

MA Research in Law

 Queen Mary
University of London

SCHOOL OF LAW





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Introduction

The School of Law at Queen Mary, University of London has a long and established record of research excellence. In the recent 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), 60 percent of its staff were considered to have both “world leading” and “internationally excellent” research activity. This is a result of its excellent 60 strong team of academic staff, who are experts in their field, and advise both national and international legal bodies, institutes, governments, NGOs, businesses and advisory boards.



With over 700 postgraduate students from all over the world, Queen Mary is one of the biggest providers of Research Programmes in Law in the country. It is the only University in London to offer a MA Research in Law. In participating in the MA by Research degree at Queen Mary, you will be part of a cosmopolitan community, which includes students from all over the world, who have come to Queen Mary to undertake research.



Postgraduate Law Building, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Holborn

Who is the course aimed at?

The MA by Research is provided for students wishing to undertake in depth, individually supervised research on topics of their own choice. It is ideal either for students wishing to proceed to doctoral study, or simply for students wishing to enhance their career prospects by developing expertise in a specific area of law and improving their research and writing skills. The ability to undertake a major piece of research is a transferable skill which is relevant to many different kinds of employment.

Theoretical and inter-disciplinary, as well as more practical and traditional approaches, are all accommodated in this programme. Though the emphasis is on one-to-one supervision, the MA by Research can extend to many areas. The Department has well-known strengths in areas such as legal theory, legal history, international law, human rights, migration law, property law, European law, company law, comparative law, family law, medical law, criminal law and criminology, comparative law, constitutional law, competition law, labour law, and any number of areas of traditional public and private law. Students interested in commercial areas of law, including arbitration, banking and finance, computer and communications, corporate, economic regulation, IP and tax, can also apply, to draw on the expertise of colleagues of Centre for Commercial Law Studies (CCLS).

MA Research students are regarded as full members of the School's research community, and are encouraged to attend the staff research seminars which are scheduled throughout the year, which include talks from both Queen Mary and external speakers:

Examples of Department of Law based seminars run in 2008-9 include:

- Professor Michael Lobban (QMUL), 'Contract and Society in the 19th Century.'
- Aileen Kavanagh (Leicester), 'The Status of the HRA: Bill of Rights, Constitutional Statute, or an Ordinary Act of Parliament?'
- Professor Ralph Henham (NTU), 'Deconstructing Punishment and Sentencing in International Criminal Justice'
- Tracey Elliot (QMUL): 'Law, Public Health and the 'Obesity Epidemic''
- Professor Kenneth Armstrong (QMUL) *Europeanizing social inclusion through new governance*
- Samia Bano (Reading) *Multicultural dispute resolution: what are the consequences for English family law?*
- Dr Ann Mumford (QMUL) *Tax, markets, families and the new institutionalism*
- Dr Sharon Cowan (Edin) *The pain of pleasure: Consent and the criminalisation of assaults*

Further details on all talks throughout the School of Law including CCLS can be found here: www.law.qmul.ac.uk/events/

Structure of Programme

The Programme is available on both a one year full time and two-year part time basis. All students enrolled in this programme will undertake supervised research with a view to submitting a 20,000 word dissertation by the end of the year. Students whose thesis receive a mark of 65 per cent or above for their thesis are eligible to progress into the PhD programme (subject to the availability of a suitable supervisor).

Students will also attend a **Research Methods** course which will expose them to a broad range of theoretical and practical approaches to legal research. This course will be taught through one 2 hour seminar each week.

In the first term the course covers theoretical topics including Ethics and Law, Law and Economics, Systems theory, Liberal theory, and Critical Theory.

In the second term, the course has a methods focus and covers areas such as research interviews, literature review and historical research methods. These second-term seminars will, so far as is possible, be tailored to the dissertations of enrolled students.

Assessment

The course is assessed by two 2500 word essays. The course entitled 'Theory and Method in Legal Scholarship' accounts for 25 per cent of the final grade and the final dissertation accounts for 75 per cent of the final grade.

Wiktor Sawinda, MA Research Alumnus, Poland

"Since 2005 I am participating in doctoral studies in Warsaw (Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Legal Studies). My doctoral thesis is focused on the subject of judicial independence in the opinion of judges. My wide-range survey (on almost 700 judges) undertaken in 2007 allowed me to localise many dysfunctions and threats for judicial independence. One group of threats concerns relations between judiciary and the executive power. My MA dissertation at Queen Mary was devoted to relations between these state powers in UK in the period of constitutional transition. This subject is very helpful for acknowledging a different than polish way of imposing cooperation between state powers and gives me a significant chance to look at the polish political and constitutional system from a distance. I am sure that many British solutions, will find a place as remedies applicable in the polish legal system.

Queen Mary was the only university in London that offered me a MA course in Law by research. It was the thing I needed, since I was not interested in a MA taught course as I already completed one. The School has easy and comfortable access to great research resources (not far from accommodation) and excellent, engaged and caring staff, very helpful to someone doing research by him/herself. I appreciate the very friendly atmosphere reinforced by possibilities of attending staff seminars and other meetings, helpful in keeping regular unofficial contact."



Examples of students' dissertations for MA Research in Law

'The Constitutional Attorney for Human Rights' (Thesis on the role and need for a public official to enforce human rights provisions)

'Clinical Photography in Healthcare: are its subjects and products different from other forms of photography and should they be protected by law?'

'Colonial Slavery: The Power of law in shaping normative order'

'The Relationship between the executive and the judiciary in the legal system of the United Kingdom and Poland'



Entry requirements

A minimum of an upper-second class honours degree or an equivalent qualification from an overseas University. For further details on International qualifications, please visit: www.qmul.ac.uk/international/countries

We welcome applications from anyone interested in pursuing a research project in a very specific area of the law, for example contract, criminal, banking or IP regulations for which a law degree would be necessary or a legal aspect of another academic or professional discipline – for instance, judiciary, politics, history, philosophy, literature, economics, medicine, theology, journalism, or other social, natural or human sciences, for which a related but non-law degree would be acceptable.

English Language Qualifications

Non-native English speakers will be required to have achieved minimum IELTS 7.0 or above or equivalent.

Further details

www.qmul.ac.uk/international/languagerequirements/index.html#PostgraduateResearchLaw





MA Research Alumnus

Aisling Boyle, LLB (Hons) (Lon) MA Res (QM) PhD Student (QM)

"In 2000, I started a Law Degree at Birkbeck College, University of London. The subjects that were of particular interest to me included Criminal Law, Medical Law and Ethics, and Employment Law. In Medical Law, my main focus of concentration included: the Legal and ethical Governance of Human Genetics; Property Rights in Human Tissue and Body Parts; ethical issues in Law and Psychiatry, and the Moral and Legal Aspects of Assisted Reproduction.

"Having developed a keen interest in Medical Law, in 2005, I commenced an MA by Research in Law at Queen Mary. The programme involved both taught and research components, which centred upon an individual research project supported by Methodology Research Skills training. The taught part of the course was divided between 'Empirical Legal Research' and 'Theory and Method in Legal Scholarship'. This combined emphasis on methodological tools and theoretically informed

approaches proved to be extremely constructive in providing us with the contextual foundations for advanced legal research. The theoretical and multi-disciplinary components were designed to develop the skills needed in formulating our individual research projects. The purpose of my research was to examine the policy initiatives surrounding the Government's proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act 1983.

"On completing the course, I felt that my specific area of research warranted further investigation as there were questions that remained unanswered within the scope of an MA dissertation. The experience gained on the MA was instrumental in my decision to embark upon a PhD at Queen Mary. I believe that the excellent standards of tuition and supervision on the MA provided me with the appropriate foundation for doctoral research. In building upon the investigative analysis undertaken at Masters level, my PhD thesis will aim to identify recommendations for alternative modes of governance in the reform of mental health legislation. Given the strong theoretical and policy considerations within this challenging field of Medical Law and Ethics, the MA by Research in Law has certainly been an invaluable learning curve."

Academic staff



The MA Research Programme Leader and Contributor on the Research Methods and Theory Course, first term

Professor Richard Nobles, LLB (Hons) (Warwick)
LLM (Yale)
Professor of Law, Solicitor

Leader and Contributor on the Research Methods and Theory Course, second term

Professor Kate Malleson, BA (Hons) (Lond)
MPhil (Cantab) PhD (Lond)
Professor of Law

Contributor on the Research Methods and Theory Course, first term

Professor Eric Heinze, Maitrise (Paris) JD (Harvard) PhD (Leiden)
Member of the Bars of the State of New York and Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Professor of Law and Humanities

Contributor on the Research Methods and Theory Course

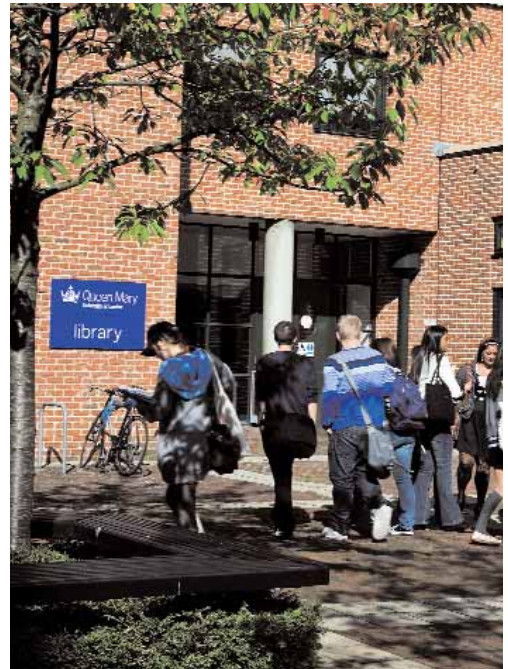
Professor David Schiff, LLB (Hons)
Professor of Law

For details of all School of Law academics and their individual expertise, please visit:
www.law.qmul.ac.uk/people/academic/expert.html

Location and library facilities

The 'Research Methods' course will be taught at the Mile End Campus. Depending on your chosen research area, supervisors for non-commercial law are based at Mile End and commercial law supervisors are based in at the Postgraduate Law Building in Lincoln Inn's Fields, Holborn, which is approximately 20 minutes away from the Mile End Campus on the tube. Students have access to the main Queen Mary Library based at the Mile End Campus, and in Holborn, the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and Senate House Library, University of London in Russell Square.

For a Location Map, please see:
www.law.qmul.ac.uk/docs/LIF.pdf





MA Research Alumnus
James Barry (LLB) Warwick, MA Res (QM) PhD Student (QM)

"I received my first degree from the University of Warwick in Law in 2002. After some deliberation I decided to join the English Bar and was called in 2005. I am also a member of the New York State Bar and worked for six months in Georgia, USA with lawyers conducting appeals from death row prisoners. I have a keen interest in American civil rights law and assist with capital cases in state courts. In 2005-6 I completed a Masters in Law at Queen Mary. My research concerned the 'problems' lawyers can cause through trying to effect social change. My project looked at lawyers attempting to achieve the abolition of capital punishment in the USA through litigation. My current PhD research is concerned with the inevitability of plea-bargaining in common law systems and analyses the methods by which the English system has reduced the number of not guilty pleas and contested criminal trials."





MA Research Alumnus
Jemima Joll, LLM (QM) MA Res(QM)

"I chose to do the LLM course part-time at Queen Mary which I really enjoyed. You were really stretched academically but there was a great cross section of nationalities among the students and good teaching in small groups with a huge range of options to choose from.

"I learnt about the MA Res option through a friend, who was on the LLM with me, who was going on to do it. It is a halfway house between the LLM and a PhD, but it's different from the LLM as there is less emphasis on taught modules and more on personal research. It is a good way to see if you are really cut out to do a PhD in terms of both academic ability and the ability to sustain individual research over a long period, which can be quite isolating. You choose the area you would like to research in depth and write a 20,000-word thesis on it.

"Through regular meetings with your supervisor you are not left to flounder alone. Deadlines are given to submit chapters and advice is given in terms of publications, structure and so on. My thesis is entitled "Should parents be allowed to consent to cosmetic reconstructive surgery on behalf of their children?" focusing particularly on children who have Down Syndrome. I have found it a really interesting area to research, as there has been quite a lot in the press around this particular area, for example the American child Ashley."

How to apply, tuition fees and bursaries

Details of tuition fees and bursaries are available here:

www.law.qmul.ac.uk/postgraduate/fees/

Details on how to apply is available here:

www.qmul.ac.uk/postgraduate/apply/



Lock-keepers Cottage Graduate Centre

Further information

For detailed research enquiries, please contact:

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MA Research Alumnus
Anna Kyria Broadfield,
LLB (LSE), MA Res (QM), PhD Student (QM)

"I chose Queen Mary because a former teacher at LSE where I did my undergraduate course got me in touch with a Professor at Queen Mary who told me about the MA Res. The programme seemed to fit my requirements exactly, as I knew what I wanted to write about and had a specific research interest, and love writing. So it was the power of a course that was able to meet my needs and be flexible enough for me, which had a strong independent research ethic that attracted me. I researched the course further, and also knew quite a few of my professors from LSE had moved across

to Queen Mary. I had also heard about what a positive friendly learning environment it was at Queen Mary and was eager to see for myself.

"For the MA Res, I researched the evolution of family law from a more abstract theoretical perspective. The flexibility of the course was really great for me, as it enabled me to get work and balance other commitments whilst still being able to retain my focus. It has also enabled me to clarify from an early stage (not possible on some taught programmes) that my personal goals are geared towards research/teaching, and hence advance my future prospects. I have subsequently expanded my research to PhD level and am now in my second year. My main research interest is family law and the significance of reflective practice amongst the judiciary in adapting the law to contemporary societal trends.

"There are some fantastic academics at Queen Mary and I was particularly impressed by the way Queen Mary has pioneered this particular course [MA Res] to enable a graduate to start research pretty much straight away and follow a personal interest in their writing, I haven't seen this anywhere else for Law.

"I had an incredibly supportive supervisor who kept an eye not only on my research but also on teaching opportunities which kept me progressing and growing within the community. It's such a confidence boost to have an experienced academic constructively criticise your work and provide the necessary reassurance that you are on track."

Queen Mary, University of London

Queen Mary is one of the largest multi-faculty colleges of the University of London and is located on attractive campuses at Mile End and Whitechapel in east London, only 20 minutes by tube from the West End, and at Charterhouse Square and Lincoln's Inn Fields in the City. We have almost 13,000 students studying in four faculties, as well as Barts and The London, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry. Of these students, more than 1,600 are following postgraduate courses and undertaking research.

We are currently ranked in the top 150 universities in the world (THES World University Rankings 2007) and the work of our 2,800 academic staff regularly features in the news – both in the UK and internationally – www.qmul.ac.uk/news/

In the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) we were ranked 13th in the UK by the *Times Higher* for the quality of our research. *The Guardian* placed Queen Mary even higher, 11th in the UK.

The Mile End Campus is a distinguishing feature of the College and is a pleasant surprise for visitors. It is a peaceful, secure and friendly environment only a few yards from the bustle of Mile End Road, with landscaped squares and a host of facilities together on one site: cafés, bars and restaurants, the Students' Union, canal-side accommodation in our Student Village, a bank, and a bookshop. The academic facilities are housed in pleasantly architecturally diverse buildings, ranging from the Victorian Queens' Building to the modern, award-winning Informatics Teaching Laboratory.

Over the last decade, £200 million has been invested in building and refurbishment programmes providing many specially designed and attractive facilities for both academic study and recreational use.

Queen Mary's Student Village, part of the College's Mile End Campus, was finally completed in 2007. The Student Village makes the Mile End site the largest self-contained residential campus within the University of London. The Village accommodates 1,000 students, meaning that 2,200 students now live on or around the Mile End site. In addition to student housing, Westfield's facilities include a shop, restaurant, launderettes, coffee bar and visiting staff flats. The Village and surrounding areas also benefit from 24-hour security to ensure students' safety.

In April 2005, Queen Mary opened its new Graduate Centre in the newly extended Lock-keeper's Cottage, by the Regent's Canal. The Graduate Centre was designed by Surface Architects, based in Shoreditch, who were awarded third prize (first place in the UK) in the 2004 International Young Architects of the Year Award. The School includes a seminar room and common room for staff and postgraduate students, and three further open plan rooms for postgraduate study. The Centre is open to all postgraduates in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The fully refurbished Postgraduate Law Centre at Lincoln's Inn Fields has an open study area for students, with 20 PCs and ten other desks. There are communal seating areas on the ground floor and in the basement for all students. There are no canteen facilities in the building, but the Holborn area is well served with shops, restaurants and coffee shops.



This guide has been produced by
the Publications and Web Office
for the School of Law – Pub4374

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