



Legal Skills 2021

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 South African National Qualifications Authority describes this level 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 online.

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 2021**.

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

4 Student assessment

Assessment will be by way of a legal environment test, a 72 hour assignment, and a Heads of Argument exercise. 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 72 hour assignment will be assessed at the beginning of the **third term**. At the same time, the last component, Legal Argument, will be taught and assessed at the same time.

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%	Heads of argument exercise (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 Kruise
Writing skills	Mrs Sarah Driver
Legal research	Prof Graham Glover
Applied logic and critical reasoning	Mrs Helen Kruise
Legal argument & moots	Adv Craig Renaud

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 regulatory framework for the legal profession 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.

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 the Heads of Argument exercise/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.

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 2021**.
- While course lectures will take place (online) on a Monday and a Friday, there will be special arrangements for the numeracy component (**SEE ATTACHED LECTURE SCHEDULE**).
- 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 Kruise
January 2021**

NQF Level Seven

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate integrated knowledge of the central areas of one or more fields, disciplines or practices, including an understanding of and the ability to apply and evaluate the key terms, concepts, facts, principles, rules and theories of that field, discipline or practice; and detailed knowledge of an area or areas of specialisation and how that knowledge relates to other fields, disciplines or practices.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of knowledge as contested and the ability to evaluate types of knowledge and explanations typical within the area of study or practice.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of a range of methods of enquiry in a field, discipline or practice, and their suitability to specific investigations; and the ability to select and apply a range of methods to resolve problems or introduce change within a practice.
- d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, analyse, evaluate, critically reflect on and address complex problems, applying evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments.
- e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to take decisions and act ethically and professionally, and the ability to justify those decisions and actions drawing on appropriate ethical values and approaches within a supported environment.
- f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to develop appropriate processes of information gathering for a given context or use; and the ability to independently validate the sources of information and evaluate and manage the information.
- g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to develop and communicate his or her ideas and opinions in well-formed arguments, using appropriate academic, professional, or occupational discourse.
- h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to manage processes in unfamiliar and variable contexts, recognising that problem solving is context and system bound, and does not occur in isolation.
- i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, evaluate and address his or her learning needs in a self-directed manner, and to facilitate collaborative learning processes.
- j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to take full responsibility for his or her work, decision-making and use of resources, and limited accountability for the decisions and actions of others in varied or ill-defined contexts.