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**ADAM SMITH COLLEGE**  
INSPIRING LEARNING

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# Course Handbook

**HNC/HND Year 1**  
**Legal Services**

## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Welcome to Adam Smith College .....                       | 3  |
| Information about your course .....                       | 3  |
| Your Curriculum Head .....                                | 4  |
| Your attendance at college and part-time employment ..... | 4  |
| Your learning .....                                       | 5  |
| Credit for previous learning.....                         | 6  |
| The aims of your course .....                             | 6  |
| The structure of your course .....                        | 7  |
| Assessment of your work.....                              | 8  |
| Re-assessment of your work .....                          | 9  |
| Submission of your coursework .....                       | 9  |
| Cheating and plagiarism .....                             | 10 |
| Support for your learning .....                           | 10 |
| Your feedback.....  | 11 |
| Your representation.....                                  | 11 |
| Your comments, complaints or compliments .....            | 12 |
| Code of conduct .....                                     | 13 |
| Progression .....   | 15 |

## Welcome to Adam Smith College

This is the Course Handbook for the HNC/HND Year 1 Legal Services. On behalf of the Course Team I would like to warmly welcome you to Adam Smith College. We feel sure that you will enjoy your time spent here.

To help you make the most of your time at College and to familiarise you with your course we have produced this course handbook. In here you will find information about the structure of your course, the teaching and learning styles used and the ways in which your work will be assessed and graded.

There is a considerable amount of information contained in this handbook, some of which will be of greater relevance to you as you work through the course than it is at the start of your studies in the College. However, we recommend that you read this Course Handbook through carefully **now**, then keep it safely - you will need to use it through your course.

We hope you will find the handbook a useful guide to your course and wish you every success in your studies.

Mary Smith

Curriculum Head: HNC/HND Year 1 Legal Services

## Information about your course

Your course is:

HNC/HND Year 1 Legal Services

Your Curriculum Head is:

Mary Smith

His/Her office is:

Mezzanine, Nairn Campus

His/Her telephone number is:

01592 223753

His/Her email address is:

[marysmith@adamsmith.ac.uk](mailto:marysmith@adamsmith.ac.uk)

Scheduled guidance time:

TBC

## **Your Curriculum Head**

Each course in the Adam Smith College is assigned a Curriculum Head, whose role is to provide you with advice and support through your course of study. This falls roughly into two categories – guidance related to your studies and pastoral care to help you deal with any difficulties you might encounter of, for example, a personal, financial or health-related nature.

At the beginning of your course you will agree your learning targets with your Curriculum Head. These will be recorded on your Learner Agreement which both of you will sign. Throughout your course, your Curriculum Head will monitor your progress and meet with you regularly during the year to discuss how you are getting on.

Your Curriculum Head will also be available at a set time each week when you can meet if there's something you need to discuss. However, if something comes up which has to be dealt with urgently, you can ask to speak to your Curriculum Head at any time. He/she might not be able to meet you immediately – Curriculum Heads have classes to teach and other students to look after – but he/she will offer you an appointment as soon as possible or refer you to another appropriate member of staff.

Your Curriculum Head may not always be able to personally provide you with the sort of help or support you need, in which case he/she might recommend that you are referred to a member of the College's Guidance or Learning Support staff.

So, if at any time throughout your course, you experience difficulties which are affecting your progress as a student, your Curriculum Head should be your first contact. Please remember that unresolved problems rarely just go away. On the contrary, they tend to get worse the longer they're not dealt with. So, speak to your Curriculum Head sooner rather than later.

## **Your attendance at college and part-time employment**

Your success as a student depends on full and regular attendance at **all** classes. You should inform your Curriculum Head as soon as possible if you have problems with attendance. Our records show that students who do not attend all their classes have a very high risk of failure.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For full details of regulations about attendance, see the College Attendance Policy and Procedure.

We recognise that you may need to undertake part-time work, but we strongly advise you not to take employment of more than 15 hours a week if you are a full time student. Should you need to take employment of more than 15 hours per week we recommend you register as a part time student. A full time student is expected to follow their timetable and negotiate work times around it.

## Your learning

Your College course will provide you with constant opportunities to learn new skills and acquire knowledge in your chosen subject areas. In order to make the most of all the opportunities available, you need to organise and plan your learning and also to manage your time effectively.

You must attend **all** your timetabled classes. You also need to study in your own time and you should plan to spend several hours a week to fulfil your commitment as a full-time student. You need to allocate time for this in your diary.

Prepare for lectures and tutorials by doing any reading or exercises in advance. Always make some notes – there is usually a handout provided. Review these after the class and ask your lecturer if there is anything you do not understand.

Note assignment deadlines and exam dates in your diary and remember to begin assignments early. You will enjoy researching and planning your work if you allow yourself plenty of time. Make sure you understand what you need to do and plan how you are going to tackle it. Seek advice from your lecturer or Curriculum Head if there is anything that needs clarification.

For full details of regulations about attendance, see the College Attendance Policy and Procedure.

In summary:

- ❖ plan your learning strategy
- ❖ allocate enough time
- ❖ attend **all** of your classes
- ❖ start assignments well in advance
- ❖ seek advice and help
- ❖ use the learning resources offered
- ❖ enjoy the learning experience!

## **Credit for previous learning**

Some students have previous experience or qualifications for which they may receive credit on their present course of study. If you have any qualification that may exempt you from part of your course, for example from school or another college, you may apply for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). Similarly, if you have undertaken work, paid or voluntary, that has resulted in learning skills or knowledge that is equivalent to units you will be studying here, you may apply for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). Together these are known as AP(E)L and it means you do not have to duplicate study you have done previously. It does not necessarily have to be in your chosen subject, but it must be at the same level as your course of studies here.<sup>2</sup>

If you wish to claim for APL/AP(E)L please speak to your Curriculum Head.

## **The aims of your course**

The aims of your course are:

- ❖ to develop your knowledge of the facts, theories, concepts, applications, development and importance of legal services;
- ❖ to enhance your practical skills in using IT in the legal sector;
- ❖ to provide a sound basis for those of you who may decide go on to a more advanced course of study;
- ❖ to give you experience of the equipment, materials, processes and practices currently used in the legal sector;
- ❖ to encourage your development of effective learning strategies.

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<sup>2</sup> For full details of the scheme for crediting previous learning, see the College Credit Transfer and APL/APEL Procedure.

## The structure of your course

The course consists of 30 credits.

The course consists of 3 or 4 days of formal classes each week along with individual study and coursework.

The units you will study in Semester 1 are:

| Semester 1 |                                  |        |
|------------|----------------------------------|--------|
| Unit Code  | Unit Title                       | Credit |
| F1A534     | Property Law                     | 1      |
| F1A734     | Scottish Legal System            | 1      |
| F1P934     | Scots Private Law                | 2      |
| F1B334     | Commercial Law                   | 2      |
| DE2433     | IT in Business – an introduction | 1      |
| DE1P34     | Office Management                | 2      |
| F3HT34     | Personal Development Planning    | 1      |
| DE3N34     | Communications                   | 1      |

The units you will study in Semester 2 are:

| Semester 1 and 2 |  |        |
|------------------|--|--------|
| Unit Code        | Unit Title                               | Credit |
| F1P934           | Scots Private Law continuing             |        |
| F1B334           | Commercial Law continuing                |        |
| F1B135           | Legal Research Techniques                | 1      |
| G1H843           | Legal Services Graded Unit 1             | 1      |
| F3HT34           | Personal Development Planning continuing |        |
| DE1P34           | Office Management continuing             |        |
| F1A334           | Legal Secretarial Practice               | 1      |

## Assessment of your work

Throughout your course, your work will be assessed in a number of different ways, depending on the different criteria in individual units.<sup>3</sup>

The majority of courses delivered in the College are assessed partly or wholly on a continuous basis – in other words, you will be assessed on parts of your work as you go along rather than all of it at the end of the unit. This assessment is carried out by the lecturer teaching the unit.

So that assessments can be fair to all students, and whoever teaches them, internal assessments are checked by other lecturers teaching the same, or similar, units. This is a process called ‘internal moderation’.

Over and above the internal moderation of assessments of student work, awarding bodies check that colleges are assessing work appropriately by a process called ‘external verification’. This process involves the awarding body carrying out checks on College staff’s assessments of student work. This is done by sending ‘external moderators’ to the College, where they check assessments against national standards.

Only after these three stages have been completed can you be sure of your results, the certificates for which will be sent to you directly by the awarding body, not the College.

Internal assessment is not just about judging whether you have passed or failed. It also provides both you and your lecturers with important information about what you’re doing well and where you have shortcomings in your knowledge, understanding or skills. Assessment is closely linked to the learning process in the sense that the feedback you will receive from your lecturers will help you improve your work in the future.

Finally, a range of courses delivered in the College are assessed by means of an externally-set and externally-assessed examination. The examining body will inform you directly whether or not you have completed your course successfully. College lecturers are not in a position to tell you whether you have passed or failed, until they have been informed by the examining body (usually at the same time as you will know directly from the examining body). If in doubt, please ask your lecturer about the procedures used.

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<sup>3</sup> For full details of the College’s regulations about assessment, see the College’s Assessment Procedure.

## **Re-assessment of your work**

If you are unsuccessful in an internal assessment, you will be offered the opportunity to be re-assessed. Depending on the arrangements for re-assessment laid down for a particular unit, this may involve retaking either the whole assessment or just part of it.

You will normally only be allowed one (or, in exceptional circumstances, two) re-assessment opportunities.

## **Submission of your coursework**

You should hand all coursework in to the subject tutor.

All coursework for assessment will have a specified deadline for submission. It is essential that you meet the submission deadline to ensure fairness amongst all students and to enable staff to mark efficiently.

Your subject lecturer may allow you an extension to a submission date if there are valid circumstances affecting your ability to meet the deadline.

Any coursework (for which there are no mitigating circumstances or an agreed extension) handed in after the submission deadline will normally receive a mark of 0.

If you are unwell when completing assessed coursework or sitting examinations, or have any other specific difficulties that may affect your performance in assessed coursework or examinations, you should notify your Curriculum Head in writing of the circumstances as soon as possible, and make immediate arrangements for medical certificates or other letters of support to be submitted.

## **Cheating and plagiarism**

There are various forms of academic dishonesty but in the student's context it means cheating in examinations or presenting work for assessment which is not your own.

Plagiarism as a form of cheating takes place when the student 'borrows' or copies information, data or results from an unacknowledged source, without quotation marks or any indication that the presenter is not the original author or researcher.

If carried out knowingly, cheating and plagiarism have the objective of deceiving examiners and this threatens the integrity of the assessment procedures and the value of your award.

Work produced by someone else may be summarised or repeated providing it is referenced to the original author. As well as text, work such as diagrams, maps and charts must also be acknowledged. In addition to the use of quotation marks when quoting from original sources and secondary material, full reference for both quotes and paraphrases or summaries of published material must be given. All references should then be included in a bibliography at the end of the piece of work. Appropriate references for web-based material must also be given, including the relevant URL.

Any student found to have used unfair means in any examination or assessment procedure will be penalised.<sup>4</sup>

## **Support for your learning**

The College has a positive policy of supporting students with learning difficulties or disabilities and their interests are represented by the Diversity Committee which reports directly to the Principals Group. The College has a Learning Support team, which can provide help and advice on all aspects of learning support and coping with learning difficulties.

The College offers support in making alternative arrangements for exams and assessment, support with study skills and advice with applications for the Disabled Students Allowance. Support and advice can also be provided in the specification and purchase of specialist equipment and the use of Information Technology.

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<sup>4</sup> For full details of the College's regulations on cheating and plagiarism, see the College Academic Deceit Procedure.

In order to ensure that you are provided with the appropriate advice and support from the start of your studies it is important that you discuss any difficulties and special requirements with the Learning Support Manager, or with your Curriculum Head, as early as possible.

## **Your feedback**

The College requires all courses to have a formal system through which students are invited to comment routinely, in confidence, upon the teaching they have received. This helps us to check that students have a clear idea of our aims in teaching particular units, and of what we expect them to do; that our classroom teaching is effective and stimulating; that our advice and feedback to students on individual work is helpful; and that our resources are adequate.

Questionnaires are the primary mechanism for this formal 'feedback'. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire for each unit you are taught. We appreciate that they can be tiresome to complete in large numbers, but hope that you will take the time to give a full and detailed response. Both negative and positive feedback is important. In order to be able to assess the feedback and to attempt to take appropriate action it is important that when making comments you indicate **why** you feel that something is good or bad, not just that you think it is.

Each lecturer responsible for a unit will prepare a short report analysing the questionnaire returns, highlighting any criticisms or suggestions. The report and the questionnaires for each unit will then be passed on to the Curriculum Head, who will present the reports at meetings of the Course Committee. The reports will also be discussed at appropriate meetings of staff within the department so that appropriate action can be taken. A summary of the student feedback and the action taken will be included in the Institute's Annual Report which is presented to the College Academic Board.

## **Your representation**

Each course in the College is required to have a Course Committee. This meets at least twice a year to review the course and consists of the Curriculum Head, all member of staff who teach units on the course and two representatives from the students on the course.

Prior to each meeting, your course representatives will be given a copy of the agenda and will be asked to consult their fellow students about the items listed and be prepared to report to the meeting on any issues raised.

Following the meeting, the class representatives will receive a copy of the Course Review report to share with their fellow students on the course.

The existence of the formal system of student representation doesn't mean that you should feel this is the only channel open to you. You may of course raise issues directly with a lecturer or your Curriculum Head. Individual problems are often likely to be more easily and quickly resolved in this way.

### **Your comments, complaints or compliments**

Naturally, we hope that your experience at the Adam Smith College will be an enjoyable and rewarding one. However, we do recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and encourage you to make your comments or complaints known to us so that we have the opportunity to resolve the problem and improve our services to you.

Problems are often most quickly and easily sorted by being dealt with informally. So we would ask that, in the first instance, you raise the matter with the appropriate member of staff. If you're not satisfied with the outcome, you can discuss the matter with your Curriculum Head.

Comments or complaints can also be put forward through your course representatives.

Where informal methods have failed to resolve the problem, you can make a formal complaint through the College's Complaint Form, which is available at Reception on all College campuses and in outreach centres or through the Students' Association.

It's always good to hear about what you think we do well and we encourage you to use the Compliments Form available at Reception. Every compliment received will be passed on to the person or department it's about.

## **Code of conduct**

Students agree to follow the Code of Conduct when they enrol. (\* College policies and Procedures are available in full on the Intranet for elements marked with \*.)

Individuals who do not follow the Code of Conduct may be dealt with through the Disciplinary procedure.

### **1 Attendance\***

Full attendance, as far as possible, is expected of all students. Those who get EMAs must have 100% attendance or they will lose their money. Absence below 90% will result in a Stage 1 advisory letter for all students. It is important that you discuss any problems regarding attendance with your Curriculum Head or a member of the Guidance Team, who may be able to offer advice and guidance with any difficulty you are experiencing.

### **2 Late Arrival/Appointments**

Appointments should be arranged for times outwith classes to avoid disruption. Late arrival or early departure must be agreed with the class lecturer in advance.

### **3 Equal Opportunities\***

You must observe and follow the College Equal Opportunities Policy, and treat people fairly regardless of their gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, race, class or disability.

### **4 Respect for Others**

You must show respect to all members of the College community and must not prevent others from achieving their goals in learning or recreational activities.

### **5 Language**

Language or gestures that offend other members of the College community must not be used.

### **6 Bullying and Harassment\***

Intimidation, harassment, provoking or threatening any individual whilst on College related activities is not allowed.

### **7 Behaviour**

You should behave in a responsible and reasonable manner within the College, on external College-related activities and not damage the reputation of the College.

## **8 Internet and E-mail Acceptable Use\***

By signing the enrolment form you are agreeing that you will use the Internet appropriately and will not transmit, retrieve or store any communications, which are

- Discriminatory or of a harassing nature
- Insulting or offensive to any group or individual
- Obscene or pornographic - this includes images of nudes or sexual acts
- Abusive, worrying, annoying or threatening to others
- Chain letters
- Illegal or against College policy

## **9 Drug and Alcohol Misuse\***

Students should not possess, use, supply or be under the influence of alcohol or any illegal/harmful substance in the College environment.

## **10 Health and Safety\***

It is expected that students take proper care of themselves and others so that their actions or omissions do not cause harm to their own health and safety and that of others. Our terms of enrolment stipulate that the College has absolute discretion to remove a student from a course, or even refuse a place, if they pose a risk to themselves or to others which cannot be managed.

## **12 Property**

Students should not misuse or cause damage to either College property or property belonging to staff, fellow students, or attempt to unlawfully remove equipment from College premises.

## **13 Smoking**

The college is a non-smoking environment. Smoking is not allowed in the College apart from in the designated area.

## **14 Gambling**

Gambling is not allowed on College campuses.

## **15 Eating/Drinking**

Students should only eat and drink in the designated areas within the College

## **16 Copying - Academic Deceit**

When you hand in an assignment or assessment it must be your work. You must not engage in:

- Plagiarism which is defined as 'copying or passing-off as your own, work which belongs to another'
- Cheating in examinations

## **17 Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices**

Mobile phones, electronic devices and pagers must be turned off and not used during class or in designated learning areas unless specifically approved by a tutor.

## **18 ID Cards**

You will be provided with name cards for identification and security. You must present (display) your card when asked.

### **Failure to Comply with the Code of Conduct**

If a student breaches the Code of Conduct, the College may implement the Disciplinary Procedure. Details of this are available in full on the Intranet, but the following are key features:

A student shall have the nature of any breach of discipline fully explained and in normal circumstances be given an opportunity to prepare and present a response prior to any form of action being taken by the College.

A student may be accompanied at a Disciplinary Hearing by a friend, Students' Association representative or other appropriate person e.g. National Union of Students representative.

A student shall be notified in writing of the outcome of any hearing and the action to be taken, including the right to appeal.

## **Progression**

Once you have completed your HNC you may wish to continue your studies at Adam Smith College or at University. Normal progression from this course would be to a degree programme at Adam Smith College validated by the University of Abertay. If you wish to progress to university, you must complete and submit an UCAS form. These can be found online at: <http://www.ucas.ac.uk>.

Your form must be completed by the end of November and you should inform your Curriculum Head when you have done this so that it can be checked and an academic reference can be completed before the deadline for submission. The guidance team hold sessions in October/November to help you complete this form and you should make sure that you know where and when these sessions are to be held. Information about the courses available at Abertay can be found on the University web site: <http://www.abertay.ac.uk>.

If you intend to continue to study at Adam Smith College, you should discuss this with your Curriculum Head.

**Progression to Degree at Adam Smith College**

