

LAW426

Legal Research Project

School: School of Law and Society

2026 | Trimester 1

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

The Legal Research Project is an immersive and self-directed course that empowers you to explore specialized legal topics of their choosing through independent research and inquiry. Guided by staff members experienced in research, this course fosters autonomy, creativity, and intellectual curiosity, providing a unique opportunity for you to design and lead your own short project.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Online Learning Materials	1hr	Week 1	6 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Online Tutorial	2hrs	Week 2	5 times
Independent Study/Research – Independent work on research project throughout the trimester	14hrs	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	Once Only

1.3. Course Topics

This course focuses on building your research and communication skills based on a topic of your choosing. Throughout this course, you will:

- Design a Research Project – *How can you make an original contribution to knowledge?* (Literature Review, Project Design, Research Methodology Approaches)
- Understand Academic Writing – *How can you effectively communicate an argument?* (Evaluating Evidence, Supporting Claims, Addressing Weaknesses, Communication Skills, Referencing)
- Address Feedback – *How can you take constructive feedback onboard and make adjustments?* (Understanding the Purpose of Feedback, Developing Iterative Drafting Skills)

2. What level is this course?

400 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES		GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Develop a critical understanding of a legal area of your choosing, including surveying the academic literature on that field and establishing an awareness of key authors in the field.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker
2	Critically evaluate authoritative sources in support of well-substantiated legal arguments.	Creative and critical thinker
3	Generate a thesis in your chosen area and create arguments to support that thesis.	Creative and critical thinker Empowered Ethical
4	Demonstrate advanced written communication skills.	Empowered
5	Demonstrate effective presentation skills, including proper referencing and citation techniques.	Empowered
6	Manage your time effectively to produce consistent results.	Empowered Engaged
7	Recognise the role of feedback and respond to feedback in order to strengthen academic and legal arguments.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Empowered Engaged

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

144 units of Law coded courses

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Feedback will be provided regularly by course staff in the tutorials and through formative tasks.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Written Piece	Individual	50%	2000	Week 7	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Thesis	Individual	50%	3000 Words	Week 12	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Annotated Bibliography

GOAL:	Produce a comprehensive annotated bibliography in your selected legal area, demonstrating a current and deep understanding of the subject matter.		
PRODUCT:	Written Piece		
FORMAT:	An annotated bibliography that examines essential primary or secondary sources, highlighting their contributions to and critiques of your thesis and research in your chosen topic area.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrate a general understanding of your field of study	1
	2	Develop a strategy to complete your research project in the allotted time	6
	3	Communicate clearly and effectively.	4 5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Organisation, Information literacy		

All - Assessment Task 2: Legal Research Project

GOAL:	To assess your research and communication skills through your ability to articulate and express well-supported arguments in support of a main thesis.					
PRODUCT:	Thesis					
FORMAT:	Written Thesis					
CRITERIA:	No.					Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Survey the literature in your chosen field, including identifying key authors and curating authoritative sources in support of your thesis argument.			1	2
	2	Create an original thesis argument in your chosen area, including sub-arguments that articulate and clearly communicate your thesis argument.			3	6
	3	Demonstrate advanced written communication skills for an academic audience, including professional referencing and organisational structure.			4	5
	4	Recognise the importance of feedback through responding to and implementing it.			7	
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy					

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

The Legal Research Project is well-placed for students who are interested in developing expertise in a specific area, or are interested in developing their research skills. This course is particularly valuable for students who are interested in undertaking Honours.

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au