Programme Specification
LL.B (Hons) Law with American Legal Studies

Date of Publication to Students: September 2012

NOTE: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found (1) at www.bcu.ac.uk/law (2) in the Module Specifications and (3) in the Course Guide.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

Awarding Institution / Body:	**Birmingham City University**
Teaching Institution:	**Birmingham City University**
Interim Awards and Final Award:	**Cert HE in Law** **Dip HE in Law** **LL.B** **LL.B (Hons) Law with American Legal Studies**
Programme Title:	**LL.B**
Main fields of Study:	**Law**
Modes of Study:	**Full-time or Part-time**
Language of Study:	**English**
UCAS Code:	**MXXX**
JACS Code:	

Professional Status of the programme (if applicable):

The LL.B (Hons) Law degree has Qualifying Law Degree (QLD) Status as recognised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board through the Joint Academic Stage Board (JASB). It exempts students from the academic stage of training to become either a solicitor or barrister of England and Wales (subject to conditions laid down within this document and by the JASB).

Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external reference points used to inform programme outcomes:

QAA Benchmark Standards for Law.

Joint Statement issued by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Bar Standards Board on the Completion of the Initial or Academic Stage of Training by Obtaining an Undergraduate Degree.

Birmingham City University Learning and Teaching Strategy 2006-2012.

Programme philosophy and aims

The aims of the programme are to:

Provide students with:

- a liberal, rigorous and coherent education in law, which provides a broad base of legal knowledge, and which provides a broad choice of modules in a coherent programme and which integrates and synthesises both the theoretical and practical aspects of the study of law, encourages the practical application of law, and which provides the opportunity to place the law in the context of other disciplines in order to provide an integrated understanding of law and its function in society;

- a curriculum which endorses learning by doing, develops cognitive, critical and analytical skills as central to the programme, a range of transferable and marketable skills, leading to employment opportunities in the legal profession and in a range of other careers, as well as the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary for lifelong learning;

- a curriculum which includes an overview of some of the principle concepts and processes of US Federal Law allied to an in-depth study of some specific areas of substantive American law;

- a learning and teaching strategy which places emphasis on active and participative education and which provides the environment for students to engage positively with, reflect upon, and take responsibility for their own learning through a variety of learning and teaching methods, as well as career and personal development planning;

- a programme which meets the requirements of the QAA Academic Infrastructure (the Subject Benchmark statement, relevant parts of the Code of Practice, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications);

- a qualification accredited by the relevant professional bodies (subject to meeting the conditions laid down in this document and the JASB).

Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated

Programme Learning Outcomes
1. Knowledge and understanding of the English Legal System and the substantive rules of English law within its political, historical, global and economic context, and of the principal features of the US Constitution and legal processes, including a range of substantive US Federal law; its relationship with ethical and moral issues and the ways in which lawyers can effect social change through the application of legal principles.
2. The ability to analyse, critically evaluate and produce a synthesis of well-established and innovative legal rules, doctrine, policy, principles and concepts; to apply this to a diverse range of practical and theoretical issues and problems, recognising and making evaluative judgements about the appropriateness of different methods of problem solving, in order to make a reasoned choice from relevant alternatives.
3. The ability to make proficient use of information and materials from a variety of sources, including knowledge of the legal conventions relevant to English and US Federal Law, in the critical evaluation and solution of legal issues and problems.
4. The skills necessary to assimilate knowledge, frame appropriate questions, marshal coherent and rational argument, and relate theory and practice in order to draw independent conclusions through the ability to strategically plan for one's own learning method and structured response to meaningful feedback.
5. The ability to understand and use the English language with precision, orally and in writing, in relation to legal issues, in order to make effective oral and written presentations which are coherent and comprehensible to others.
6. The development of a range of other pervasive skills, including: making relevant use of numerical and statistical information derived from primary and secondary sources when constructing an argument, conducting electronic research and appropriate use of the internet to locate relevant information, producing work which is presented and formatted using standard software packages, working co-operatively and professionally with others.

Learning, teaching and assessment methods

Learning and teaching takes place through a combination of face to face contact hours and tutor directed learning activities which take place in the students' independent study time.

Lectures are predominantly used to deliver information and develop students' knowledge and understanding of the law and the legal concepts that they are studying. Lectures will often be used to introduce new topics or consolidate areas already covered. They may be supplemented by further on-line material and activities. For example, additional information or explanation may be delivered through an on-line lecture and understanding checked via a Moodle Quiz. Students will be expected to supplement these sessions by additional reading, research and preparation in readiness for Seminars.

In Seminars students build on the knowledge and understanding acquired in lectures and develop their skills of analysis and critical evaluation. Seminars are intended to test higher level learning objectives and students will practise and develop their ability to analyse, evaluate and apply law in a variety of different ways. In Seminars students will also develop a

number of other skills depending on the exercises that they undertake. They may work in teams in tackling problem solving activities, they may present their work to the group orally or might peer review a colleague's piece of writing.

A number of skills based modules will run Workshops rather than Seminars. The different terminology is intended to reflect the very practical nature of these modules. Workshops will give students the opportunity to focus on skills based learning. In particular they will develop skills of advocacy, interviewing, research and legal writing. The focus in these sessions will be on developing the skills themselves.

A number of modules will also run "Clinic" sessions. These are timetabled drop-in sessions which are tutor directed and designed to meet the needs of a particular module. A Clinic might be used, for example, to allow students who have struggled with a particular topic to get extra help and guidance. They might also be used to give personal feedback on formative assessment.

The students' learning process is designed to be developmental and is aligned to the expectations of achievement at each level as laid out in the Course Guide. There is a focus on development of legal skills, including legal research, analysis and critical evaluation. These also link to employability skills which are developed throughout the degree and students are given every opportunity to work on and practice transferable skills which can be carried through to their future careers.

Information technology is embedded in the programme and used to give added value to the learning and teaching which takes place. For example, students will begin to compile individual ePortfolios in the first year of their studies, which are used to evidence competence in a number of legal skills and also to develop a professional profile as well as enabling students to share a more social aspect of themselves with their peers and tutors. In their second year they will continue to use their ePortfolios but will be encouraged to be more selective about the material they include so that they start to produce professional portfolios which might be appropriate to share with prospective employers. In their final year students will be encouraged to develop greater independence and to update and add to the ePortfolios as necessary with the aim that their Portfolios will become a tool for life long learning.

Summative assessment methods will vary according to the needs of different modules and the level at which they are being taught. Examples of assessment methods include examinations, (seen and unseen, open and closed book), coursework, ePortfolios, patchwork assessment, presentations (oral and written) and dissertation. A rich variety of assessment methods will suit a number of different learning styles and the focus will be on assessment ***for*** learning rather than assessment ***of*** learning. Formative assessment and the provision of high quality and timely feedback is an important aspect of our assessment strategy and all modules will provide opportunities for formative assessment and feedback throughout the module, often through multiple opportunities at formative assessment, or through formative assessment opportunities that are ongoing throughout the module, (these are in addition to the formative learning that takes place regularly in seminars and other learning activities). Students will be encouraged to seek out and act upon feedback given and, in some, cases this will be required to be documented – for example through a learning diary as part of their ePortfolio.

Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The LL.B (Hons) Law with American Legal Studies programme is normally studied over three years full-time or four years part-time, and students may if they wish move between full-time and part-time modes of attendance, but only between years of the course, and at the discretion of the Programme Director. The academic year is divided into three terms

which run from September to December, January to March and April to June. The programme is divided into study units called modules, and these are all double (30 credits). Students complete 120 credits at Level 4, 120 at Level 5 and 120 at Level 6. Students follow a scheme of compulsory study supplemented by option modules chosen from a list of American legal subject areas as detailed in the table below.

Students are admitted onto the programme in September. However, subject to demand and resources, a January intake may be recruited into Level 4. This January intake will be taught as a separate and distinct group and will complete Level 4 during the period January to August. Subject to successful completion of Level 4, students will start Level 5 the following September. As articulation agreements are concluded with overseas institutions, it may be possible to recruit a January intake at Level 5.

The LL.B (Hons) Law with American Legal Studies programme can be completed in accordance with the structure below:

The structure of the programme, the modules, levels and credit ratings, and the awards which can be gained are shown below. Modules in which Personal Development Planning is an integral part of the learning process are underlined.

Level 4

Module number	**Module name**	**Credits**
	Skills Processes and Scholarship	30
	Criminal Law	30
	Law of Contract	30
	Law of Tort	30

Award: Cert HE (120 credits)

Level 5

Module number	**Module name**	**Credits**
	Public Law and Civil Rights	30
	Land Law	30
	Skills option module	30
	US Constitutional Law	30

Award: Dip HE (240 credits)

Level 6

Module number	**Module name**	**Credits**
	Equity and Trusts	30
	Law of the European Union	30
	American Criminal Procedure & Evidence	30
	American Legal Practice	30
	or	
	US Supreme Court Decision Making	30

Award: LL.B (Hons) Law (360 credits)

Qualifying Law Degree (QLD)

To qualify for a LL.B (Hons) Law, students must successfully complete *all* of the core modules (exemption from one or more core modules may be granted pursuant to an articulation agreement or on the basis of prior study undertaken on an equivalent programme at another institution (which will normally be a QLD delivered by a University in England and Wales)). In addition, to qualify for a LL.B (Hons) Law with QLD status at least 60-credits of these core modules must be completed on-campus at the University.

Support for Learning including Personal Development Planning (PDP)

Students are encouraged to identify and, with guidance, to reflect on their own learning needs and are offered the following support as appropriate to meet those needs:

- an induction programme dealing with orientation and the dissemination of essential information and the introduction of skills as an essential focus to their studies, and a diagnostic test used to identify any special student needs;
- within Skills, Processes and Scholarship at Level 4/5 and in the Skills option at Level 5 in particular, but also integrated into other Level 4, 5 and 6 modules, and continuing throughout the programme, a programme of study skills, including library use, essay-writing, problem-solving and examination techniques;
- sessions on revision and examination techniques for those needing additional support;
- a Course guide, containing information relating to the University, the School of Law, the programme and the modules;
- Options Fairs, Options Directories and other guidance in the choice of option modules;
- access to administrative staff and to academic staff, including the Year Tutors, Programme Director and Head of School, at reasonable times;
- a Personal Development Planning Tutor to advise on pastoral and academic issues, with structured meetings at Levels 4, 5 and 6;
- access to Faculty resources, including a range of supported IT equipment, and centralised University resources through the Centre for Academic Success and the library;
- access to the services of the University's team of librarians;
- a programme of careers advice, including sessions run by local employers;
- assistance and support for learning skills from the University's Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching;
- support for international students and those for whom English is an additional language through a tutor in the Law School;
- access to the University's Student Services, including those offered by the careers service, financial advisers, medical centre, disability service, crèche, counselling service and chaplaincy.

Criteria for admission

Candidates must satisfy the general admission requirements of the programme.

The current admission requirements can be found under the 'Entry Requirements' tab of the web page for this course.

Methods for evaluation and enhancement of quality and standards including listening and responding to views of students

Committees:

- Board of Studies
- Course Committees
- Examination Board
- Faculty Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Student Experience Committee
- Faculty Board
- Senate

Mechanisms for review and evaluation:

- Individual module evaluation by students, staff and, where appropriate, stakeholders
- End of Year Transition Day in Years 1 and 2
- Annual review of modules by module leaders
- Annual course evaluation reports and action plans
- Annual monitoring process
- Peer Observation of Teaching
- Individual performance reviews
- External examiners' comments and formal reports
- Student representatives' feedback to Boards of Studies
- Consideration of the minutes of Boards of Studies by Student Experience Committee
- Approval and review and re-approval events
- National Student Survey
- Student Experience Survey
- Course Development Day