

LW4635: INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Independent Research

Subject Code

LW - Law

Course Number

4635

Academic Unit

School of Law (FL)

College/School

School of Law (FL)

Course Duration

Two Semesters

Credit Units

0-6

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Students must have passed all the compulsory law courses and have obtained a minimum CGPA of 3.2.

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

LW5552 Independent Research

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to:

- provide students with an opportunity to engage in original discovery in the form of an independent legal research under the supervision of an experienced staff;
- develop students' ability to analyse data, think critically, discover new concepts and organise thoughts on a given issue and to further develop the students' attitude in discovery by engaging in enquiry with the supervisor;
- harness and acquire the writing and citation and research skills of students;
- enable students to express and defend their views orally and in writing; and
- complete an original piece of researched writing.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Demonstrating research skills on a selected legal issue		x	x	x
2	Describe and explain the legal position and principles relevant to the topic selected for conducting research		x	x	
3	Apply techniques of legal research techniques in a clear, coherent and logical manner		x	x	
4	Construct and develop an argument orally			x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Consultation	Students will engage with the planning and formulation of their research project.	1, 2, 3
2	Research	Students will critically engage with books, articles and data related to their research topic.	1, 2, 3, 4
3	Writing	Students will describe and critically assess the legal issues of their research topic.	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Continuous Assessment: Written research paper will test students' ability to discover and conduct independent research on a selected legal issue	1, 2, 3, 4	100	** CILOs 1-3 will be tested by a written research paper, which will carry 70% weighting.	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

40

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Additional Information for ATs

The use of AI is prohibited unless an expressly permitted by the supervisor, in which case the burden is on the student to acknowledge the use of AI in each part of the work and demonstrate his/hers contributions in the design, analysis and writing of the research dissertation.

Students' achievements will be graded on the basis of their performance in assessment tasks/activities. To pass this course, students must obtain an aggregate mark of 40% and a minimum of 30% in written research paper (carrying 100% weightage).

The written research paper must be between 8,000 and 10,000 words (excluding footnotes). Students must cite all relevant authorities as per the Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA) 2006.

All research papers – which will be assessed for substance, originality, breadth of research, quality of presentation, analysis and reasoning, accuracy, and citation style and authorities. The faculty who supervised the independent research and another anonymous faculty member will mark the research paper simultaneously. The relevant External Academic Advisor and/or a third marker may moderate the assessment of the research paper, especially if there is a significant difference in grades assigned by the supervisor and the second marker.

Late submission of research papers, if allowed in exceptional circumstances and for good reasons, will attract a penalty at the discretion of the Course Leader.

Grading will be done as per the Law School's adopted standards: A+ (85% or above), A (80-84%), A- (75-79%), ... F (below 40%).

If an LLB student was previously enrolled in LW5552 Independent Research, he/she will not be allowed to enrol in LW4635.

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Research paper and writing

Criterion

1.1 Capacity to carry on in depth research into chosen area

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

1. Research paper and writing

Criterion

1.2 A well-structured and coherent presentation and research

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

1. Research paper and writing

Criterion

1.3 Scope and depth of research

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

1. Research paper and writing

Criterion

1.4 Application of principles, critical analysis, discussion and recommendation (where appropriate)

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

1. Research paper and writing

Criterion

1.5 Biography references

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

1. Research paper and writing

Criterion

1.6 Grammar, sentence and construction

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. Individual presentation

Criterion

2.1 Ability to explain in detail and with accuracy independent research paper

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. Individual presentation

Criterion

2.2 Ability to respond adequately, to question and comments raised

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

This course has no syllabus of its own. The course is intended to allow LLB students to conduct independent research on any legal topic of their interest. In order to maintain quality, the freedom to select a topic will, however, be subject to the approval of the supervisor and the course leader. Students will also receive guidance from their supervisors as to the framework and research methodology suitable for a given topic.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Nil

Additional Readings

Title	
1	John Bahrij, <i>Hong Kong Legal Research: Methods and Skills</i> (Hong Kong: Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 2007).
2	Charles Chatterjee, <i>Methods of Research in Law</i> , 2nd edn (London: Old Bailey Press, 2000).
3	Jill Cottrell, <i>Legal Research: A Guide for Hong Kong Students</i> (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997).
4	Terry Hutchinson, <i>Researching and Writing in Law</i> (Sydney: Lawbook Co, 2002).
5	William Strunk & EB White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , 4th edn (New York: Longman, 2000).
6	Eugene Volokh, <i>Academic Legal Writing: Law Review Articles, Student Notes, Seminar Papers, and Getting on Law Review</i> , 2nd edn (New York: Foundation Press, 2005).
7	Faculty of Law, University of Oxford, <i>Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities</i> (2006).