ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

The Law Extension Committee’s primary methods of assisting in your preparation for the Board’s examinations are:

- the lecture and weekend school programs in each subject
- the research and resource provision through the Law Library
- the setting and assessing of assignments

In accordance with the Legal Profession Admission Rules, the LEC is obliged to inform the Board when a student has not completed the LEC’s course of instruction in a particular subject to the LEC’s satisfaction and is therefore ineligible to sit the examination in that subject. See page 37.

To be eligible to sit for the Board’s examination, students must register online with the LEC in each subject in which they are enrolled and satisfactorily complete any task prescribed in the LEC’s teaching program for that subject.

ASSIGNMENTS/ELIGIBILITY

Assignments are used to assess eligibility. Students are expected to achieve at least a pass mark of 50% in assignments to be eligible to sit for examinations. However, a category of “deemed eligible” has been introduced to offer students whose assignment mark is between 40-49% an opportunity to sit for the examination. In these circumstances students are often advised not to sit. A mark below 40% means a student is not eligible to sit for the examination.

Please refer to the relevant Subject Guide and the Course Materials section on the Webcampus for the guide to the Presentation and Submission of Assignments.

Assignments as Part of the Board’s Examinations

Assignment results contribute 20% to the final mark in each subject. The LEC administers the setting and marking of assignments. The LEC engages the LPAB’s examiners to assess or supervise the assessment of assignments.

Submission/Late Assignments

Assignments should be submitted by the due date unless

please:

- Check your Subject Guides for the compulsory requirements in the subjects you are studying, make a careful note of the due date and ensure you are able to complete them by the due date.
- Check your copy of the Guide to the Presentation and Submission of Assignments before completing and submitting an assignment.
- Submit your assignments online to the Law Extension Committee, not the Legal Profession Admission Board.

an extension has been granted; otherwise a late penalty will apply. Late assignments that have not been granted an extension attract a penalty of one mark out of 20, or 5% of the total marks available, per day. Assignments that are more than ten days late will not be accepted. See the Webcampus for an elaboration of this policy.

Purpose of Assignments and Submission Policy

Assignments are prescribed to ensure that you take the opportunity to refine your techniques of research, analysis and expression, and to give you feedback on them.

It is an integral part of the discipline of studying law that tasks are performed in a responsible and timely manner. Adhering to deadlines is an important aspect of this. Also, to be fair to all students, there must be a substantially equal amount of time available for each assessment task.

Very early in each session you should make sure you will be able to adhere to the prescribed submission dates for compulsory tasks.

Assignment questions and due dates in all subjects can be found under Course Materials on the Law Extension Committee Webcampus. Once you have registered online with the Law Extension Committee, you will have full access to all the facilities on the Webcampus (see page 23 for instructions).

Presentation of written work is also a vital part of a professional discipline. Please note that where an assignment has more than one part, all parts must be attempted. As a general rule, students who do not attempt to answer all questions in an assignment will not achieve a satisfactory result. With regard to assessment and eligibility criteria relating to assignments, see pages 28 and 37.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

In cases of unforeseen hardship, typically illness or accident, we will try to provide an opportunity for a student to submit an assignment for up to 10 days after the due date. The critical word here is “unforeseen”. All students should try to ensure that they are not vulnerable to last minute technology or workplace crises. Complete assignments ahead of the due date.

If, after taking these precautions, it is apparent that an assignment will not be submitted by the due date, it is imperative that you contact the LEC immediately. Unless we are contacted prior to the due date, an extension cannot be granted.

Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The Law Extension Committee may use its discretion to grant extensions, however as a general
rule, an extension will only be granted based on serious misadventure or unforeseen medical grounds. The application must be accompanied by a specifically detailed medical certificate, or in other extenuating circumstances accompanied by a statutory declaration and evidence of unforeseen disruption to study.

Pressure of work, holidays or family commitments generally are not valid reasons for an extension.

REQUESTING AN EXTENSION
If you feel your circumstances meet the abovementioned criteria of unforeseen hardship and you would like to request an extension, you should send an email outlining your request to enquiries@lec.pip.com.au before the assignment due date. Your email should include your name and student number, the subject you are requesting the extension for, the number of extra days you feel you need and the reason you are requesting the extension. A response to your request will be sent by return email within two business days. All extension requests are treated in the strictest confidence.

Please note, an extension waives the late submission penalty for the time specified in the extension. It does not extend the late submission deadline.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS
All assignments should be submitted online through the Webcampus Submit Assignments no later than 11.59pm (in the time zone applicable to Sydney, either Australian Eastern Standard Time or Australian Eastern Daylight Time) on the due date. The assignment must be submitted in a readable format to be accepted. If unable to submit through the Webcampus then you must email your assignment to:
lecass@pip.com.au

All assignments must be submitted electronically.

Please ensure you submit the correct version of your assignment and that your answers to individual questions are submitted as one document.

The Results screen allows students to track the progress of assignments. Students are able to check:

- when an assignment was received,
- if the assignment is able to be read,
- the mark.

Please check the Results screen before contacting the Law Extension Committee with an assignment query.

It is your responsibility to notify the Law Extension Committee if, three business days after submitting the assignment, you become aware that your assignment is not recorded as having been processed or shows as “unable to open” or “wrong file format”. If this is the case, please ring the office and have your tracking number and student number ready to provide the Law Extension Committee staff.

Further information regarding the submission of the assignments is provided in the Guide to the Presentation and Submission of Assignments.

Eligibility to Sit Exam
Prior to the examination, assignments will be returned to students and results posted on students’ individual results pages of the LEC webcampus. Students are responsible for checking their results screen and ascertaining their eligibility to sit for the examination.

Review
Where a student’s overall mark after the examination is between 40-49%, the student’s assignment in that subject will be reviewed prior to a final mark in the subject being awarded. Except in the case of demonstrable error, assignment marks will not otherwise be reviewed prior to the examination.

Feedback
Markers will make every effort to mark your paper quickly. Comments by markers will address the aim of the question.

The LEC Office is receiving an increasing number of calls from students who are dissatisfied with their assignment mark. Consistent with our explanation of the nature of the course, we cannot provide the amount of consultation that might be expected from full-time academic staff. Prior to contacting the LEC, students should go through their marked assignments carefully and critically. If you think there is an error in the marking, or you cannot understand a specific aspect of the marking, you may contact the LEC for clarification. It is not appropriate to contact the lecturer or marker directly. A request for further feedback must be as particular as possible. For example, an argument that a lot of work was done but is not reflected in the mark is not sufficient, nor is a comment to the effect that someone else has read the assignment and would give it a higher mark. A useful starting point is to delay reacting to the mark for a while, assume the mark and comments are valid, think about what you have submitted in the light of your re-evaluation of your answer, and then ask yourself what further guidance you need.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM
The Law Extension Committee encourages collaboration in learning. The active exchange of ideas is one of the
most powerful teaching tools. In teaching, our lecturers are encouraged to share their particular insights with students, and to be generous in the guidance they offer in bringing deeper understanding to the subjects they teach. Students are encouraged to ask relevant questions in class to seek the opportunity to make serious comment and to discuss the substance of lectures with fellow students.

The Law Extension Committee does not object to students making audio tapes of lectures for their own individual study and for their own study group purposes provided permission is requested of the teacher and the class is not disturbed. The Law Extension Committee does warn, however, against the sale or purchase of any notes purportedly transcribed from lectures or tapes of lectures.

It is vitally important that in examinations and in assignments the work submitted is your own. This does not mean that the ideas you put forward will be necessarily of your invention, but they should represent your considered response.

Any part of an assignment that is not your own words must be specifically identified and referenced. Use a comprehensive and consistent referencing style.

One of the most serious forms of academic misconduct is plagiarism, or seeking to use someone else’s material as your own. It is similar to the offences in commercial and professional life of passing off, of misrepresentation, of deceptive conduct. If in doubt, acknowledge the source of your information.

It is serious misconduct for a student to copy an answer to an assignment of another student, whether the student is a past or current student or a student doing a similar course at another institution. Students need to be especially careful not to appropriate the notes or electronic files of others.

Nor should students allow others to appropriate their notes or electronic files knowing or suspecting that their material may be used inappropriately.

The possible impact on a person’s study and career, as well as the deeper moral issue, should make avoiding the risk of plagiarism a fundamental priority. In relation to this, students’ attention is directed particularly to Rule 82 of the Legal Profession Admission Rules, which provides in part as follows:

“The Examinations Committee and the Law Extension Committee shall be vigilant to detect any cases of cheating in examinations or in home assignments . . .”

The consequences of an allegation of plagiarism can be dire. After inviting a response to the allegation, the Examinations Committee may hold a formal hearing, chaired by a Judge.

If plagiarism is established, exclusion from the course, at least for a period of time, is likely. For a person intending to practise, there is the professional issue of character.

An appreciation of the distinction between plagiarism and collaboration allows for a rich and resourceful period of study followed by the intense learning experience of constructing your own analysis, synthesis, and presentation, and the satisfaction and fulfilment of personal achievement.

**ASSIGNMENT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

There are ways you can increase your chances of a good grade. First, make sure you answer the question. It is surprising how many people either misread the question, answer only part of what is asked, or answer the question they would like to see on the paper rather than the one that is there. Organise your time. Plan your answer. While you will need a command of factual detail, many questions will want an argument from you. Identify issues. Explore the application of legal principles and doctrines. Weigh up competing claims.

Concise, coherent and clear writing should be a priority. The marker needs to see that you understand the issues you are writing about. Point form answers and executive summaries often don’t do this. Be fluent, be logical, be direct. Presentation is also important. A consistent and thorough referencing style should be learned early. The test is whether the reader can easily find the source you are using from your reference.

Since assignments and examinations are very different in nature, a direct correlation between assignment results and anticipated examination performance is not possible. However, identification of your strengths and weaknesses in assignment writing will assist your exam preparation both in terms of understanding the content of the subject and in presenting your answers.

Assignments are assessed carefully and marks are reviewed before eligibility status is recorded. We do not have the resources to remark assignments but we will offer as much assistance as possible in clarifying and furthering understanding and analysis of issues.

The grading and assessment criteria identified on page 18 of the Guide to the Presentation and Submission of Assignments (which can be found under course materials in the Webcampus) are cumulative - each level assumes that the characteristics of the one below have been satisfied.

**Assignments Submitted in a Previous Session**

A student must complete all compulsory assignments in that subject to be eligible to sit the ensuing examination. An assignment submitted in a previous session does not count towards the current session.