

Legal Studies

General senior subject

General

Legal Studies focuses on the interaction between society and the discipline of law. Students study the legal system and how it regulates activities and aims to protect the rights of individuals, while balancing these with obligations and responsibilities. An understanding of legal processes and concepts enables citizens to be better informed and able to constructively question and contribute to the improvement of laws and legal processes. This is important as the law is dynamic and evolving, based on values, customs and norms that are challenged by technology, society and global influences.

Legal Studies explores the role and development of law in response to current issues. The subject starts with the foundations of law and explores the criminal justice process through to punishment and sentencing. Students then study the civil justice system, focusing on contract law and negligence. With increasing complexity, students critically examine issues of governance that are the foundation of the Australian and Queensland legal systems, before they explore contemporary issues of law reform and change. The study finishes with considering Australian and international human rights issues. Throughout the course, students analyse issues and evaluate how the rule of law, justice and equity can be achieved in contemporary contexts.

The primary skills of inquiry, critical thinking, problem-solving and reasoning empower Legal Studies students to make informed and ethical decisions and recommendations. Learning is based on an inquiry approach that develops reflection skills and metacognitive awareness. Through inquiry, students identify and describe legal issues, explore information and data, analyse, evaluate to propose recommendations, and create responses that convey legal meaning.

They improve their research skills by using information and communication technology (ICT) and databases to access research, commentary, case law and legislation. Students analyse legal information to determine the nature and scope of the legal issue and examine different or opposing views, which are evaluated against legal criteria. These are critical skills that allow students to think strategically in the 21st century.

Knowledge of the law enables students to have confidence in approaching and accessing the legal system and provides them with an appreciation of the influences that shape the system. Legal knowledge empowers students to make constructive judgments on, and knowledgeable commentaries about, the law and its processes. Students examine and justify viewpoints involved in legal issues, while also developing respect for diversity. Legal Studies satisfies interest and curiosity as students question, explore and discuss tensions between changing social values, justice and equitable outcomes.

Legal Studies enables students to appreciate how the legal system is relevant to them and their communities. The subject enhances students' abilities to contribute in an informed and considered way to legal challenges and change, both in Australia and globally.

Pathways

A course of study in Legal Studies can establish a basis for further education and employment in the fields of law, law enforcement, criminology, justice studies and politics. The knowledge, skills and attitudes students gain are transferable to all discipline areas and post-schooling tertiary pathways. The research and analytical skills

this course develops are universally valued in business, health, science and engineering industries.

Objectives

By the conclusion of the course of study, students will:

- comprehend legal concepts, principles and processes
- select legal information from sources
- analyse legal issues
- evaluate legal situations
- create responses that communicate meaning to suit the intended purpose.

Structure

Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Beyond reasonable doubt • Legal foundations • Criminal investigation process • Criminal trial process • Punishment and sentencing	Balance of probabilities • Civil law foundations • Contractual obligations • Negligence and the duty of care	Law, governance and change • Governance in Australia • Law reform within a dynamic society	Human rights in legal contexts • Human rights • Australia's legal response to international law and human rights • Human rights in Australian contexts

Assessment

Schools devise assessments in Units 1 and 2 to suit their local context.

In Units 3 and 4 students complete *four* summative assessments. The results from each of the assessments are added together to provide a subject score out of 100. Students will also receive an overall subject result (A–E).

Summative assessments

Unit 3		Unit 4	
Summative internal assessment 1 (IA1): • Examination — combination response	25%	Summative internal assessment 3 (IA3): • Investigation — analytical essay	25%
Summative internal assessment 2 (IA2): • Investigation — inquiry report	25%	Summative external assessment (EA): • Examination — combination response	25%

