Law Undergraduate Orientation FAQ Sheet

you’ve asked, we’ve answered!

Study load (double degrees, course acceleration and summer session):

UTS has three teaching sessions a year; does this mean I can finish my Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree early?

- The Legal Profession Admission Board (LPAB) stipulates that a law degree must be a minimum of three years in length, not including the Practical Legal Training component (PLT). The LPAB is the Board in NSW that determines the eligibility and suitability of people seeking admission as a lawyer.

If your course is longer than three year are you able to accelerate it?

- Generally students are not permitted to enrol into subjects beyond those outlined in the course progression in the online handbook. Summer session does allow you to enrol into subjects (generally electives) outside of your suggested course progression, however this will usually just lighten your load during a subsequent session, and won’t serve to accelerate your progression.

In a double degree, can I accelerate the secondary degree?

- It depends upon the requirements of the other discipline. You should really stick to your course progression outlined in the online UTS handbook but there may be opportunities for you to study some subjects from your other discipline over Summer.

If you are doing a double degree do you still have the same amount of electives than those just studying law?

- Sort of. Students in a straight LLB have a 48 credit point general elective choiceblock where they can select electives from across UTS. They could be law electives or non-law electives. Students in a combined degree don’t have this 48 credit point general elective choiceblock. However, in both a combined degree and a straight LLB, there is a law specific elective choiceblock. Check out your course structure in the online UTS handbook.

What do you usually recommend to do in the optional summer session? Should we accelerate, look for internships or something else?

- Get involved! Of course it’s a break from a hefty session so a rest is definitely necessary. Looking for a job is a great thing to fill some time though. The UTS Careers Team can offer you great employment advice. If you would like to enrol into subjects in summer that is an option also, but keep in mind that generally, only a selection of elective subjects are timetabled over Summer.

Is it compulsory to take classes during the summer session?

- Nope, it’s optional!
How many subjects can you do in the summer session? Can you just do one?

You can do more than one.

Do we actually get a six month holiday if we choose not to take anything in the summer session?

- Check out the UTS Principle Dates. You will get a break from study over Summer if you are not enrolled into any subjects, but not a six month one.

Can you further explain the difference between a Juris Doctor and LLB?

- A JD is a postgraduate course, and an LLB is an undergraduate course. Completion of either will satisfy the NSW LPAB’s academic requirements for admission to the Supreme Court of NSW as a lawyer. The structure of the courses are slightly different, and some subjects offered in the JD are for JD students only. You can check out the course structures in the online UTS handbook.

Your academic and professional future!

What other career options are there for someone graduating with a law degree, other than law?

- The world is your oyster! An understanding of the law is invaluable in every industry, and as such, you can take your LLB into any profession. For example: research assistance, academia, teaching, advisory roles (providing legal direction for independent businesses) and working for/alongside government sectors (e.g. policing, national security, health, community services and policy making divisions).

- There’s plenty of opportunities, although they may not be obvious yet! Professional services (consulting and finance), start-up work, government work and leadership roles. Many lawyers work in non-legal parts of businesses. It opens doors!

The law field is quite saturated. How do I differentiate myself in such a competitive field?

- The future of the legal profession is ever expanding, particularly nowadays given the rapid advancement of technologies. A key goal of the UTS Law Faculty is to produce students that are resilient, able to adapt and who see this change as an opportunity above all else.

- A few things to keep in mind with regards to the apparent ‘over-saturation’ within the legal profession:

  1) The options for legally qualified professionals are much greater than 15 years ago (e.g. in-house, start-ups, internationally, government agencies, NGO's and within other industries).

  2) Not all law graduates, particularly dual degree students, wish to practice law in the lawyer/barrister sense.

- Be interesting, get involved and do extracurricular activities (such as the Brennan Program, mootng, or anything that sparks your interest - even canyoning!). UTS LSS careers events are also a great way to network and find out how to differentiate yourself. The UTS Careers Team can also offer you great employment advice.

Are you less employable if you do a straight LLB without combining it with another discipline?

- It depends on what kind of law you want to work in! All we can suggest is not to ever limit yourself.

Do employers favour you more if you pursued a double degree?

It depends on what the employer wants. Some may if the skills you acquired in the other discipline are appealing to them, others won’t.

What is the employment percentage post-graduation?

- The Federal Government’s Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) shows full time employment rates for law UG’s from UTS are 89.2%.
Do employers have a preference for which University you studied law at?

- Employers like a well-rounded, engaged and involved university student! When you go to a highly regarded university like UTS you have nothing to worry about except applying yourself and building up your resume!

- The federal government’s Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) shows full time employment rates for law UG's from various universities: UTS – 89.2%, UNSW - 87.4%, Sydney - 85.1% and Macquarie – 81.5%.

Can you get help from a course advisor if you know what area of law you want to go into but are unsure of how to get there?

- Start by talking to your law tutors and asking questions about the profession.

How does honours work with a double degree?

- If you are in a double degree, we only consider your law subjects when determining your eligibility to undertake honours in law. Check out the UG honours information in the online UTS handbook.

If I pass all my law subjects, but fail a subject in my double degree, am I still able to pursue honours?

- Yes, you can still pursue honours in law.

Is doing honours a recommended pathway to obtaining a PhD in law?

- It’s definitely the start of your study journey towards a PhD, but you’ll also need to do further PG study before a PhD.

Do students have to maintain a WAM of 70 after they take on the research subjects to achieve Honours?

- Yes they do, however it’s unlikely that our high achieving students that undertake Honours would fall below a WAM of 70 in their final session(s) of study.

If I have extreme social anxiety, and know I will struggle with mooting and public speaking, does that mean I won’t be a successful lawyer?

- Definitely not! There are many ways you can work towards boosting your skills as a public speaker. In addition, there are many behind the scenes things you can do with a law degree, and several very successful lawyers don’t go to court at all! Please utilise our free counselling services, or contact our LSS wellbeing director Sophia Bechara, if you ever feel like you need to talk! We’re all here for you.

How many students go into a law degree not wanting to be a lawyer?

- A fair number of law students, particularly combined degree students, wish to progress into other professions (rather than practicing law in the lawyer/barrister sense).

- Potentially less than half of new Law students have considered alternatives to being a lawyer. Having said that, by the end of the first year, (hopefully) everyone will have realised just how many career pathways there are for Law Graduates. UTS, in particular, has a large focus on interdisciplinary professions and research. As such, you will be readily encouraged to broaden your skills and interests, which will serve you well whether you become a lawyer or enter another profession.

Social and extracurricular activities:

How do you join the UTS Law Students’ Society (UTS LSS)?

And why should I?

- Head to the website to join (utsslss.com)! It’s free, is the largest society on campus but still has a family feel, and the support you’ll get is critical (particularly in first year!). Get involved to make your university life the best it can possibly be. You get notified when social events or other extracurricular activities are happening. And you can also join up for things like peer mentoring and the Brennan Program!
How do you become a part of the LSS committee?
- First step is to sign up to the LSS. Second and most important step is to get involved! Come to events and meet as many people as you can to get your name out there. You'll have the opportunity to campaign to be voted in by other law students at the end of this year! Check out www.utslss.com/calendar/.

How do you join a subcommittee at UTSLSS?
- Keep an eye out! Sign-ups for things like this come up all the time. Wellbeing subcommittee sign-ups are happening right now! Check out www.utslss.com/calendar/.

Are extracurricular law opportunities (such as the ‘Brennan Program’) flexible/easy to manage on top of part time work?
- Quite flexible. It’s important to get as involved in the society as you can to enjoy uni life! Without activities (especially social events) you won’t meet people outside your classes!
- Totally! The Brennan Program is a program where you can get as involved as you want and participate at your own pace. It’s voluntary, free and it’s up to you if you focus on taking out the award.

What can a first year student do to get involved in society activities? Where do we find out info about what’s going on?
- Firstly, go to first year camp! It’s the best way to start to get involved. We also have a calendar of all upcoming events on www.utslss.com.
- Email us asking to be added to our mail list – we’ll subscribe you to an email thread to let you know about all the events that we have going on especially for first years!

What should I expect on law camp?
- The UTS LSS First Year Law Camp is a weekend away filled with fun activities to help you meet your fellow peers, sessions on first year initiatives where you will learn tips and tricks on surviving law school and of course a party to celebrate start of the university year. An annual rite of passage among undergraduate law students at UTS, this weekend will be one of the highlights of your university career (check out www.facebook.com/events/627175751060831/).

I want to go to camp but I don’t know anyone… will I feel left out?
- DEFINITELY NOT! We can assure you that everyone is in the same boat as you, looking for friends, trying to meet people. Other than that you’ll have an awesome group of 25+ leaders who can’t wait to meet you! Older students who didn’t attend law camp have actively regretted it!

I want to come to first year camp but I can’t afford it, is there anything I could do?
- We offer subsidy equity tickets for camp! Check out our Facebook camp event for more info (www.facebook.com/events/627175751060831/).

At what point during the LLB is it recommended to participate in competitions such as mooting?
- Start off early with the LSS competitions, build some experience and then move on from there.

Should first years try the open championship for mooting?
- You are open to - we encourage students to go for any moot we run. However we encourage you to compete in the junior champ moot in Spring session as you’d be orientating yourself in Autumn session. We also want to say mooting is a part of The Gauntlet - you’ll get a workshop and coaching before trying it! Do it!

When is puppy day?!
- Check out the LSS Events calendar 😻🐾 www.utslss.com/calendar/!!
Exchange and internships:

What year do you recommend going on exchange?
- Students need to have completed Equity and Trusts (70517) which is generally done in Autumn session of year two if you are in a straight LLB, and usually in Autumn session of year four if you are in a combined degree. Check out your course structure in the online UTS handbook.

Are there short term legal exchange programs?
- You can elect to do subjects overseas that typically run for 3-4 weeks!
- UTS offers a range of short term overseas programs - the International Legal Internship is offered as an elective subject that offers internships and short term study programs over Summer and between Autumn and Spring sessions.

If going on exchange, how much roughly are we expected to save and how long can we go for if we are doing a double degree?
- It depends on where you're going. Reach out to the UTS Global Exchange Office for advice. You can spread your exchange electives out over two sessions if you wish.

Is it harder to find an appropriate exchange program/university to suit a double degree?
- If you’re looking at just doing law subjects on exchange, then no, it’s relatively easy. However, if you are in a combined degree and you want to study some subjects on exchange that are to be counted towards your LLB, and others that are to be counted towards your other discipline (if exchange in that degree is permitted), then you might find it a little more challenging to find a university that offers subjects that meet the requirements of both degrees.

How does the financial aspect of the exchange program work? Are there scholarships available, or partial funding?
- There are Government HECS loans available and also grants from UTS Build.

During exchange, do you still learn the same subjects in the other country?
How does it work given that the law differs in every country?
- You can’t do core law subjects on exchange in the overseas country – they have to be done here at UTS. Students need to undertake electives at the host university, and they need to be approved by UTS beforehand to ensure that the content is relevant to your degree. Upon completion of those subjects, students receive academic credit for exchange electives here at UTS.

I don’t do electives until later in my degree, does that mean I can only go on exchange later?
- Yes – only after you’ve done Equity and Trusts.

Can you take the mandatory subject for exchange (Equity and Trusts) earlier than the recommended 4th year (i.e. over Summer session)?
- Essentially, no. Check out the online UTS handbook to see what the course progression is, and what the pre-requisites for Equity and Trusts are. You’ll find that subject pre and co-requisites will prevent you from doing subjects out of sequence or too early in your degree.

Are internships considered as electives? And do they speed up graduation?
- Yes you can get course credit for approved internships, if you select an internship elective option. You won’t graduate sooner if you do an internship elective.

Should we be looking for a job/internship with a firm now or should we do it further into the degree?
- Give yourself a bit of time to settle in! But if you’re a keen bean start looking now, go for it! It will help in classes if you have out-of-university practical experience (and will look GREAT on your resume)! The UTS Careers Team can offer you really valuable employment advice. Be sure to reach out to them for help.
Day to day UTS Law life (books, getting around, and choosing/attending classes):

What's the correct way to address superior court judges?
- The answer to this is quite comprehensive as it depends on their level! Head to the UTS website, as we have recently added a very comprehensive guide to addressing Judicial Officers. It's helpful to know this - put it on your to do list to learn the correct addresses!

Do we get a travel discount on our Opal card (or similar)?
- Yes, you may be eligible to get a travel discount as a UTS student. Click here for more information. If you need more help arranging or affording transport, head to one of the UTS Student Centres for advice.

How do we know what textbooks to get, and where's the cheapest place to get them?
- Check out your subject outline on UTS online. Head to the UTS LSS Textbook Exchange Facebook Group for great deals on second hand textbooks.

How do we get to the Powerhouse Museum for Foundations of Law?

When will classes in the new campus commence?
- The building will officially open at the end of this year - so you'll definitely be able to experience it in 2020.

What is the difference between a lecture and a seminar?
- Lectures provide content to a big theatre whilst seminars are approx. 25 students and more like a class where you work through problem questions as a group.

Are seminars compulsory? Can I miss one without a valid reason?
- Try to go to as many classes as you can. Most seminars and tutorials have a class participation mark that can be up to 40% of your mark! Your tutor will make it known at the beginning of every session whether they expect you to be at every class. Attendance is expected however sometimes absences are unavoidable. Contact your seminar leader in advance if you can to let them know why you can't be there, or afterwards if you were unable to contact them beforehand. Sometimes you might be permitted to attend an alternative seminar instead.

If I miss a few classes but don't feel confident enough to approach classmates to catch up, who can I go to?
- Check in with your lecturer or seminar leader for advice. Also, remember the UTS LSS peer mentoring classes! They're student run classes that go through class content!

Are seminars recorded and made available to view online?
- You'll get a much better learning experience by turning up to seminars and lectures face to face. Seminars are not recorded however many lectures are. They are generally available on UTS Online about 24 hours after the lecture has taken place. If in doubt READ THE SUBJECT OUTLINE.😊

Is it unusual to only be doing two law subjects in the first year?
- No that's standard for some combined degrees. In other combined degrees you'll do more than two law subjects in the first year, and of course in a straight LLB you'll undertake a number of law subjects in the first year. Check out your course structure in the online UTS handbook.

How many non-law electives can count to the law degree?
- It depends if you are in a combined or straight law degree. In a combined degree – none. In a straight law degree, there is a 48 credit point general elective choiceblock in which you can choose do either law or non-law electives. Most elective subjects are generally six credit points – so that's eight subjects.
When do I select my electives?

- Not until you’ve done a number of core subjects first. Check out your course progression in the online handbook and enrol at the appropriate time.

Do I need to do my subjects in the order of the handbook?

- Generally yes you should because subject pre and co requisites will usually prevent you from enrolling out of sequence. Students may sometimes find that they are a bit out of sequence throughout their degree, particularly if they fail a subject or take up a subject over the Summer session, and they may have to adjust their study plan to “re-align” their course progression. In some cases students may need to submit an e-request to ask permission to have a pre of co requisite waived.

Should students choose classes for Spring session for now?

- Yes!! You should plan your year out in advance for Autumn and Spring. 😊 Even Summer, if options are available to you.

Extensions and (the fear of) failing:

Is the due date for an assignment really the due date, or is there flexibility with dates?

- The due date is the due date. However, if you are experiencing illness or unexpected circumstances beyond your control, a Subject Coordinator may consider limited assessment extensions of no more than one week. Applications are made via the Faculty and must be accompanied by supporting evidence such as a medical certificate.

- If your studies are affected by serious illness or extenuating hardship, and require long-term extensions, you need to submit an application for special consideration.

- Starting university is a big learning curve. If you are struggling with time management skills, we highly recommend contacting UTS HELPS – Higher Education Language and Presentation Support. HELPS offers many support programs, including drop-in advice and time management advice.

If I need an extension on an assessment, what do I do? Where do I go first?

- Good question! Head to the 2019 Law Student Guidebook and read pages 18-19 titled ‘Late Work’ and ‘Extensions’. Absolutely everything you need to know is there! You can also check out the UTS Law Website (under ‘Assessments’, in the ‘Current Students in the Law Faculty’ section).

What do you do if you’re failing?

- Speak to your seminar leader/tutor/lecturer for advice. Make use of the various study resources on offer. If you have personal circumstances that are impacting your ability to study, make an appointment to see the Director of Students.

Can we redo a subject if we fail it?

- If it’s a core subject then yes, you must do it again until you pass. If it’s an elective subject, you may wish to redo it, however you can choose to do an alternative subject in its place if you wish.

What if this course isn’t right for me?

- Our faculty is unique in the fact that it has a dedicated Director of Students (Francis Johns) to support students in need and to help work out their course and career path. If you need someone to chat to about support, or are thinking of dropping out, get in touch with Francis.