

Departmental Curriculum Statement | LAW 2022-23

Curriculum Intent Statement

Studying A-Level Law offers you a great opportunity to study an exciting new subject while at the same time building on the range of skills you have already gained at High School. It will help you to develop the necessary skills for a legal career, further study or success in any field requiring intellectual discipline combined with a practical approach.

Like many of us, your interest in studying law may have started through watching television dramas about criminal law and the criminal justice system. That's a great place to start! The aim of our course is to build on what you already know and broaden your knowledge and understanding of other important topics in law such as our responsibility towards each other and human rights.

You can expect to develop practical problem-solving (through analysing scenarios) and the ability to develop your own creative solutions and arguments. Don't be surprised if you're asked to stand up in class, think on your feet and address an imaginary judge! We believe that opportunities to develop your confidence in this way are great preparation for the challenges you may face in the future.

An important aim of the course is that you appreciate the bigger picture: how the law fits together and how the law relates to other subjects, such as politics, economics, history, criminology and philosophy. The law reaches into every aspect of human life and the course highlights the rich variety of problems and possibilities with which the law engages. You will come to appreciate that our society's desire to promote inclusivity, tolerance and diversity is a major influence on the review of old laws and the passing of new ones. Hopefully, you will feel that *you* can influence society for good in the same way that recent campaigners have achieved significant positive change.

The law department consists of one member of staff who also teaches Criminology and Psychology in addition to Law. The social science/humanities team is committed to spreading the enjoyment of our subjects and we work collaboratively to achieve that.

Curriculum Implementation Statement

Knowledge

The law curriculum is structured to help you gain new skills of organisation, encourages reflective learning and fully supports Cowley's core principle of "Knowing More and Remembering More".

The early weeks of the course are designed to help you make a smooth transition from High School to Sixth Form. We understand that students appreciate help in making this adjustment and lessons are specifically planned with your needs in mind. We also recognise that you are studying a completely new linear A Level subject and you need to gain and consolidate knowledge quickly. We will therefore teach you the difference between short-term ('working memory') and long-term memory and use different classroom activities to help you retrieve knowledge. The aim is to provide you with facts and information about law, the wider curriculum and life-experience, then help you to embed this in your long-term memory (LTM) as a network of accessible memories.

Learning

In the first term of the course, we concentrate on the legal system and criminal law. We encourage you to be an independent learner while at the same time helping you to encounter and learn material. By doing this you will gain full understanding of the 'building blocks' of prior knowledge required as you progress through the course. For example, arguing that X had murdered Y will involve knowledge of different components such as *actus reus* and *mens rea*, alongside an appreciation of possible defences.

Learning is encouraged through varied classroom activities and through regular homework. A lesson may take the form of an initial class discussion to explore an idea, invite input from you to find out what you already know then introduce the topic through a practical activity such as a 'pop-up' Magistrates' court where you will make a contribution through a role-play. Additional materials (in the forms of cases/examples) are offered to further your knowledge in independent study.

Skills

You have already acquired many of the skills required to be successful on a law course. Our time together will help you to develop skills such as reading and interpreting primary sources, putting them in context, evaluating them, and developing your own opinion.

Can you imagine what it is like to be a Magistrate with twenty cases to hear in one morning? One thing you would be hoping for is that each solicitor presenting the case will do so clearly, fluently and in as few words as possible! Those are the kind of skills we encourage in law lessons. You will come across language in texts and articles which will challenge you. Your task is to gain understanding and be able to express these ideas in your own words. Through a step-by-step approach and through positive feedback, we will encourage you to develop resilience and a positive mind-set so that hopefully you will learn how to take value from every situation.

In addition to written and oral skills, you will be encouraged to develop formal presentation skills and impromptu exposition (e.g. 'mock court' situations). By doing this regularly, you will learn how to relate and interact with others, how to work in a team, how to negotiate and how to influence others.

Above all, we hope that you will become an active citizen. You will be taught about the law, democracy (including *your* responsibility as voters), British Values and how to express your views effectively.

Understanding

Understanding in law is achieved through the combination of knowledge and skills. It is therefore natural for you to move onto analysis of scenarios detailing civil and criminal liability once their knowledge has been consolidated. Mid way through Y12, skills of analysis are taught and practised through exposure to statutes and scenarios based upon individuals being negligent or breaking the law. These skills are developed throughout the rest of Y12.

Concepts

Key concepts are the important ideas and principles in Law (such as 'The Rule of Law' or 'Criminal Liability') which often underpin other areas of subject learning. Since concepts of law are more difficult to understand and are, by their nature, synoptic, these units of study are left towards the end of the course and taught exclusively in Y13. The department will support you in understanding these concepts and any other aspect of the course. We have one base and an 'open-door' policy which encourages you to talk to staff and receive the personalised, individual support you may require.

Curriculum Beyond the Classroom**Wider Curriculum**

The wider curriculum contributes significantly to your knowledge. We will introduce you to learning experiences outside of your timetabled Law lessons.

Visits are organised to both Liverpool Magistrates' Court and Liverpool Crown Court so that you can see 'law in action' and how legal personnel work. A visit is also organised to London so that you can see how Parliament passes laws and how the higher (appellate) courts work such as the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Visits from legal professionals and lay-people (such as magistrates) involved in law are a regular feature of the course. This is often combined with students studying Criminology.

The department has established links with a number of law firms in Liverpool which offer opportunities for work experience for Cowley students. An ex-pupil at another Liverpool Law firm is also an important contact for those considering an Apprenticeship in law.

Subject Expertise

The law teacher has ten years' experience in delivering the course. The fast-moving nature of issues in law means that resources are constantly adapted and updated. However, as you will discover for yourself, it is not difficult to keep up to date with the latest developments in law as there is always great press interest in high-profile cases/changes in the law (proposed and actual). You will be encouraged from the outset to keep up to date with news outlets and to watch documentaries/dramas which highlight aspects of the criminal justice system.

Impact and careers/destinations

An important aim of this course is that through thinking creatively about problems, practising writing and presenting arguments, you will acquire skills which will prepare students not only for further study in law but also for diverse subjects.

You will be provided with opportunities for work experience in legal firms, tailored to your areas of interest. In recent years Cowley students have shadowed barristers, worked in the Magistrates court and pursued an interest in Employment Law. Lockdown has provided innovative opportunities to access careers advice and showcases, including a Webinar hosted by the Solicitors' Regulation Authority and a virtual event hosted by the Liverpool Law Society, presenting information about all aspects of legal careers. In the absence of opportunities for work experience this year, organisations are offering 'virtual work experience' and students in Y12 applied to Springpod. Opportunities offered by organisations such as the University of Law are frequently highlighted and forwarded to the department by our Careers department.

Many students continue onto degree courses as a direct result of their interest in studying law, whether a straight law degree or a combination of law, criminology, Youth Justice etc. All students who have applied for Law degrees have been given offers and the vast majority take up the place. An increasing number apply for both degree courses and apprenticeships. When required, students are also helped to prepare for interviews at universities, including Cambridge. Some students choose a degree in Policing and A level law is an excellent starting point. Law students who have completed a law A level in the last five years are now starting legal careers. These include a solicitor in a Southport firm, a legal executive in Manchester and an advisor for Citizens Advice in Manchester.