

Information for Incoming Erasmus Students

Dundee Law School

Dundee is a medium-sized Law School in United Kingdom terms, with some 25 fulltime academic staff and half-a-dozen administrative staff, and some 500 undergraduate students. Uniquely, it offers courses allowing students to qualify as lawyers in all three United Kingdom jurisdictions, that is, Scotland, England & Wales, and Northern Ireland. In addition to the LLB undergraduate degree, the Law School teaches the Diploma in Legal Practice, required after the LLB to qualify in Scotland, and there are LLM and PhD students.

The LLB degree

The LLB degree in the United Kingdom is normally taken by students straight from school, aged about 18, though there are some who have taken another degree already. In Scotland, it is usually taken over four years.

Teaching

In Dundee, all courses are divided into Levels 1-4, reflecting the year of the degree in which they are taught. (There is also an "Induction" session for each Level at the beginning of each academic year: see Blackboard and email and Choice of subjects for incoming ERASMUS students below).

Courses in Level 1 are therefore introductory, and are taught largely through lectures (usually two to four hours a week for each course), and tutorials (usually three during the semester for each subject). Lectures require no explanation. For tutorials, which may contain a dozen students, work will have been set in advance, and so will questions for the tutorial, which may be in problem form. The purpose of the tutorial is to discuss the questions and answers. As they normally take three subjects in each semester, First Year students usually have about a ten lectures a week overall, and one tutorial per week on average.

Level 2 subjects are taught in a similar fashion, but are principally subjects necessary for professional practice as a lawyer. Second Year students therefore have about the same number of hours of lectures and tutorials as do First Year students.

Level 3 and 4 modules are restricted in size (with a maximum class size of approximately 20 students). Modules are delivered to classes comprised of both Level 3 and 4 students with differentiation being achieved by the aims and objectives at each level and by different assessment elements. These modules are usually taught by one two-hour seminar per week in each subject. Some modules have a few introductory lectures in addition to the seminars. Reading and questions are set for the seminar in advance, and the purpose of the seminar is to discuss the relevant topics. Level 3 students will study two modules per semester, Level 4 students will study one module per semester and complete a 15-20 000 dissertation. In 2012-13, Level 4 students will study two modules in semester 1 and a module and 15 000 word dissertation in semester 2.

Exchange students wishing to take Level 3/4 modules are normally registered for the Level 3 version thereof.

Blackboard and email

“Blackboard” is a “virtual learning environment” used by Dundee University. In effect, it is a website, containing more or less all the information a student needs. The Law School uses Blackboard to provide all information on every course which it offers (such as the topics covered, the reading for them, tutorial questions, etc), and all other relevant information (such as timetables and special announcements). Email is now the normal method of communicating between academic staff, administrative staff, and students. It is therefore important to log onto Blackboard, and read emails, frequently. Students are given usernames and passwords at matriculation, so can access Blackboard and use emails from that time. Also, as part of the Level 1 Induction (see Teaching above, and Choice of subjects for incoming ERASMUS students below), there is an IT Induction session, in which Blackboard and other IT matters are explained.

Examinations

Almost all courses in the Law School require one item of work by each student during the semester, which counts for 25% of the final mark in that subject. This is usually in the form of an essay. The remaining 75% of the mark thus comes from an examination at the end of the semester. For Level 1 and 2 subjects, this is a two-hour examination, and for Level 3 and 4, a three-hour examination. Most examinations are “unseen”, but some are “seen”, that is, the examination paper is made available one week before the examination.

Credits

All Scottish universities use ScotCAT, a credit system in which the credits are half the size of ECTS credits. Each Level 1 and 2 subject is allotted 20 ScotCAT credits, thus equal to 10 ECTS credits. Each Level 3 and 4 subject is allotted 30 ScotCAT credits, equal to 15 ECTS credits.

Choice of subjects for incoming ERASMUS students

A complete list of subjects normally taught by the Dundee Law School can be found at <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/law/l1b>

From the point of view of Dundee Law School, an incoming Erasmus student can take any subject from any Level, though a student would normally be expected to do about 60 ScotCAT credits (30 ECTS credits) per semester. Otherwise, restrictions on choice are ones imposed by students’ home universities.

One or two subjects are thought to be particularly difficult for Erasmus students, but these can be considered when the students’ application forms are received. Occasionally there are difficulties with the maximum numbers for Level 3 and 4 subjects, but these can also usually be overcome. From time to time, a subject may be transferred from one semester to the other.

Also, it is useful for incoming Erasmus students to attend the Induction classes for each Level in which they are taking courses. However, as they are likely to be taking courses in more than one Level, timetabling may make attendance at these classes impossible, unfortunately.

Semesters

Dundee University as a whole has adopted a semester system and, so as far as the Law School is concerned, no subjects are taught in both semesters.

Advisers of Studies

All students, including incoming Erasmus students, are allotted to a member of the academic staff, who is their Adviser of Studies. The role of the Adviser is to complete matriculation at the beginning of the year, and to assist in offering advice on choice of subjects to be taken, and any other academic, or non-academic matter.

The Adviser for incoming Erasmus students is usually the Law School Erasmus coordinator, but if there are many incomers, other members of the academic staff may act as Adviser as well.

School Erasmus Co-ordinator

The Law School Erasmus Co-ordinator is currently Ms Aude Fiorini. However, applications to the Dundee Law School are handled centrally. Information on how to apply is available from the Dundee University website (see below). Also, full information is sent to incomers before arrival.

Further information

Further information, for example, on how to apply, on accommodation and on the city of Dundee, can be obtained from the Dundee University website at <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/erasmus/incoming>