

NOTRE DAME LAW STUDENTS' SOCIETY
FIRST YEAR
HANDBOOK
2021



WWW.NDLSS.ORG

CONTENTS

1	_____	FOREWORD
2	_____	WELCOME
3	_____	FIRST YEAR COURSES
4	_____	PRESIDENT
5	_____	COMMITTEE TIPS
6	_____	TRUST THE PROCESS
7	_____	FIRST YEAR MIXER
8-9	_____	THE NDLS
10	_____	COMPETITIONS
11	_____	GET SOCIAL
12	_____	NDLS CAREERS
13	_____	NDLS SPORTS AND SUPPORT
14	_____	EXAMS AND STUDY TIPS
15	_____	GET INVOLVED

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Notre Dame Law Students' Society is honoured to be situated on the ancestral lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people. We acknowledge the First Australians as the traditional owners of the lands on which we study and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

FOREWORD

Jocelyne Boujos

President of the Law Society of Western Australia



Dear First Year Law Students

Hello to all of you...and congratulations. You have arrived after 12 years of school at an excellent course in an excellent university.

Full Disclosure: I have two connections to this university:

- I was one of the original lecturing staff at the embryonic Notre Dame Law School; and
- My eldest son is a graduate.

You are entering law at a time of seismic change in the legal profession, nationally and internationally brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a most exciting time.

Because of the pandemic, the legal system and legal profession have undergone profound change at a rapid rate. Lawyers and how they practice, and the judicial system including basic administration of justice, have had to adapt to forced changes. Flexible legal systems including the adoption of working from home and the use of existing technology have had to be adopted

along with social expectations. Knowledge of the interplay between courts and technology is more relevant than ever. However, always remember that technology cannot replace the ingenuity that exists in a living, breathing lawyer but it can augment that through memory, process retention and automation, and help legal assistants, paralegals and lawyers do their jobs better – you are perfectly placed in time to embrace these changes.

Law is a course that can inspire, frustrate and empower, not always in that order and not always equally. Law will challenge, provoke and push you out of your comfort zone...but it's worth it. Law is not meant to be easy – don't ever hesitate to ask a tutor or lecturer for clarification – trust me, you will not be the only one who feels puzzled.

You will learn the art of law, read cases to solve problems, often re-imagining the meaning of words and asking, repeatedly, what reasonable people would do. You will learn the value and art of legal referencing – see below...*

Mooting will propel your researching skills, so give it a go – you will slowly see law in a different light.

In terms of a career in the legal profession, if you want to become a solicitor or a barrister, then network and get work experience early. However, law degrees don't always lead to lawyers. Up to 50% of all law graduates enter non-legal careers where your skills are really valued. These are not lesser options. You may find that you obtain a good degree, and in that process find out what you excel at – this process may lead you down a different path. I completed a law degree but entered the Public Service, Australian Taxation Office, then lectured at UWA (Taxation!) and then commenced legal practice with a large firm after becoming

established in my specialist field. At each stage, different doors opened for me.

Above all **maintain your sanity. Students have, variously, noted the necessity to:**

schedule “do-nothing time”/ see family and friends/ spend time with non-law school people/ turn off electronics/ cook/ sleep/ breathe/ exercise/ find a hobby;

And that to do any of the above can be hard because:

*“Law school is more than attending classes. It involves many activities out of class including reading, case briefing, outlining your class notes, completing writing assignments, joining societies, building your resume, as well as studying.”**

In a world where social distancing has been and will be the new normal, maintaining a sense of community by staying connected to your family, friends, your fellow students and the wider legal profession has rarely been more important. I would therefore also encourage you to join societies such as the Law Society of Western Australia and the Notre Dame Law Society to build your networking skills and enjoy kinship and collegiality with other graduates and law professionals.

Good luck to you all.

Jocelyne Boujos

President of the Law Society of Western Australia

**This introduction was inspired and informed from various sources, including student consultation, legal association websites and published articles – details available on request.*

WELCOME

Professor Joan Squelch

Dean of Law



Welcome to all the first-year law students! We are delighted that you have chosen to study at the Notre Dame Law School and to join the Notre Dame community.

Hopefully, you are filled with excitement and anticipation as you commence your studies and take your first step towards preparing for an exciting career in law. It is also no doubt somewhat daunting especially as we all return to campus after a tumultuous 2020. As with law schools across the globe, our law school was thrust headlong into teaching and learning online, which was a whole new experience for students and staff.

Although students were faced with the overwhelming prospect of studying at home in a hugely different and unfamiliar way, online learning positively challenged students to be more independent, organised, resilient, flexible and adaptable learners. Unsurprisingly, these are all essential professional and workplace skills and attributes that the Law School continues to promote and develop through our rigorous and practice-based law program.

As we embark on the new academic year, we are thrilled to be back on campus and once again engaged in face-to-face, personalised learning, for which we are well known. But the new academic year will still be shaped and influenced by COVID restrictions and hence the law program will be

delivered as a truly blended program, combining the best of face-to-face and online learning. This year will once again challenge us all to embrace change and new and different ways of doing things. However, we also appreciate how daunting it can be to navigate your way through the first year of university and law school, especially in such unusual and uncertain times.

This handy guide will help! The NDLS are here to help you integrate into university life and to become actively engaged in law school activities. This guide is a starting point in providing heaps of useful information.

I encourage each and every law student to seize every opportunity the university and school has to offer. I hope you have a fun, rewarding and enriching first year at law school!

Professor Joan Squelch

Dean, School of Law

LAW SCHOOL

Phone: 9443 0741

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FIRST YEAR COURSES

LEGAL RESEARCH AND WRITING

Legal Research and Writing is an introductory core skills course for Law. Students will learn how to solve legal problems and approach law assignments; how to find, interpret and use primary and secondary sources; how to distinguish credible from non-credible sources; how to communicate clearly and persuasively in academic and professional contexts; and how to reference appropriately.

"CRIM" CRIMINAL LAW

Criminal Law A and B provides an introduction to criminal offences and criminal procedure. While the focus will be on the relevant State jurisdiction, aspects of Federal criminal law will also be introduced. The course also examines aspects relating to criminal responsibility.

LEGAL PROCESS ^{"STATS"} & STATUTORY INTERPRETATION

This course introduces students to a critical understanding of the institutions and practices that are basic to the law in Australia. This course provides a foundation for later courses, both in its content and its method of teaching, within the context of legal problem solving.

CONTRACT LAW

Contracts are legally enforceable promises or agreements. Contract A and B will focus on the principles of contract law governing the formation of a contract and the principles governing the context, effect and enforceability of contractual terms. Relevant principles from common law, equity and statute will be covered.

TORTS

In Torts A and B students will examine a variety of torts. The intention of torts will be covered, alongside a sampling of other torts such as nuisance and defamation. Unifying topics such as vicarious liability, multiple tortfeasors, apportionment of liability, limitation of actions and wrongful death will also be covered. There are many important contested issues in the law of torts, which speak to how our society should regulate civil wrongdoing.

LEGAL HISTORY

This course introduces students to a critical understanding of the institutions and practices that are basic to the law in Australia. This course provides a foundation for later courses, both in its context and its method of teaching, within the context of legal problem solving.

PRESIDENT

Congratulations to you all on what will undoubtedly be an exciting and rewarding journey as you pursue a Law degree here at the University of Notre Dame.

The NDLS is a student-run society who are here to represent you and to voice any opinions, thoughts or comments you may have. We are an incredible resource that is here to see to your success and growth as a Law student and individual.

This journey will be one like no other as you begin to forge your own path and start to think about the impact you want to make in not only your community but in the world. Whilst it will be one full of joy, fulfillment and excitement, you will also come across challenges and obstacles that comes with any venture in life.

You have an amazing NDLS Committee leading you this year for every step of this journey and to help you overcome anything in your way.

In this handbook you will find some tips and advice to assist you in making the transition into Law and/or University which have been compiled by Alex Barwick, your First Year Representative. Alex is an incredible person to guide you through the beginning of this year and help in any capacity he can. This being until one of you have the opportunity to take over from his role in Semester 2!

There are so many opportunities to get involved with the NDLS and I hope to see you at our future social events, competitions or in the committee itself.

I hope you all have a fantastic start to your Semester and remember that I am always here to have a chat in my capacity as President and as a friend.



CONTACT

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COMMITTEE TIPS

REBECCA, SOCIAL JUSTICE REP

“Don’t forget your worth. As a law student there are times when you might feel inferior or out of your depth, which is okay and perfectly normal. However, being inexperienced does not reduce your worth. Be kind to yourself and make sure the people around you show you the respect you deserve.”

FRANK, CAREERS AND EDUCATION VP

“It is imperative as an undergraduate that you gain as much practical experience in the legal profession as possible. Start applying for volunteering positions at Community Legal Centres and clerkships at Law Firms or Government departments/Agency’s as soon as possible even if you are only in your first or second semester. Volunteering or clerking is a fantastic productive way to spend your semester breaks. When it comes to finding work as a graduate, a CV with a wealth of practical experience is leaps and bounds more appealing to an employer than a CV with only good grades.”

TROY, CAREERS AND EDUCATION REP

“Fundamentally, your lecturers are here to help you and want you to succeed. If you are ever confused or have a question about something in-class, you should always ask your lecturer for help either when they are free during/after class or via email. Furthermore, you should always take the opportunity to speak up and try to engage in class activities. Lecturers are people too! An awkwardly silent classroom is miserable for everyone.”

MEG, TREASURER

“Working longer and harder is not necessarily working smarter. It’s important to find the right balance between your studies and finding time to relax and unwind. Be kind to yourself and don’t push yourself to extremes. Good study habits are a must!”

CHARLIE, COMPETITIONS REP

“Your academic transcript only shows the letter grade. Working and getting involved gives you something that will set you apart from the rest and will make all the difference for your future career.”

REM, MATURE AGE REP

“If you can’t afford to buy all/some of your textbooks, the library has the current editions available on high demand checkout, so you can loan them for a few hours to get your readings done each week.”

BELLA, SOCIAL VP

“Use your unit outlines! Put all the relevant dates for your assessments and their weighting in a diary. Make sure to consult your unit outline for every assessment before submitting them. Don’t let your law lecturer nit-pick over something like spacing and formatting.”

TRUST THE PROCESS.

Congratulations and welcome to the Law school! For the first half of 2021, I have the privilege of serving as your First-Year Representative in collaboration with the NDLS Committee.

The Committee and I volunteer for the greater good of the Law School community, which means we are here to help (by choice!) Remember to get in contact with myself, or the respective representative, whenever you have a concern. Coffee is always on us.

The most important thing to remember is that by receiving your offer to study law, the University identified the values, attributes and skills synonymous with a successful law student. You are in the right place.

Secondly, your lecturers and tutors know you are new! These programs are organised so that you learn in order, starting with the basics, until you can

analyse complex legal issues. So long as you enjoy the ride and follow the advice of your academics, you will no doubt make great strides in your legal studies.

Outside of class, a significant portion of your university experience is networking, socialising and making friends. Law is definitely who you know, (rewarded by what you know) and that starts with your peers. I invite you to come along to the First Year Mixer, annual Law Ball and other events as they are announced.

Finally, the competitions and extracurricular events are an amazing way to add breadth to your CV, which snowball into more opportunities later down the road. Saying 'yes' to as many things as possible pays off ten-fold.

PS. Join the Facebook group. Announcements, news and organising our events happen through that page.

The NDLS and I hope this handbook finds you well, and I look forward to getting to know you all throughout 2021 and beyond.

Alex Barwick

First Year Representative

2021

First Year Mixer

Mingle & Muffin

Come to Bateman's Courtyard for a
FREE coffee and muffin!

WHEN: Monday 8th March

TIME: 12 - 2pm

WHERE: Bateman's Courtyard

WHAT: Free Coffee and Muffin

THE NDLSS



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The NDLS is the student body that represents all students currently studying law at The University of Notre Dame Australia (Fremantle). The NDLS is responsible for the student experience on campus and hosts a range of events throughout the year including social, sporting, competitions and career orientated events. The Society also promotes student wellness.

All current Law Students at The University of Notre Dame Australia (Fremantle) are members of the NDLS while the elected committee focuses on the logistical operations throughout the year. If you'd like to get involved, contact the relevant representative via the details below.



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COMPETITIONS

Participating in competitions at law school is a fantastic way to develop as a young professional. The NDLS facilitators facilitate a number of junior and senior competitions throughout the academic year. These events are run with the law school and between external law schools.

Competing may seem daunting as a first-year student, however our NDLS Competitions Representatives, *Mikayla Ware* and *Charlie Richards*, will be to help you every step of the way. Participating will allow you to learn new skills, build your resume and form working relationships with your peers.

Not sure if you want to compete? There are other ways you can help out such as playing a witness in the Trial Advocacy competition, a client in the Client Interview competition, or joining the Competitions subcommittee to assist our representatives in the broader organisation and facilitation of events.



JUNIOR MOOT

SEMESTER 2

WHAT IS THE JUNIOR MOOT?

The Junior Moot Competition is designed to introduce students who have just begun their law degree to the world of academic competitions. It provides students with the opportunity to develop their advocacy skills, drafting of legal documents and formulation of legal arguments. The hypothetical scenario is based on topics that are accessible to first and second-year law students. Questions are limited to the topics of Criminal Law, Tort Law and Contract Law.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A moot is a mock appeal. It is a simulated judicial proceeding based on a hypothetical scenario. Two teams each consisting of two students debate issues of law, with one team representing the appellants and the other the respondents. There are no questions of fact in dispute, the moot will be decided simply on legal argument. The objective of the moot is to present the most persuasive legal argument based on the mock scenario. The competition assesses the student's ability to formulate a persuasive legal argument, as well as their public speaking skills.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

This competition aims to provide new law students with an opportunity to develop critical skills in public speaking, drafting of legal documents, formulation of legal argument and professional conduct.

JUNIOR CLIENT INTERVIEW

SEMESTER 2

WHAT IS JUNIOR CLIENT INTERVIEW?

The Client Interview Competition is NDLS' most popular competition, and is perfect for first-time competitors, as it does not require intensive preparation or extensive legal knowledge.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The competition is in an interview format, where teams of two act as solicitors meeting with their client. The interview is the first between the client and the solicitors, and teams should be able to build a relationship with the client while also identifying the client's problem, relevant facts to the case, and determining a suitable course of action.

Teams should also make sure that they address all the formalities of a client interview, such as discussing the fee schedule. Teams will receive a memorandum before the competition starts that provides an idea for the theme of the interview and allows teams to brainstorm questions for the client.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

The competition is specifically designed to help students learn important skills in interviewing, client relations and identifying legal and ethical issues. Want to know more about Competitions? You can contact our Competitions Representative, Meg Symonds at: competitions.ndlss@nd.edu.au

GET SOCIAL!

The NDLS social calendar plays a very big part of law school life. Each year, we play host to a cocktail party in semester one – to get ready for the big year ahead! Semester two sees the annual law ball, our biggest and most anticipated event of the year. Finally, at the end of semester two, students are able to let down their hair at our quiz night.

To keep up-to-date with info on all the NDLS social events, make sure to follow us on social media!



MEMBERS
PAY \$45



SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERS
PAY \$15



At only \$10, the Social membership entitles you to 10% off all social events in 2021. Not to mention \$10 off your NDLS Jumper, and \$5 off the NDLS Tote!



NDLSS CAREERS

The NDLSS offers a number of careers events throughout the year. These events give students the chance to get up close and personal with firms to see what they are really looking for in clerks and graduates. In 2020, we will continue running our careers symposiums in partnership with Bread and Common in Fremantle.

Additionally, each year the NDLSS releases a careers guide to aide students in structuring the way they apply for clerkships, giving valuable career insight and drawing on what was learnt during the symposiums throughout the year. First Year can be a very daunting time in the grand scheme of your career.

First Year is the perfect time to start thinking about how you can be competitive in the jobs market upon graduation. If you're interested in getting involved in a careers symposium, or joining the careers sub-committee, you can contact our Careers Vice President, Frank, at careers.ndlss@nd.edu.au

OUR ADVICE...

It's never too early to start attending careers events! Most students find it extremely beneficial to attend these events in their first year. They provide a better understanding about the field of law outside of university. Wouldn't you like to see the finish line from the start?

DO YOU KNOW THESE CAREER TERMS?

CLERKSHIPS

Clerkships are a key stepping stone to working in private practice. A clerkship is a short period of time, generally two to three weeks, where students work at a law firm providing support to a team through legal research, document management, client and team liaison and maintenance of different legal matters. You can think of a clerkship as an extended interview as law firms generally select their graduates from their clerkship pool.

LAW FIRMS

As you probably know, a law firm is a group of lawyers who work together. They can specialise in specific area of law or serve a specific geographic area. They can be categorised as a boutique, mid-tier and top-tier. Often, people refer to the 'big six' in Australia as Herbert Smith Freehills, King & Wood Mallesons, Clayton Utz, Minter Ellison, Ashurst and Allens.

GRADUATE POSITIONS

Receiving a graduate position at a firm means you will be able to do your PLT hours at that firm and will likely go onto being a lawyer within the firm.

PRACTICAL LEGAL TRAINING (PLT)

Practical Legal Training is a training program that you must complete once you have finished your law degree. PLT is designed to help you develop the practical, day-to-day skills you will need as an entry-level lawyer. Once you have finished your PLT and completed a number of practical hours, you will be eligible to be admitted as a lawyer.

ADMISSION

To practice or to call yourself a lawyer in Western Australia you must first be admitted to practice in Australia. This involves meeting the educational and practice requirements set by the Legal Practice Board of Western Australia and involves a hearing before the Supreme Court.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

Community Legal Centres (CLCs) are not for profit, non-government organisations that provide legal and welfare services to people in need. Some CLCs specialise in certain areas such as the legal problems of youth, tenants, migrants. CLCs are great places to get practical legal experience in a range of different areas.

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL

Lawyers who work 'in-house' within a company structure to provide legal advice to the company and is on the company's payroll. This is opposed to an outside counsel who would be a lawyer who works outside of the company.

NDLSS SPORTS

There are a number of sporting events to get involved in throughout the year. These include competing against other universities at numerous social and competitive events. In 2021, the NDLSS will facilitate competitions in Netball, Soccer and Boxing with more to be announced. These events are regularly followed by casual drinks or a party.

If you're interested in joining a team, you can express your interest at www.ndlss.org/sport or by getting in contact with our Sports Representative, Ella, at sport.ndlss@nd.edu.au.



SUPPORT SERVICES

While law school can be fun most of the time, there are times where you may feel overwhelmed and unsure of who to turn to. The following list is just a small number of places you can find support.

Remember, these services have been put in place to help you, utilise them as much or as little as you see fit.

LIFELINE

Lifeline WA's mission is to support people in crisis and create opportunities for emotional wellbeing.

24 Hour Hot Line: 13 11 14

Online: <https://www.lifelinewa.org.au/get-help/>

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

Always call 000 (Emergency Services) if life is in danger.

NOTRE DAME COUNSELOR

The Student Counselling Service is free, confidential and provides a safe environment for students to discuss academic, psychological and personal difficulties affecting their studies.

Make an Appointment: (08) 9433 0580

Location: ND5/100, P&O Hotel

BEYOND BLUE

Beyond blue is an Australian independent non-profit organisation working to address mental health.

24 Hour Hot Line: 1300 22 4636

Online: <https://online.beyondblue.org.au/OutOfHours/>

HEADSPACE

Headspace is an Australian non-profit organisation for youth mental health established by the Australian Government.

24 Hour Hot Line: 1800 650 890

Online: <https://headspace.org.au/contact-us/>

EXAMS AND STUDY TIPS

DO YOUR READINGS.

It's super important to stay on top of your readings in law school. Prescribed readings are examinable and your lecturers will expect that you have completed them. The trick with this is working smarter, not harder. Don't feel like you need to read it all at once!

The best place to start is by reviewing the relevant textbook chapters or required cases prior to your classes. This will mean you're familiar with the legal concepts and won't feel overwhelmed in class. There is always a supplementary reading list that you can look at after class if you're feeling confused about a topic. These readings are also great to go back to when you're studying for exams as they often give a more critical analysis about the topic.

KEEP IT ORGANISED.

Everyone has their own style of note taking. It is likely that it will take you a few semesters to figure out what works for you. Many students use the Cornell method of note taking. You can find templates for this online. The main thing to focus on is breaking down the information you learn in lectures, and in your readings, to easily digestible material. Make sure you're doing this consistently and you'll be on the road to being a great note-taker in no time!

BREAK DOWN THE KEY POINTS!

Your lecturers will usually upload their lecture slides to Blackboard a few days before your class. This is a great time to go over the content that they have provided and take out the key points. Many people copy the information from the slides into their notes document and then add onto that in class. This ensures all of your notes are in one place.

PREPARE QUESTIONS

Asking question in class is a great way to clarify your thoughts and reassure yourself that you're on the right track. While you may feel nervous asking questions in your first year, it is important to remember that most people will have similar questions to you, and will be glad that you spoke up. Preparing your questions before class shows your lecturer that you're on top of you content and allows you to extend yourself in discussion.

LIBRARY TIP!

You can often find your prescribed texts and other useful textbooks in the reserved section behind the Library reception. You can borrow these books for two hours at a time as they are usually in high demand. If you're the last one to borrow the book for the day you can take it home overnight, but make sure to return it the next morning or risk getting a library fine!

1. TIME MANAGEMENT

Make sure you know the structure of the exam and break it up into parts. Go back to blank questions at the end.

2. DON'T RELY ON OPEN BOOK

Mastering an open book exam is hard. Do not copy your notes word for word into your exam. Show you actually understand the content!

3. PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Your exams will generally be based off of your tutorial questions. You can't be examined on something you haven't been taught. Answer, look for feedback, and rewrite your answers.

4. STUDY GROUPS

Study groups help you stay motivated. You can book a study room or create a Zoom call. You'd be surprised how smart your friends are!

5. STAY CALM

Exams are not the be all and end all of University. An exam is a small step in a big journey. It's okay to feel stressed and overwhelmed. You've got this.

GET INVOLVED

LAW ACCESS WALK FOR JUSTICE

Each year the Notre Dame Law Student Society participates in the Law Access Walk for Justice. The walk celebrates the pro bono work of the legal profession of Western Australia and raises funds for the charity, Law Access, who matches individuals and community organisations seeking legal assistance with pro bono lawyers.

If you're interested in participating, or want to get involved in events involving social justice, get in touch with our Social Justice Representative, Rebecca, at socialjustice.ndlss@nd.edu.au

JOIN THE NDLSS!

Nominations for First Year Representative open early second semester. This position is packed full of opportunities, socialisation and responsibility, but worry not, as the committee will work with you to ensure a seamless handover.

Plenty of other subcommittees require your help now! Visit our website, www.ndlss.org to sign up!



OUR ADVICE...

The extracurriculars are what makes you stand out as a student, but also a professional. The soft skills are arguably the most important when it comes to finding work experience in the legal profession!

BE A CLIENT OR WITNESS IN OUR COMPETITIONS

Our Competitions Representatives, Charlie and Mikayla, are always looking for students to put on their acting hats and be clients in our Client Interview competitions, or witnesses in our Trial Advocacy competitions. This is a fantastic way to get an idea about how competitions at university work, without actually competing. Plus, you're bound to make great friends.