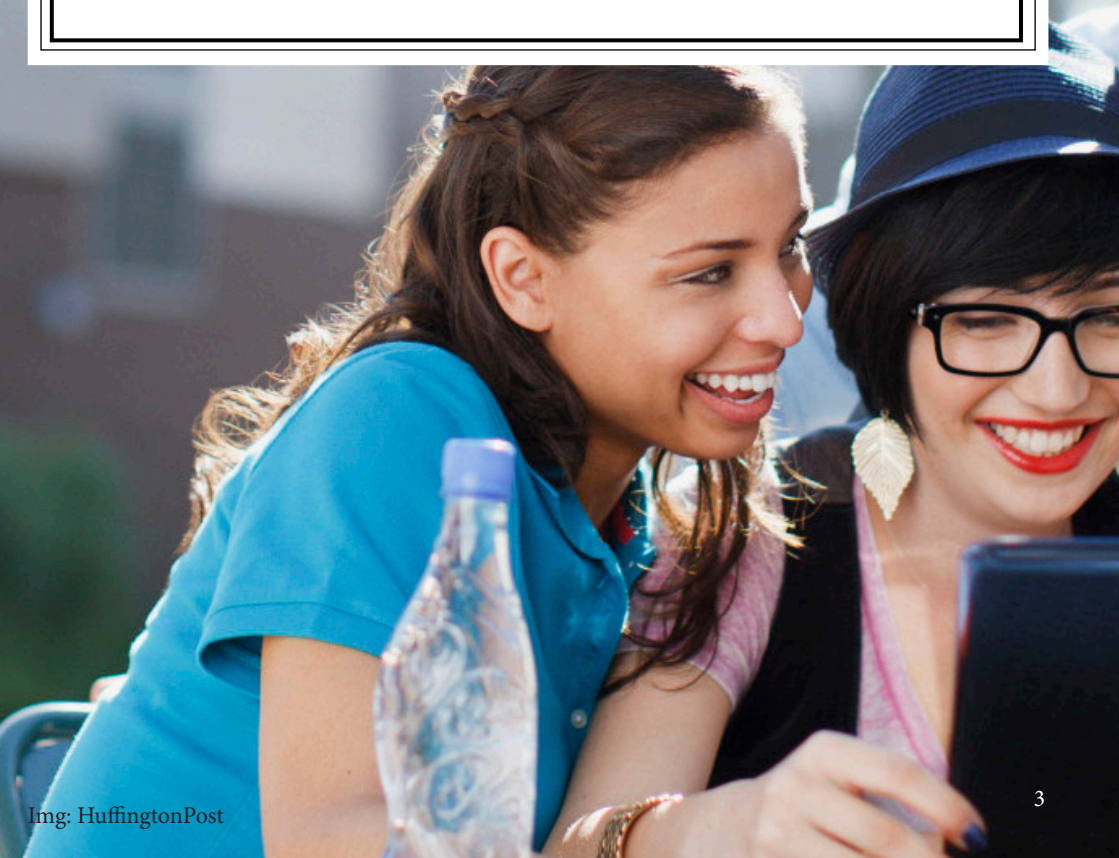
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AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUR LEGAL STUDIES

The majority of first year law students have never studied law prior to arriving at University. This adds to the confusion and mystery surrounding the start of term. The short summaries of modules on the next few pages hope to dispel any myths about first year and give you some idea of what to expect.



UNDERSTANDING LAW

'O Law, Law! Wherefore art thou Law?' is a fundamental question, amongst many others, that this module seeks to answer. Divided into two halves, Critical Introduction to Law and an Introduction to Legal Method, students will have to attend four lectures a week and a two-hour seminar every fortnight although this varies for BA students. Seminars, whilst similar to tutorials in many ways, feature a larger group of students, more opportunities for debate and discussion, and a more pro-active style of learning, as demonstrated by the moot in the sixth seminar.

Understanding Law often polarizes the student body with regards to its approachability and usefulness. Nonetheless, it forces you to consider Law in terms of its big ideas, such as Justice, Equality, Order and Fairness, which is often overlooked in other modules. Rest assured though, this will prove to be a thrilling ride. Understanding Law will bring you on an adventure through Azande chicken divination, HLA Hart's penumbra of doubt and explorers of the Speluncean

variety, amongst many other mystical concepts that will leave you positively glowing from a halo of wisdom and comprehension, and no doubt make each of you an utter joy to be with at parties.

This module culminates in a piece of coursework that determines your final grade. You will have a choice of two essay questions, on top of a compulsory Case Analysis. The essay questions will be related to the topics discussed in one or more of the seminars, so attendance and note-taking is definitely in order. The coursework will draw on both sections of the module, emphasizing critical analysis and the application of legal principle to fact. As such, extensive preparation is vital and good students will collate their resources before leaving for the Christmas holidays. An early start is always recommended in order to avoid last minute panic.

As a whole, this module is engaging and offers a unique perspective of Law. Buckle up and enjoy the ride!

By Andre Lum



Contract

The Law of Contract is an important foundational module which impacts virtually every facet of every day life, from transport to housing, education to employment, multi-billion dollar acquisitions to paying a two quids for a pint. Just imagine – a contract governs almost every instance where your money changes hands. Practically speaking, knowing how a contract is formed, performed or ultimately discharged is essential for all aspiring to enter the ever so attractive world of commercial law.

Make no mistake, the Law of Contract is a tough one, filled with numerous complex legal principles, sometimes unclear or downright contradictory; but do not fret, the module will slowly ease you into it. Law of Contract A in the first semester will guide you through the very basics of contract law, setting out the building blocks of a contract – offer, acceptance and consideration, and moving on to simple doctrines like the privity of contract and undue influence. These terms may seem alien to you at first, but you will soon be asking whether there is valid consideration, a quid pro quo, so to speak, for the promise – much to the annoyance of your non-law friends.

Law of Contract B in the second semester will focus on the substance of the contract, whether terms are incorporated, implied or invalid. You will learn what the effect of

signing a document actually is, and, among other many exciting topics, whether or not oral representations are incorporated (hint: sometimes they are!). With that in mind, you will move into breaches of contract – what happens when a party goes back on his word – and subsequently, the remedies available in such cases.

Although known for being an extremely challenging module, the law of contract raises many thought provoking questions and will illustrate the workings of the common law. More importantly, it sees the most practical application in every day life.

Your grade will be determined by a three-hour exam at the end of the year, which will test all material covered since September so taking good notes and conscientious preparation for tutorials are a definite must. The exams will be a mix of problem and essay questions, so avoiding one or the other is not an option. The lecturers are very adept at explaining the complex principles behind the law, but excellent textbooks are available should you need further guidance. Notwithstanding, it is a module with a significant amount of material, so staying on top of work throughout the year is essential in giving you the best opportunity to ace the examinations.

By Kelvin Tjakra



By Trina Tan

A tort is a civil wrong that unfairly causes someone else to suffer loss or harm resulting in legal liability for the person who commits the tortious act. The difference between tort and contract is that the former is based on a legal obligation, while contract is based on consent to agreement. In very basic terms, the idea of tort law is to put the claimant back in the position he or she would have been in had the wrong not occurred.

The study of tort law begins from the seminal case of *Donoghue v Stevenson* [1932] AC 562, which authoritatively established the principles in determining when a duty of care arises. From there, you will start by considering the various instances where a duty of care might exist and when they are breached. Following that you will interact with the characterisation of the different types of losses or injuries, and the remedies which the law may award. In the second semester your course will delve into civil wrongs, such as nuisance, trespass to land, and defamation. The final assessment will be a three-hour paper and you will be tasked to write 4 essays or problem answers.

It is in tort where you will encounter the highest number of potential defendants in a problem question - this means that there is a lot to address in your answers and good time management is a must. It can also be extremely tricky so it is important that you hone the skills necessary to distinguish cases from each other and to apply the correct one to the case facts. The important thing is to be clear about the ratio of the case and demonstrate the applicability of the case in a concise manner. Tort is also highly influenced by policy considerations, so don't just memorize the case-law - it's important to think carefully about whether a particular judgment is right. Adding in your own thoughtful observations about the law in your answers is a sure-fire way of getting the first class grade you covet.

Overall, tort is extremely material-heavy. One way of cutting through the forest of cases is to be discerning about the relative importance of the cases - you must always be able to cite the most authoritative case for your point. Read your textbooks and most of all, pay attention in lectures!



PUBLIC LAW

If you, a concerned citizen or a fascinated onlooker, have ever expressed an opinion regarding the Scottish Referendum in 2014, you would have encountered a quintessential element of Public Law. As its name suggests, this module introduces you to the legal concepts that underpin the political and administrative functions of governance and society in the United Kingdom. This module is conducted over two semesters and is divided into Public Law A and Public Law B.

Public Law A introduces you to concepts such as the British Constitution, the Rule of Law, Parliamentary Sovereignty, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Given the dynamic nature of Public Law, you will be taken on a wild journey through time: from the Treaties of Union between England and Scotland in 1707 to the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union in the present day. Public Law A culminates in a piece of coursework for which a pass is compulsory. Rest assured, with early preparation and some hard work, it is not difficult to attain a good grade.

Public Law B deals with more administrative matters such as the principles of judicial review of administrative bodies and the powers afforded to the police. Here, you will gain some expertise at peering into the hitherto uncharted territory of statute books, whilst also discovering with glee that your secret grudge against a local government body or police authority can now be acted upon; but only if you have standing of course. Do pay close attention to lectures and tutorials if that happens to be your motivation!

Whilst Public Law may prove to be rather impenetrable initially, the fog around it will clear quite swiftly by the second semester. Do not worry if the initial months are a struggle. Learn the case names, match them with the relevant legal principle, tab your statute book, and you will be fine when the three-hour-long final examination comes along.

By Andre Lum

INTRODUCTION TO LAW SOCIETIES

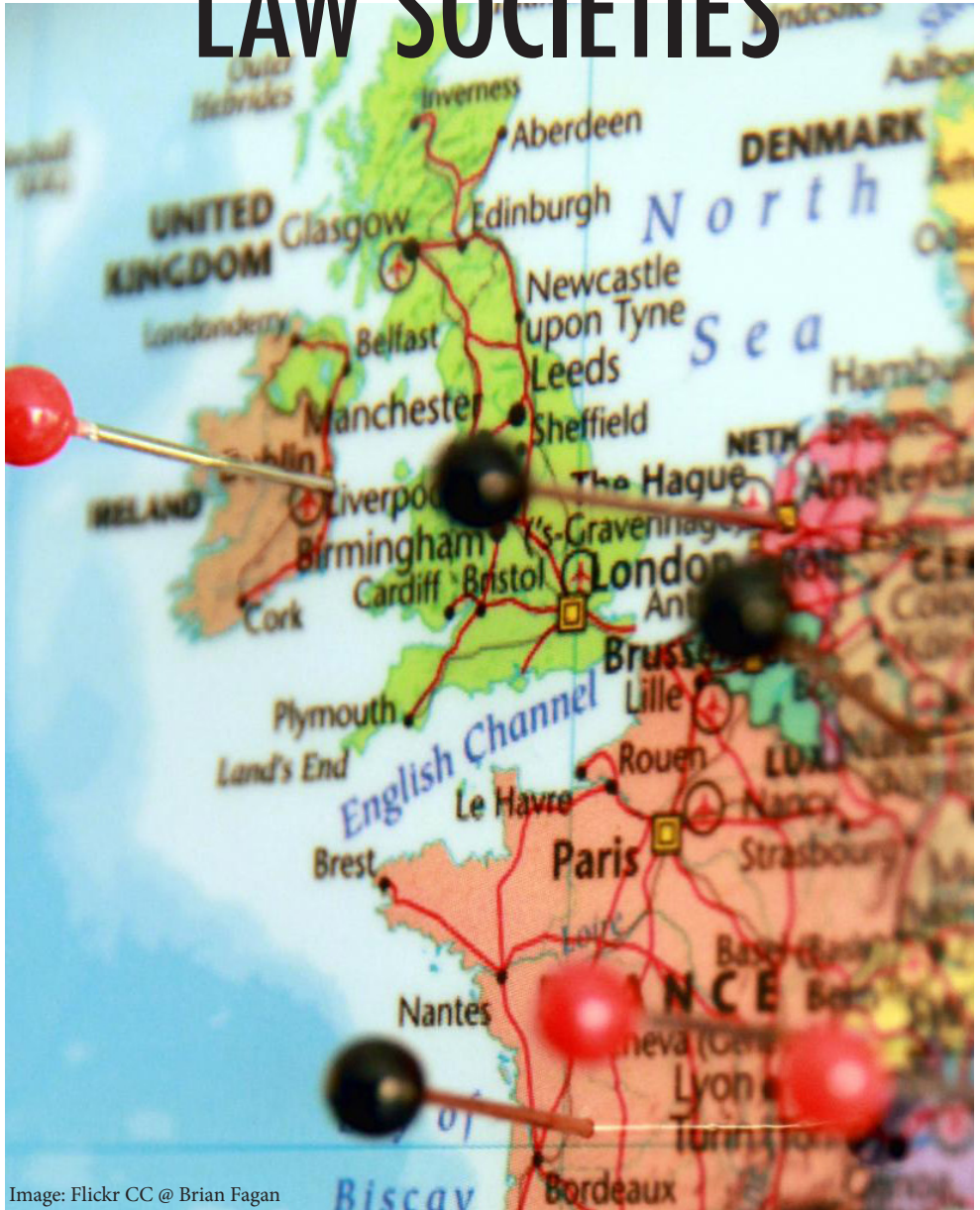


Image: Flickr CC @ Brian Fagan



LAWSOC

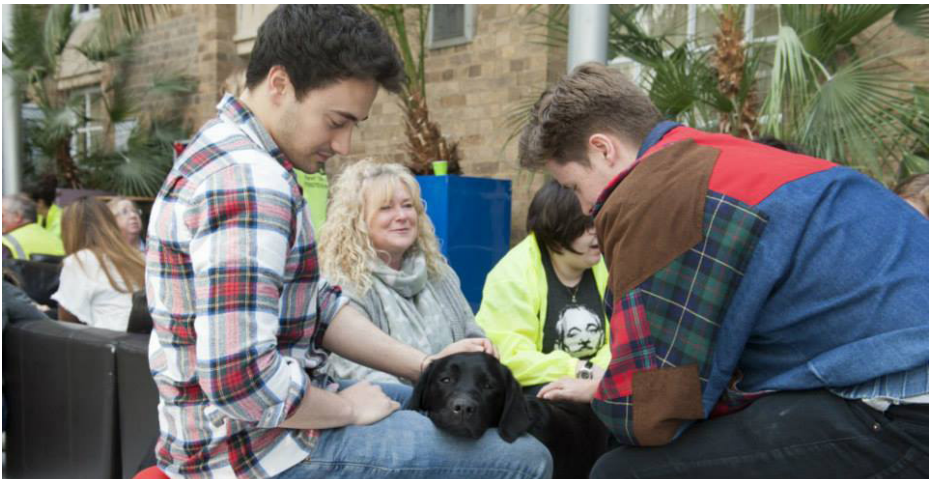
The Law Society is at the heart of the Nottingham Law School. This year we are hoping to give students more from their membership than ever before with exciting careers events, entertaining socials, and strong sports teams. The society has been performing incredibly well the last few years, achieving Gold standard status and stacking up the awards at the society's ball.

Our socials are some of the cheapest and most wide-ranging on campus with 2 large balls a year and plenty of boat cruises to fill the gaps. The careers events offer a better understanding of many different sectors of the legal profession with skills workshops

and other interactive events working to increase the employability of our members.

The sports and mentoring aspects of the law society are some of the best in terms of meeting new people and getting involved. A Law degree is no small undertaking and to go through it with friends alongside you can make the experience all the more enjoyable.

So however you wish to get involved, there's something for everyone, and don't hesitate to get in touch with us at lawsociety@nottingham.ac.uk and check out our website www.nottslawsoc.co.uk





UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM BAR SOCIETY

By Louisa Simpson, President

Hello! Welcome, and well done for gaining a place at The University of Nottingham. I hope you're as excited to come here as we are to have you.

BarSoc is dedicated to providing opportunities for those interested in and considering a career at the Bar. We aim to promote the Bar as a career pathway and provide our members with the skills, knowledge, contacts and awareness to give them the best possible chance of success in what is an extremely competitive, but rewarding, profession.

Whilst many of our members wish to become barristers, the society welcomes everyone, including those who are unsure and simply want more of an insight into life as a barrister. It is an excellent place to meet interesting people and keep up to date with legal developments.

The society was created in 2007 and has been growing ever since. In 2012, the Bar Council of England and Wales called Nottingham Bar Society "the best student-run society we have seen to date" based upon our schedule of events!

We are an events-based society and run trips to the prestigious Inns of Court in London, the National Pupillage Fair, as well as fortnightly trips to Nottingham Crown Court, visits to the Old Bailey, the UK Supreme Court and the Royal Courts of Justice, and hopefully also a trip to an international court to look forward to...! We also host career talks with leading barristers and practitioners, run internal mock trial competitions, and take part in an Advocacy Cup against other university Bar Societies.

Such events often include going out for dinner or drinks afterwards where everyone can get to know each other, and one of our favourite annual events is the Christmas Dinner in December.

The Bar Society is the best place to explore the ins and outs of life as a barrister, meet great people, develop vital skills, make important contacts, and build up a good CV. As a member you'll get the chance to earn a Bar Society Involvement and Achievement Award, by completing "Twelve Qualifying Sessions" - i.e. attending twelve of our events throughout the year!

Membership fees to join BarSoc costs £5 per year — or £10 for the full three years. Sign up is available through the Student Union website or at the Bar Society stand at the Welcome Festival, so look out for us! In the meantime please do like our Facebook page ('The University of Nottingham Bar Society') and follow us on Twitter (@uonbarsociety) to keep up to date with everything we have planned for the exciting year ahead.

Our Annual General Meeting is held in September at the beginning of the academic year. I look forward to meeting you all and introducing you to my committee and other members, setting out our programme and distributing various Careers resources.

If you have any questions, please feel free to visit the Bar Society stand at the Welcome Festival, leave a message for us on Facebook or send an email to barsociety@nottingham.ac.uk.



PRO BONO

You're Alicia Florrick. You've just been assigned to Pro Bono. Do you grimace or do you embrace it, realising that this is exactly what you wanted to culminate from years of study? This is a reality for many trainees, including those lucky enough to secure a secondment from Freshfields to Liberty.

'Pro bono' derives from the Latin *pro bono publico*, translating brusquely to 'for the public good'. In legal practice, this often translates into providing free legal advice and representation to the disadvantaged. More recently, however, pro bono has been taken into the conscience of many businesses as a way of giving back to the community.

This is the model that we like to use as university students, and we're on a mission to give back to the city that hosts us. Like lots of Robin Hoods, but the bow and arrow is optional.

For volunteers, pro bono works as an excellent CV booster, whether you have an interest in pursuing a career in law or otherwise. The transferable skills and ethic developed through pro bono work are incomparable, but none is more significant than confidence. It is the confidence to stand up in front of a room of serving prisoners in our

Unbarred project and present to them. It is the confidence to negotiate to the benefit of your client through our Negotiation Competition. And it is the confidence to throw yourself into a new activity with a group of strangers.

Whilst our projects focus on legal issues, the vast majority of our work does not require any prior legal knowledge. In keeping with the spirit of pro bono, our work is also inclusive of all degree disciplines and backgrounds – all that is required is a willingness to offer community assistance.

Pro bono is an exciting and rewarding area of work. As university students, we're proud of what we can offer to Nottingham. In the past we have won the LawWorks Award for Best Contribution by a Team of Students, which is testament to the quality of our work and our volunteers. Join us, and make yourself proud.

Lizzie Passey-Heaton

President



MOOTING SOCIETY

By Chiam Yun Xin, President



Law students from the Mooting Society taking part in a mock trial.

What is Mooting?

Mooting is where participants present legal arguments on a point of law in mock court proceedings in a persuasive and succinct way. One wins in a moot court based on one's advocacy skills, the quality of one's arguments and legal research - and not by being purely accurate on the law!

Why should you moot?

Mooting is an incredibly fun way to develop your oratorical skills. It helps develop your confidence and knowledge of the law. The research done for moots will be beneficial during exams. In addition to the above, you will also get the opportunity to interact with and get valuable advice from barristers, solicitors and even judges!

About the University of Nottingham's Mooting Society

The University of Nottingham's Mooting Society has groomed teams who have done well in many national competitions. In the past year, our external mooting team won the Rajah & Tann-Cambridge Mooting Competition. Another team also made it to the semi-finals of the UKLSA moot (held in the Supreme Court). Our outstanding achievements demonstrates the excellent training we offer. In addition, our internal competitions also offer great opportunities,

such as cash prizes sponsored by Freeths LLP.

Always wanting to help our members grow, the committee behind the Society has also worked hard this summer and revamped the entire training programme after collating feedback from past participants. In so doing, we have endeavoured to tailor the programme to the needs of our members to assist them in excelling.

In addition, the Society has also increased its number of varsity moots by having tie-ups with established Universities like Cambridge, Warwick, Manchester and Leicester. In so doing, we hope to offer more opportunities for our members to hone their oratorical skills.

How do I join the Mooting Society?

There are two ways in which you can join the society. The first is by visiting us at the Freshers' Fair (23rd September) where we can answer any questions you may have and help you to sign up. If you have missed the Freshers' Fair you can sign up online through the Students' Union website (<http://www.su.nottingham.ac.uk>).

We look forward to a fruitful year ahead!

A GUIDE TO GETTING AHEAD

By Lucy Hanson

Congratulations – you have secured your place to study law at Nottingham! Whilst you are in for a fantastic few years, a law degree is sadly never earned without its fair share of hard work. Here is a brief all-in-one guide to navigating each aspect of your law degree and making the most of your time as a first year.



1. YOUR LECTURES

As a real treat, law lectures normally begin during Fresher's Week. Leaving your arts hall-mates behind at 9am will often be a struggle (particularly post Crisis), but lectures are the skeleton of your learning here at Nottingham, and the method by which lecturers impart the course knowledge needed in exams. Attendance is paramount to avoid leaving gaps in module topics that will be very difficult to catch up with later on. Do try and read the recommended pre-lecture material where possible. This is especially hard to keep on top of, but will be of huge benefit to you when you are better able to follow what the lecturer is saying.

2. YOUR TUTORIALS

If lectures are the skeleton of your learning, tutorials are the muscle and flesh. Tutorial groups consist of about 6 students and a tutor and are the perfect opportunity to consolidate your understanding of a topic. The importance of tutorial preparation cannot be understated and no tutorial is unimportant. Reading the cases, articles and textbook chapters and preparing to discuss the questions set for tutorials will account for a large proportion of your independent study. Given that you will probably not have time to revisit a tutorial topic again until you are revising, the work you do for tutorials is crucial for exams. The law school recommends a minimum of 8 hours preparation per tutorial, which is by no means an over-estimation. Remember though that contribution and engagement in tutorials is just as important as preparation. If you have a question, speak up! 99% of the time the rest of the tutorial group will be unsure too.

3. YOUR NOTES

Be prepared for your notes to become as sacred to you as your iPhone 6, limbs, and possibly your dog. Your notes are an accumulation of what you type (or write) in lectures, your tutorial preparation, what you record during tutorials, and additional reading and revision you undertake. Organisation is key – keep your notes for each module separate and divide them in order of topic. Try to regularly update your notes throughout the year; re-read them, add to them from textbooks and judgements, and ensure that there are no gaps. This will be invaluable when it comes to revision time.

3. YOUR ESSAYS

Law essays require different skills to those you may have used in your A levels. Legal writing is demarcated by its concision and precision. Your target audience is the intelligent layperson, who by definition has no prior knowledge of the law. The law you cite must be correct and relevant, the legal analysis precise, and your delivery easy to understand. The use of subheadings is welcomed by examiners to help you structure your answers and/or deliver your advice. Do take every opportunity to complete the formative essays set in each module. The practice and feedback you will receive can be nothing but beneficial when it comes to your final assessments.

5. YOUR EXAMS

Exams rear their ugly heads all too soon. In an ideal world, you will have kept on top of your notes throughout the year, and revision will involve making condensed versions of these. When preparing for exams, utilise your tutorial questions, past papers, model answers and general feedback on past ex-

ams, all of which will be available on Moodle. Doing practice essays under timed conditions is wise, especially if you have spent much of the year typing instead of handwriting. Remember that every single part of a question is relevant and no fact should be ignored. Brief essay plans are hugely recommended in exams as well as for revision. If you run out of time, examiners are still able to award limited marks for bullet points.

5. YOUR SOCIETIES

It is not all hard work! You will soon discover that law societies are some of the best on campus. Getting involved can be immense fun whilst also looking great on your CV. Attend as many introductory sessions as possible to get a flavour as what you would like to get involved in. However it is important to remain realistic. It is not sensible to imagine that you can be the social secretary of the Law Society, be in the external mooting team, lead a pro-bono project, and captain the LawSoc netball team. Decide which societies appeal to you the most and throw yourself into those. Remember that many societies have an unofficial progression system. Getting involved in a society in your first year will often help lead to success when running for positions in your second and final year. There are some opportunities for first years to take up posts in law societies and the law school itself. However it is by no means all about getting on the committees. Societies work hard to give their fellow students a great time. Simply attending LawSoc socials is a great opportunity to let loose and meet other students.

6. YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is fundamental to mak-

ing the most of your time at university. From ensuring you get to lectures on time, to balancing your workload with your social life, organising your time is vital to your success. Getting the balance right may take time, but mastering it in your first year will be a real help to yourself. Carry a diary planner to note down event announcements or any lecture re-arrangements, and wear a watch - being late to lectures and tutorials may well lead to an embarrassing public grilling! It is also critical to plan your work across the week and make the most of any gaps between lectures to avoid doing last minute tutorial reading into the early hours. Yet most importantly do not forget to allow yourself some time off! Maintaining a work-life balance is essential for keeping you sane throughout your law degree.



THINGS I WISH I HAD KNOWN IN FIRST YEAR

“You do not have to read every sentence of every case. You will quickly learn how to skim read and prioritise the most important paragraphs. Also remember that tutorials are only productive if you participate actively,” Kate Coppack, 4th year, Law with Australian Law

“Remember that LawSoc runs a book sale at the start of the semester, so do not feel pressured to buy all of your textbooks new. There are also a number of good revision guides and nutshell books on offer.” Alice Dugmore, 4th year, Law with Chinese Law

“First year grades definitely do count – just not towards your degree.” Aidan Collett, 3rd year, LLB Law

“You definitely have time for a social life, whether that is sports, societies, or going out.” Ciara Berry, 2nd year, Law and French and French Law

“Do not feel pressured to join every society and go out every night. Your degree (and your health!) are more important.” Elizabeth Breeze, 3rd year, LLB Law.

“Start thinking early about careers. Attending the law fair, law firm open days, and career talks all help to keep your options open and secure the work experience you want. Training contract application deadlines come around far too quickly and all experience helps!” Lucy Hanson, 4th year, Law with Australian Law

“Do not expect to get straight 1:1s and do not feel like a failure if you do not understand everything straight away. It takes time to get used to the law and how it works.” Elspeth Bailey, 4th year, Law with European Law

“Your time at Uni goes far quicker than you think, so make the most of your time and do not waste any opportunities!” Luc Chignall, 4th year, Law with American Law

“Make sure you check out Moodle as well as use your textbooks and lecture notes. The wider the range of resources you use to learn, the better.” Richard Walters, 4th Year, Law with German and German Law

By Lucy Hanson

STUDYING ABROAD: EXPERIENCES FIRST-HAND

By Lucinda Chow (Law with South East Asian Law) & Lucy Hanson (Law with Australian Law)

One of the perks of Nottingham law school is the opportunity to spend your penultimate year studying abroad, and the options given span the globe: from America and Canada to Hong Kong and New Zealand, there are over 20 universities from around the world to choose from.

It is an attractive prospect in many different aspects: meeting people from all over the world, the inevitable travelling adventures, and the chance to completely immerse yourself into living in a new country. This is not to mention the academic benefits: it is not often that you can learn about a different country's legal system first-hand, and given today's increasingly globalised landscape, it can work as a competitive advantage when applying for law firms. Everyone will come back with their own stories to tell and life skills acquired, but most will agree that they have been enriched in some way.

For those who do not study Law with a Language (which guarantees a year spent studying abroad), you can apply to study at a Universitas 21 University in the first semester of your second year. The process involves a written application, a legal reasoning test and an interview.

It's all worth it though – you would be hard pressed to find anyone returning from their year abroad regretting their decision!

LAW WITH AUSTRALIAN LAW

In July of last year, I set off on a one way flight to the other side of the world, ready to start my adventure in the southern hemisphere. Having been fortunate enough to be transferred onto the Law with Australian Law programme, I was to spend the penultimate year of my degree studying at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Sydney. Arriving at a beach side hostel filled with other exchange students from around the world, it soon materialised that choosing to study abroad was to be one of the best decisions I have made.

Consistently ranked in the top 15 universities for law in the world, the academic benefits of studying at UNSW were immense. The seminar style teaching and alternative assessment methods allows students to engage with leading Australian academics whilst furthering their legal skillset in essay writing, legal research, presentations and legal policy discussions. The choice of modules was vast – exposing me to a range of subjects such as

Australian Banking Law, Indigenous People and the Law, International Humanitarian Law, and the Economic Analysis of Law.

Whilst being a unique academic experience, the year abroad in Australia was ultimately a fantastic personal experience. Living in one of the best cities in the world certainly has its benefits. Be it the beautiful Sydney harbour, learning to surf, living a five minute walk from the beach, attending international sports matches, and meeting lifelong friends of all nationalities – my twelve months away was filled with once in a lifetime opportunities. There were also plenty of chances to go travelling, including driving a campervan down the East Coast of Australia, spending my 21st birthday in the middle of the outback, visiting Melbourne and Perth, and enjoying a fantastic couple of weeks across the ditch in New Zealand.

The twelve months came to an end all too quickly, but I return to Nottingham with some invaluable memories and a great foundation in the Australian legal system. The year abroad leaves students more independent, broad-minded, and employable individuals and I would wholly recommend the experience to all first year law students at Nottingham.

LAW WITH SOUTH-EAST ASIAN LAW

Studying in Singapore for a year meant a year of perpetual heat (and unexpected monsoons), enduring a 24 hour exam, and accidentally spending extortionate amounts on mobile data. However, it also meant a year of learning from some of the best law professors in Asia, and having world-class rooftop bars, shopping malls and landscape views at the tip of my fingers.

The transition from living in the UK to living in Singapore was surprisingly not a difficult one. It is certainly a comfortable country to live in: the public transport is cheap and efficient, the variety and quality of food offered is unrivalled, and as you would assume from their nickname as the 'Little Red Dot', the size of the country means you rarely feel overwhelmed by your surroundings.

The downside of potential boredom from living in a tiny country is countered by its ideal location. One of the best things about going on exchange to Singapore is its proximity to an array of hugely popular tourist destinations such as Bali, Siem Reap and Bangkok, which are literally a short (and usually cheap!) flight away. Many of my exchange friends spent the majority of their weekends out of the country, whether it be a casual 6-hour bus journey to Malaysia or a 3-hour flight to Hong Kong.

The modules offered at the National University of Singapore (NUS) were vast and

wide-ranging, which enabled me to study modules I would never have had the chance to take in Nottingham. Hence, I chose some niche modules (e.g. Wealth Management Law, Aviation Law), and also globally relevant modules (International Commercial Arbitration, Government Contracts: International & Comparative Perspectives). I was truly inspired by the passion and expertise of many of my professors; motivation was also gained from the local students, who had an undeniable propensity for hard work and dedication to the subject.

The experience left me with friends from all over the world, memories from travel-

ling in countries I would never have visited otherwise, and a renewed vigour for law. For those who are open-minded enough to throw themselves into the unknown, I would say this is an opportunity very much worth taking. For me, it opened up unexpected possibilities and intangibly changed my perspectives for the better.





A FRESHER'S GUIDE TO CAREERS

University is a time where you explore your interests and expand your intellectual horizons. But it also bears remembering that what you do in these brief three years will be instrumental in securing you the job that you desire. Even if your grades are stellar (top law firms will generally want a minimum of a 2:1 degree classification), employers usually want to see how you have set yourself apart from other law students who have done equally well in their studies. Whether it is to be a barrister, solicitor, or to pursue other non-law careers, there is a vast array of activities and opportunities available for you to find out what you truly want, and how to go about achieving it.

ON BECOMING A SOLICITOR

Generally, a solicitor is the first port of call for those seeking legal advice or assistance. They give legal advice on all a vast range of legal aspects such as commercial transactions, disputes, wills, and domestic affairs. Clients go to solicitors to better understand the complexities and consequences of the law and to gain advice on the best legal solutions available.

Graduates looking to become a solicitor must first undertake a one-year Legal Practice Course ("LPC") after they graduate from law school. Non-law graduates must first undertake a Graduate Diploma in Law ("GDL") conversion course prior to the LPC.

After the LPC, graduates must undertake a training contract with a law firm, which usually lasts two years. The Professional Skills Course (PSC) is taken during the training contract and must be completed in order to qualify as a solicitor.

In order to secure the elusive and highly competitive training contract, students are advised to partake in activities beyond the legal curriculum to make their curriculum vitae ("CV") more attractive. Obtaining leadership positions at the society groups are a great way to show that you are a proactive and determined individual.

Students should also research more about the firms they might be interested in and attend the Open Days that these firms arrange with the universities. These provide valuable opportunities to learn more about the firm, meet up with the firm representatives, and make you more visible than other candidates. It is usually easier to obtain a training contract when you have attended a vacation scheme with the firm, so apply early and keep your eyes peeled for the deadlines. Note, however, that vacation schemes are

highly competitive - more so than training contracts - so in the meantime, it doesn't hurt to read more about current legal affairs to boost your commercial knowledge.

ON BECOMING A BARRISTER

If you like advocacy and dealing with points of law, you might want to consider becoming a barrister. Barristers work at higher levels of court than solicitors and their main role is to act as advocates in legal hearings, which means they stand in court and plead the case on behalf of their clients in front of a judge. They also have specialist knowledge of the law and so are often called on to give legal advice. Most barristers are self-employed and work in offices called chambers.

There are three steps to becoming a barrister:

1. A qualifying law degree (2:1 is almost essential) is required.
2. Completion of the one-year vocational Bar Professional Training Course ("BPTC").
3. Completing of the year-long pupillage under the supervision of an experienced barrister.

The pupillage is highly sought after and notoriously difficult to achieve. Barrister aspirants should complete some mini-pupillages, usually a week long, to gain experience in the bar circuit and see what the job is like. To apply, students should contact chambers directly. This is often less formal than securing a vacation scheme, but unlike vacation schemes it is less common for pupillage to be considered directly after.

ON EXPLORING OTHER NON-LAW OPTIONS

Attending law school doesn't necessarily mean that you have to be a lawyer. Your legal

education is valuable in terms of intellectual rigour and analytical skill that it hones, and these are transferable skills that are highly sought after everywhere else.

Law-related careers include: paralegal, outdoor clerk, legal executive, company secretary, patent attorney, recruitment consultant, law firm support services, or work for the Crown Prosecution Service, and the Government.

Non-law related careers include: civil servant, police officer, bank manager, business, author, charity sector, events planning, PR, advertising, communications, recruitment, postgraduate studies, lecturer, academic, psychologist (requiring conversion masters and PhD).

If you have any questions about careers, the School of Law has a strong Careers and Employability Service. Feel free to contact them at careers-team@nottingham.ac.uk.

By Trina Tan

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