



Graduate School of Professional Legal Education

Postgraduate Diploma in
Professional Legal Practice

www.gsple.ulster.ac.uk



Introduction

Welcome to the Graduate School of Professional Legal Education at the Magee campus of the University of Ulster.

This leaflet will provide you with important information about the School and will explain why choosing to undertake your solicitor training at Magee is the best choice you could possibly make.

Here are some facts about the School:

- It is the sole provider of professional legal education in the north-west and only the second provider of such training in Northern Ireland.
- The School has its own dedicated space at the Magee campus with customized facilities.
- We have places for 28 students wishing to obtain the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Practice. This course will allow you to qualify as a solicitor.
- The focus of the course is on equipping you with the necessary practical skills to discharge your professional functions as a solicitor.
- The provision of an interactive and innovative learning environment allows you to participate actively in the learning process.
- The relatively small class sizes make discussion in classes easier and you will find that any difficulties you may encounter are quickly addressed.
- The core subjects in the course are delivered by a team of experienced legal professionals, both solicitors and barristers. Each of the teaching staff has been recruited on an associate basis to allow them to continue to practice as solicitors or barristers thus ensuring a tangible link between the teaching and ongoing developments in practice.
- Leading practitioners from the north-west and across Northern Ireland are invited to contribute to the course to give the benefit of their professional experience.
- The School works closely with the Law Society to ensure that the course meets the requirements of the legal profession.

Here are some facts about the course:

The course aims to build on your prior learning and provide you with:

- A range of practical skills and a knowledge base necessary to equip you to enter practice as a solicitor.
- An understanding of the application of law in practice.
- An appreciation of the concept of professionalism and ethics in line with current professional standards.
- An ability to bridge the gap between the academic study of law and the practice of law.
- An ability to communicate effectively with clients, lawyers and non-lawyers in a professional capacity.
- An understanding and appreciation of the need to take future responsibility for your own professional development.
- A qualification recognised by the Law Society for NI.

Public Interest Programme and Competitions

The course contains a short public interest litigation programme which allows for the two best performing students to undertake placements in legal offices in the United States. In addition the School encourages students to enter a number of competitions in Northern Ireland and beyond.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Practice has been designed and developed in partnership with the Law Society of Northern Ireland to meet the needs of the solicitors' profession in a rapidly changing legal environment. The course complies with the Solicitors Admission and Training Regulations 1998 (as amended).

You register and enrol in September and undertake training in your Master's office until December following which you complete the academic course through attending University on four days per week. You also attend your Master's office one day per week (Monday) plus holidays and from January until August of the following year. Successful completion of the two year apprenticeship and academic course entitles you to be enrolled on the Roll of Solicitors in Northern Ireland.

Members of Staff

Director

Paul Mageean, *LLB, LLM, Solicitor*

Senior Lecturers

Anne Brown, *LLB, BCL (Oxon), MA TESOL, Solicitor*

Catherine Nixon, *LLB, Solicitor*

Clerical Assistant

Helena Devine

Lecturers

Diane Nixon, *MA, Dip.Soc., Barrister-at-Law*

Chris Coyle, *LLB, LLM, Barrister-at-Law*

Emile Daly, *BCL Barrister-at-Law*

School Administrative Assistant

Christine Stewart

The Course Structure and Requirements for the Award

The course comprises 13 compulsory modules.

The modules are set out in the table below. Most of these will be divided into individual short courses covering all of the topics required by the Law Society. The modules are as follow:

Module Title	Mand./Opt.	Credits	Level	Academic
Financial Management	M	10	7	Anne Brown
Business and Commercial Practice and Procedure	M	20	7	Christopher Coyle
Professional Ethics and Conduct	M	10	7	Paul Mageean
Wills and Probate 1	M	10	7	Catherine Nixon
Conveyancing 1	M	10	7	Anne Brown
Civil Litigation 1	M	10	7	Emile Daly
Skills 1	M	5	7	Paul Mageean
Wills and Probate 2	M	10	7	Catherine Nixon
Conveyancing 2	M	10	7	Anne Brown
Civil Litigation 2	M	10	7	Christopher Coyle
Criminal Procedure	M	20	7	Diane Nixon
Practice Management	M	10	7	Diane Nixon
Skills 2	M	5	7	Paul Mageean

A different learning environment

The course is student-centred and skills-based to allow you to develop the skills that you will require in practice. It will therefore include practical exercises based upon typical scenarios that are likely to arise in practice.

You will interview 'clients', draft legal documents and correspondence, read example materials and documents received in a solicitor's office, make decisions regarding the future conduct of fictional cases – all steps to emulate real life in a practice insofar as is possible. It will be a more participative learning environment than you may have experienced in your undergraduate studies.



Teaching Methods

The principal teaching methods on this course are lectures, seminars and independent learning.

The lectures are largely expository, but student participation, in the form of question and answer sessions, is encouraged. The topics covered in the lectures will be those discussed in the seminars that follow. Throughout the course you will be expected to take part in a range of activities, including mock-trials, moots, oral and written presentations, and group work.

Active participation in seminars is crucial if you are to gain the most from your course. You will be asked to study a particular problem or to read something in advance of the seminar. The more preparation you do, the more will be gained by you and your colleagues in the subsequent seminar discussions.

Transactional based learning will consist of learning that is based on transactions or cases simulated on legal practice. The transactions or cases will evolve over time with various events and legal occurrences taking place and simulating, as much as possible, a real case in an office environment. You will carry out a variety of types of activities concerning the simulated transaction or case including drafting, presentation, advocacy and interviewing exercises.

Assessment and Examinations

A range of assessment methods will be used, but most modules require you to sit an examination. Coursework is assessed in a variety of ways, including presentations, mock-trials, moots, and drafting various documents. You must complete and pass each of the 13 modules.

Daily attendance at classes is vital.

The pass mark is 50% for each assessment element within a module and for each module overall. Distinctions will be available for those who achieve the necessary standard of 70%.

Fees

Fees for the two-year course starting in Sept 2011 are £7100 (£3550 per year). The fees have not yet been set for 2012-13 but will be published on our website as soon as they have been confirmed. It is the student's personal responsibility to ensure that fees are paid on time. Failure to do so may lead to suspension from the course.

Students taking up a place at the Graduate School will receive a £500 bursary which can be spent on a laptop, iPad, or travel and accommodation costs. This, combined with our competitive fees, represents a significant saving for students.

Do you want to speak to someone about the course? If so please ring :- The School Office on 028 7167 5222

**Do you want to apply for the course for 2012/13?
If so, please see our website for details: www.gsple.ulster.ac.uk**

Full information about the Magee Campus can be found on the University website at:
www.ulster.ac.uk/campus/magee



Magee Campus

Staff / Student consultative committee/ Advisers of Studies

Students elect representatives to a Staff/Student Consultative Committee which meets regularly to discuss the content and delivery of the course. A member of staff is assigned to each trainee to assist students throughout the course and to monitor progress.

Disability

It is the policy of the University to assist any student who has a disability. In order to do this it is important that information concerning disability is communicated to us in good time so that we can make any necessary arrangements. Information about disability plays no part in the selection process and will be treated confidentially.

Please see the application process booklet and the relevant section on the application form if you need special arrangements for the Admissions Test.