RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Legal Skills 2020

1 Introduction and overview

Welcome to the Legal Skills course. This is a compulsory course for penultimate LLB students.

This is the Faculty's flagship course on skills, and has attracted considerable (and favourable) attention from law firms. Anecdotally, law firms have employed Rhodes graduates on the basis of performance in this course. The course builds on the basic generic skills acquired in the Legal Theory programme or the first two years of the LLB degree, and assists students in identifying, understanding and using *advanced* numeracy, research, writing and reasoning methods. The course is designed to equip students to perform complex tasks independently in the professional context.

2 National Qualification Framework Level (NQF) and Credit Value of the course

This course is pegged at NQF Level 7. The level is described by the South African National Qualifications Authority as providing a scaffold from which outcomes can be derived, depending on the context of the course. Please see the end of this course handout for the general type of knowledge and application required for this course (particular course outcomes are set out in para 5 below).

The course carries 10 credits. This translates into 10 hours to be spent on this course per week, including the time spent at lectures.

3 Course content

The course consists of five modules ('blocks'), four of which are taught one after the other, being the legal environment; writing skills, legal research, applied logic and critical reasoning, and legal argument and moots. **PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE OF LECTURES.**

The numeracy component is scheduled for the first two weeks of the course for all students, and continues for the rest of the semester for those students who do not reach the subminimum for the first test as described below.

Each component of the course will be presented by a different lecturer who will post information about their various sections on a common RUConnected course: **Legal Skills 2020.**

The course co-ordinator is Mrs Helen Kruuse (h.kruuse@ru.ac.za), Office F5B (first floor, Law Faculty).

4   Student assessment

Assessment will be by way of tests, a 72 hour assignment, and a moot. There will be no exam at the end of the course, and hence no possibility of a supplementary exam in the event of a failure.

Note that the last component, Legal Argument and Moots, will be presented and assessed at the beginning of the **third** term.

The assessment tasks, allocation of marks for the total mark, and modules tested, are set out below:

Assessment tasks	Percentage of the total mark	Modules tested
Numeracy test (x 2[1])	15%	Numeracy
Legal environment test	15%	Legal environment
72 hour assignment	35%	Research, writing, applied logic and critical reasoning (implicit: legal environment)
Legal argument & reasoning	35%	Moots (but implicitly all of the above modules)

5   Specific outcomes for each module

The modules (as scheduled), and lecturer are:

Module	Lecturer
Numeracy	Dr Andrew Pinchuck
Legal environment	Mrs Helen Kruuse
Writing skills	Mrs Sarah Driver
Legal research	Prof Graham Glover
Applied logic and critical reasoning	Mrs Helen Kruuse
Legal argument & moots	Adv Craig Renaud

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[1] Please see information contained in section 6.2 infra regarding the testing of the numeracy component.

5.1 Outcomes for Numeracy

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to do the following:

- Be numerate at the level required for the numeracy component of the attorneys' admission
- Competently apply the following mathematical skills:
- Basic number sense and calculation skills involving the following number systems:
  - Whole numbers
  - Integers
  - Rational numbers (represented as fractions, decimals or percentages)
  - Calculating weighted averages.
- Simple algebra; representing quantities symbolically and manipulating such symbols.
- Functions and relationships; in particular:
  - Proportion and rates
  - Linear functions
  - Exponential functions
  - The amortization function
- Plotting and reading simple graphs; in particular, graphs of the above relationships
- Applications of the above concepts and skills to situations relevant to the legal profession.

5.2 Outcomes for the Legal Environment

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify the different types of legal practitioners contemplated in the Legal Practice Act.
- Identify and understand the transitional arrangements and regulatory framework for the legal profession contemplated in the Legal Practice Act.
- Identify and understand influences on the legal profession in South Africa.
- Debate issues within the legal profession and think critically about existing practices.

5.3 Outcomes for Writing Skills

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Understand the importance of communicating information in clear and plain language in a legal context.
- Apply the skills and techniques they have learnt to communicate clearly and concisely in writing in plain English.

5.4 Outcomes for Legal Research

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify and understand the various legal research resources, methodologies and techniques that are available to a law student and a lawyer;
- Use the various legal research resources, methodologies and techniques in order to solve practical legal problems.
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5.5 Outcomes for Applied Logic and Legal Reasoning

At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Analyse and explain the concepts of applied logic and critical reasoning in the context of the study of law;
- Organise their approach to legal research, and their production of verbal and written work, in a logical and systematic manner;
- Apply logic and critical reasoning in their construction of legal arguments and opinion.

5.6   Outcomes for Moots/Legal Argument
At the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:
- On a supplied set of facts prepare heads of argument suitable for a moot court (and thus for a real legal argument in court) which comply technically with court requirements, and which succinctly and logically provide an outline of the argument which will be delivered orally subsequently;
- Present an oral legal argument in a moot court setting in a logical, coherent and distinct fashion, and competently respond to questions posed from the bench during the course of the argument.

6   IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATING TO THE COURSE

a. General
- All course material for each block, including handouts, will be provided by the individual lecturers. Relevant material for each block will be posted onto one RUConnected page: **Legal Skills 2020.**
- While the main part of the course will be undertaken in the two official lecture slots as per the timetable, there will be special arrangements for the numeracy component (**SEE ATTACHED LECTURE SCHEDULE)**.
- Attendance requirements will be strictly enforced. Note that the quota of permissible missed lectures, as set out in the Law Faculty Handbook, applies to the course *as a whole*, and not to each component.
- Failure to secure a DP will mean repeating the course. As noted above, there is no supplementary exam.

b. Numeracy
- Students who obtain a minimum of **65%** for the first numeracy test will *not* need to continue with numeracy lectures and write the second test at the end of the semester.
- In order to obtain a credit for Legal Skills in the LLB degree, students need to attain a sub-minimum of **30%** for the numeracy component.
- Should a student fail to attain 30% or more for the numeracy component, but manage to attain **50%** or more for the Legal Skills course in that same year, that student need not repeat the entire Legal Skills course. He or she must repeat the numeracy component only.

Helen Kruuse
January 2020