The Inns of Court College of Advocacy

Legal Research Guide

ICCA Bar Course 2026

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ICCA Bar course – research guide

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Chapter 1 - Ten rules for research

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Rule no. 1: There is no ‘right’ way of doing research

Legal researchers often feel that there is a ‘right’ way of conducting legal research: a set of rules which can be applied no matter what the topic. This is not the case. Just as there is no single source (yet) which provides all the legal primary and secondary sources you need, so there is no one approach which applies to all legal research. The intention behind our training and this guide is to demonstrate the range of resources and research strategies available. Some will work brilliantly for some research tasks but not be an efficient way of carrying out other research.

You will quickly develop search strategies and familiarity with sources and use these on a regular basis. Do remember, however, when faced with a different research task that there may be other sources you have not used before which will allow you to carry out your research more efficiently.

Rule no. 2: Check you understand what is required of you

This probably sounds self-evident, but do make sure you know

- what you are being asked to do,
- when you need to provide the results and
- the form in which you should present them.

Getting this wrong can waste a huge amount of time.

This can be a particular issue when you start pupillage and you work for a number of different barristers who may have very different ways of working. They may use jargon or give references which mean nothing to you. Although you may feel awkward asking for clarification, this will be less embarrassing than confessing later on that you could not find anything because you did not know what you were looking for.

Before you start your research:

- **Clarify any jargon or abbreviations**

This will not necessarily be limited to legal jargon. You may encounter jargon and abbreviations relating to industry sectors, etc.

- **Check the correct spelling of any names which are unclear**

This is particularly relevant for cases involving parties with unusual names, although do keep in mind the fact that the person giving the reference may have mis-spelt it.

- **Challenge vague terms in research requests**

E.g. 'Find a recent case' – what is meant by recent: last month, last year, last five years?

- **Check the deadline**

If you are working for different barristers you will probably notice how some people insist everything is urgent, while others do not. 'Urgent' can mean different things to different people – it can mean within the next hour, but it might mean by the close of business. It is important to have a set deadline rather than a vague concept like 'urgent' when prioritising different pieces of work.

- **Check how the research fits into the wider piece of work**

Your research is likely to be directed to different purposes. It might be connected to preliminary advice, a key point being argued in a high-profile case before the Supreme Court, or anything between these extremes. Knowing the ultimate purpose of your research will inform the amount of time you should spend on it and the level of detail required.

- **Check how the work should be presented – detailed memo, brief note, citations or full documents, etc**.

This relates to the point above. The best way to present your research results will depend on the context. In some cases a short non-technical summary aimed at the non-legal reader may be required, in others a detailed argument with full citations. In some cases you will be required to provide full copies of relevant cases, in others references only may be more appropriate. There are times when print copies of sources are required and, increasingly, others where electronic versions are preferable.

Rule no. 3: Take time to think before you begin researching

This may sound self-evident, but when facing a complicated or unfamiliar research task spend some time planning a research strategy. This might include checking a few textbooks for their coverage of the topic, or running a few test searches on different databases to see which looks the most relevant. When pressed for time, this can feel like an indulgence, but it can save a great deal of time in the long run, as you concentrate your efforts on the most relevant sources.

Rule no. 4: Not everything is available online

The last three decades have seen the transfer online of a vast number of legal sources – many of them freely available on the internet. These are highly useful sources which you will doubtless use many times in your career. Do remember, however, that there are still sources only available in print. These include historical primary sources, some sources for other jurisdictions and much legal commentary – including some current legal textbooks.

It is also worth remembering that some material will be online but not included in the online subscriptions to which you have access.

Rule no. 5: Do not forget obvious sources

When lawyers start researching, they often find one or two sources helpful for many questions and use these as their preferred source. It is easy to overlook other key sources, so try to bear in mind the diversity of sources available (many of which will be referred to throughout this guide).

Sources which are commonly forgotten, but which can prove very useful include:

- **Textbooks**

Despite the focus on electronic databases, there is still a need for textbooks. Textbooks are often the best starting point for research, as they put an issue into context. They are also a good way of indicating the key legislation and leading cases on a particular issue.

- **Practical Law / Lexis Practical Guidance**

These databases are available for use within the Inn libraries. Originally designed as 'know how' resources, they now contain much material of wider relevance, including practice notes on procedure, drafting guides and checklists. They also feature legislation trackers and legal updates by topic area.

- **Legal Journals on Westlaw**

A very useful source for finding commentary on legal issues, cases and legislation. Also worth checking for commentary on legal issues in other jurisdictions. If the full text of the article is not on Westlaw, check the Inn library catalogues as it may well be held in one of the libraries.

Rule no. 6: Start broad and narrow down

This particularly applies to online research. A very common mistake researchers make is to key in too many terms into a database, thereby restricting the number of possible results. It is much better to start with one or two search terms, review the number of results and add extra search terms gradually.

Related to this issue is the danger of keying in complete case names. As parties' names may be cited differently (e.g. shortened or in full: **Prince Jefri Bolkiah** or just **Bolkiah**) it is best just to use the most distinctive elements of the case name.

Rule no. 7: Follow up references to primary sources

When using secondary sources (such as textbooks, journals, Practical Law) do remember that they will by their nature reflect the views of their authors. The comments may also represent a simplification of the case or statute discussed. This can be a particular issue with student textbooks, but even the most authoritative practitioner text may not have considered the issue through the prism of the circumstances with which you are dealing.

It is therefore important to follow up references to primary sources to check the original wording of the case or statute, shorn of later interpretation.

Rule no. 8: There may be no answer

Once you begin legal practice you will sometimes encounter research questions to which there is no answer or obvious analogy. At the beginning it can be difficult to assess whether you are drawing a blank because you have not looked at the right sources or because the answer does not exist.

When you draw a blank – top tips:

- Draw up a search strategy – a checklist of possible sources and search terms – and work through this in order, noting any new ideas and sources which occur to you.
- Discuss with others.
- Keep a careful record of your research (see rule 10 below), particularly important if you are unable to find any answer to your problem and need to 'prove a negative'.

Rule no. 9: Discuss with others

When faced with a difficult research problem take advantage of the experience and expertise of colleagues, who may be able to offer helpful pointers.

Do not forget library staff in the Inn libraries who should be able to offer suggestions for sources and have access to additional sources. Do remember that library staff are there to give advice – not to carry out your research for you!

Rule no. 10: Keep a record of your research

When carrying out complicated research you should keep detailed notes for your own reference as an *aide memoire* for the future. It is important that you can quickly and easily locate your research if you need to justify your conclusions and you may need to update your research in future. A clear record of your sources, search strategies and results will make this much more efficient.

For detailed guidance on producing a research trail for opinion writing assignments and a sample research trail, see Appendix 5

Recording your research – top tips:

- If you use a textbook, note the publication details, including date and edition.
- If you have accessed sources online, note the date on which you did so, in case the source is updated or removed.
- If you have spent a long time refining a search, record this in case you need to re-run the search in future. Most databases offer the option to save searches.
- If you have relied on sources from the internet (such as guidance on Government websites) it is worth printing this – or saving to pdf. When doing so, you can print the URL and date on the page. To do so, when using Google Chrome,
  Click on print > More settings > tick the box next to Headers and Footers.
  This will add the URL to the bottom left of the page and the date to the top left of the page.

Databases – general principles when searching

In the principles for research above, we stressed the importance of experimenting with research rather than assuming that there is a single way of doing this. This is especially important when using databases.

Unless you have an exact reference to an item and can locate it straightaway it is worth starting with a broad search and following up with some wider / narrower searches to get a sense of what is available, until you start to find relevant hits and a realistic number of hits to work with.

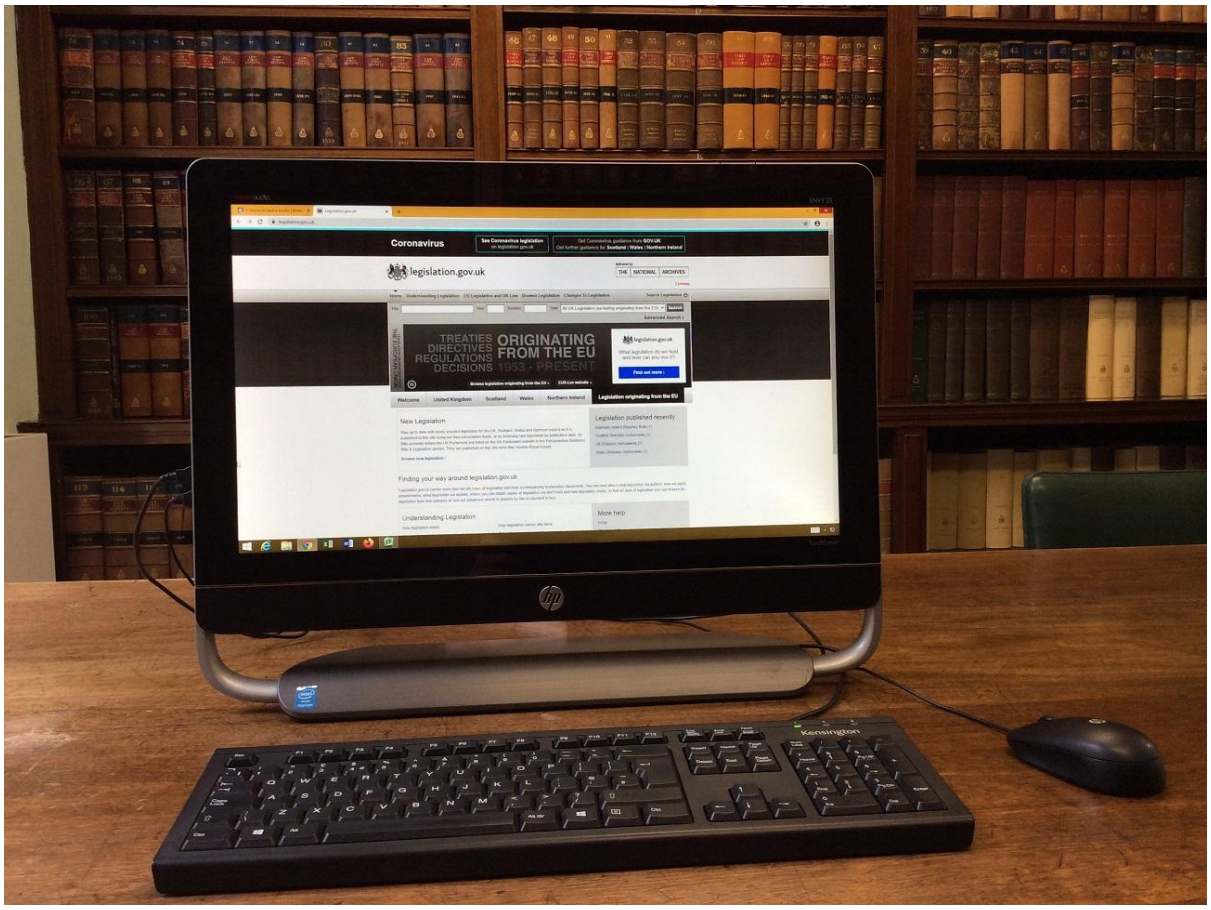
The table below provides details of search operators which are common to most databases and which offer options to widen your search (if it is too restrictive) or narrow it (if it is retrieving too many hits).

See Appendix 2 for more details on search operators.

Techniques to widen your search		
Operator	**Notes**	**Example**
Use synonyms separated by **OR**	Same for Practical Law, Westlaw and Lexis+ (*N.B. Lexis+ connectors are case sensitive, use lower-case only*)	**building or construction**
Truncation symbol (**!**) to find variants on the root of a word	Add ! to the root of a word in Westlaw or Lexis+. Practical Law automatically searches for variants	**Fraud!** finds fraud, frauds, fraudulent, fraudulently, etc.
Search for keywords, rather than exact phrases	Keywords can be sourced from subject textbooks, or from the indexing on Westlaw Journals, for example.	

Techniques to narrow your search		
Operator	**Notes**	**Example**
Use **AND** to ensure your results contain all the keywords you specify Westlaw: Use **&**	Type **AND** between keywords. (*N.B. Lexis+ connectors are case sensitive, use lower-case only*) Lexis+, Practical Law and Westlaw assume you want all keywords to appear whether you type AND or not.	tenant **AND** option **AND** terminate **AND** lease
Use **NOT** to exclude items containing specified terms	Although this can on occasions be useful, it should be used with extreme caution as it is very easy to exclude relevant search results. On Lexis+, use 'and not' unless other connectors are also being used. (*N.B. Lexis+ connectors are case sensitive, use lower-case only*)	commons NOT "house of commons"
Limit searching to particular phrases	Use quotation marks in Lexis+, Westlaw and Practical Law to search for an exact phrase.	**"insider dealing"** **"option to renew"**
Word proximity operators allow you to search for words near each other or within the same sentence or paragraph	**/5** for terms within 5 words of each other. You can use any number between 3 and 50 **/s** for words in the same sentence **/p** for words within the same paragraph For Lexis+, /5 and w/5 are both valid.	**covenant /5 trade** **covenant /s trade** **covenant /p trade**
Advanced search templates with specific search fields (Case; Legislation; Judge; Counsel; etc.)	On Lexis+ Advanced search fields be careful to only use exact phrases or distinct search terms.	
Use index terms	These differ from database to database. There is a Subject / Keyword field on Westlaw. On Lexis+ you need to select Practice Areas and Topics within search results. Using index terms can be very helpful in reducing the number of irrelevant hits, but bear in mind that an index is only as good as the person compiling it…	

Chapter 2 - Legislation and official publications



Basic research:
The majority of research enquiries you are likely to have will involve finding Public Acts or SIs as currently in force.

This research can be answered using **Lexis+** and **Westlaw**. These databases are also useful for finding some historical versions and some commentary on Acts.

Other research:
There are times when you will need to find other versions of legislation (as in force on a particular date or as originally published).

You might also need to consult
- Private or local Acts or SIs
- Bills and debates on Bills in Parliament
- Other background materials
- Regulations or made by organisations outside Government (e.g. the FSA)

There are a range of different online and printed sources suitable for these enquires – see the relevant sections below:

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Different types of legislation

There are different categories of legislation and a number of different sources. The most appropriate source will depend on the type of legislation you need and whether you are looking for a current or historic version.

Legislation takes the form of primary and secondary legislation.

Primary legislation takes the form of Acts of Parliament and Measures of the Church of England.

Secondary legislation includes statutory instruments ('SIs'), bye-laws and other delegated legislation.

There are different types of Acts of Parliament and SIs. Most of your legislation research is likely to involve Public Acts and SIs, but it is important to remember that other types of legislation exist.

Acts	• Public and General Acts • Local, Personal and Private Acts
SIs	• Public SIs • Local SIs (published) • Local SIs (unpublished)

No single source covers all comprehensively. The notes below cover the questions you are most likely to encounter and guidance on the most appropriate sources.

Primary legislation

Public and General Acts

These are the Acts you will encounter most frequently. They are the Acts which apply to everyone – for example the Companies Act, the Finance Act, the Criminal Justice Act etc.

Sources for Public Acts as originally published		
Print	King's Printer's copy	The official text of individual Acts published as soon as possible after Royal Assent. Since 1999 most Public Acts have been accompanied by explanatory notes. Copies are held in the Inn libraries.
Print	Current Law Statutes Annotated	Commercially published versions of the King's Printer's copies with the addition of explanatory annotations at the start of the Act and with each section. Copies are held in the Inn libraries.

Electronic	vLex Justis	Subscription database of legislation with PDFs of the official published Act. The coverage is from 1235 onwards (although for earlier Acts the printed series Statutes of the Realm is more authoritative). Available in the Inn libraries. Consolidated versions from legislation.gov.uk are also included.
Electronic	www.legislation.gov.uk	Free database of legislation in its original form and as in force (although the latter versions are not always up-to-date). Provides PDFs of the official published Act and accompanying explanatory notes (1999-). The coverage includes all Acts from 1988 onwards and most pre-1988 Acts.

Sources for Public Acts as currently in force		
Print	Halsbury's Statutes	Commercially published set of Acts as in force which is updated frequently and has useful annotations, giving cross-references to other parts of the Act, to other Acts, to relevant SIs and to relevant case law. Does not cover statutes that apply to Scotland only or any statutes that have been repealed. Always check the Current Statutes Service, cumulative supplement and noter-up to ensure currency.
Electronic	Lexis+	Subscription database providing the text of Public General Acts currently in force, incorporating some features of Halsbury's Statutes. Coverage includes all Public Acts in force, but does not cover any repealed statutes.
Electronic	Westlaw	Subscription database providing the text of Public General Acts which were in force in 1991, and all published subsequently. Coverage includes all Public Acts in force from 1991 onwards and selected earlier Acts including all since 1949 published as originally enacted.
Electronic	www.legislation.gov.uk	Free database of legislation in its original form **and as in force** (although the latter versions are not always up-to-date). These amended versions are also available on vLex. Use Westlaw or Lexis+ if available.
Electronic and Print	Is It In Force?	Details of commencement dates of Acts of general application in England, Wales and Scotland passed since 1960. Does not contain details of subsequent

		amendments.

Conventions on indicating amendments

All the sources below follow the same conventions – namely:

Text missing and replaced by …
This indicates that the text in question has been repealed. Check the notes for details of how and when this was effected.

Insolvency At 1986

2 Procedure where nominee is not the liquidator or administrator
(1) This section applies where the nominee under section 1 is not the liquidator or administrator of the company [. . .].
(2) The nominee shall, within 28 days (or such longer period as the court may allow) after he is given notice of the proposal for a voluntary arrangement, submit a report to the court stating—
(a) [whether, in his opinion, the proposed voluntary arrangement has a reasonable prospect of being approved and implemented,]

Text in square brackets [ ]
This indicates that the text has been added by a subsequent enactment. Check the notes for details of how and when this was effected.

Text in italics
This indicates that a change to the text is pending. Check the notes for details.

Insolvency Act 1986
s. 429 (3) *A person* [An individual] to whom this section so applies shall not—
(a) either alone or jointly with another person, obtain credit to the extent of the amount prescribed for the purposes of section 360(1)(a) or more, or
(b) enter into any transaction in the course of or for the purposes of any business in which he is directly or indirectly engaged,
without disclosing to the person from whom he obtains the credit, or (as the case may be) with whom the transaction is entered into, the fact that this section applies to him.
(4) The reference in subsection (3) to *a person* [an individual] obtaining credit includes—

Sources for Public Acts – summary of amendments / repeals		
Electronic	Westlaw	Notes at the bottom of the section (version in force) outline details of amendments / repeals.
Electronic	Lexis+	Notes at the bottom of the section (version in force) outline details of amendments / repeals.
Electronic	legislation.gov.uk	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/changes offers the ability to generate a table displaying all the amendments to a piece of legislation.
Print	Halsbury's Statutes	Notes at the bottom of the section (version in force) outline details of amendments / repeals.

Sources for Public Acts as in force on a past date		
Electronic	Westlaw	Includes historical versions of all Acts from 1st January 1991 to date.
Electronic	Lexis+	Historical versions of legislation are available from 1998 onwards. Historical versions prior to 1998 are available on request.
Print	Old editions of textbooks	May include copies of an Act as an appendix. Check publication details to see when the Act was updated
Print	Old editions of Halsbury's Statutes	Available in the Inn libraries. You will need the edition immediately before the date you are interested and then update via the annual cumulative supplements.

Sources for commentary on Public Acts		
Print	Textbooks and looseleaf encyclopaedias	Most books and looseleafs contain a table of statutes enabling you to access commentary on individual sections of an Act.
Print	Halsbury's Statutes	Notes are provided on individual sections of legislation.
Print	Current Law Statutes Annotated	Background notes to the whole Act and notes on individual sections.
Electronic	Lexis+	Contains the annotations which appear in Halsbury's Statutes. You can also click on 'Books & Journals' (right hand menu) to access references to this section in sources included in your Lexis+ subscription.

Electronic	Westlaw	When you have a section open on screen, click on 'Commentary' (left hand menu) to access references to this section in sources included in your Westlaw subscription. You can also search for journal articles discussing a specific section of legislation. (Click on 'More options' on the journals search screen to see this option).
Electronic	Practical Law / Lexis Practical Guidance	Often include commentary on sections of legislation, particularly recent legislation and its likely implications.

Background material for legislation

In addition to commentary written once an Act has been published, researchers may also want to look back at material discussing its provisions during its progress through Parliament – or even before it was a Parliamentary Bill.

Typically, researchers will look at Parliamentary debates published in Hansard, both debates in the Houses of Commons and Lords, and also scrutiny of the Bill by Standing Committee, which has its own series of Hansard reports.

Since the case of Pepper (Inspector of Taxes) v Hart [1993] A.C. 593 it has been permitted to cite Hansard in Court in certain circumstances.

Other background materials which may be relevant (but which are not available for all Acts).

- Explanatory Notes accompanying the Bill.
- Explanatory Notes accompanying the Act.
- Command Papers, including 'Green Papers' and 'White Papers' published in advance of some Bills.

Sources for Parliamentary materials		
Explanatory Notes to Acts	Print	Explanatory Notes were introduced in 1999 and accompany all Public Acts except Appropriation, Consolidated Fund, Finance and Consolidation Acts. Available in all the Inn Libraries
Explanatory Notes to Acts	Electronic	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ Free website
Hansard, inc. Standing Committee	Print	Available in the Inn libraries. Check the Library catalogues for details of holdings. Lincoln's Inn, which specialises in Parliamentary materials, has the most comprehensive collection.
Hansard, inc. Standing Committee	Electronic	Access to Hansard (1909-) via the Public Information Online database in Lincoln's Inn and Middle Temple Libraries. Holdings for different collections vary.
Hansard – Commons and Lords	Electronic	https://hansard.parliament.uk/ Free access to Hansard debates from 19th Century to the present. Works well if you know the date of the debate. Search function is rudimentary.
Standing Committee Hansard	Electronic	https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/stand.htm Freely available on the Parliament website from the 1997-98 session
Bills and Explanatory Notes to Bills	Print	Available in the Inn libraries. Explanatory Notes published for most Government Bills from 1998 onwards
Bills and Explanatory Notes to Bills	Electronic	https://www.parliament.uk/business/bills-and-legislation/current-bills/previous-bills/ Note: until the 2005-06 Session Bills were removed if the Bill received Royal Assent.
Bills and Explanatory Notes to Bills	Electronic	Access to all Lords and Commons Bills via the Public Information Online database in Lincoln's Inn and Middle Temple Libraries
Parliamentary Papers (inc. Command Papers)	Print	The Inn libraries hold selections of Parliamentary Papers in print. Lincoln's Inn has the most comprehensive coverage
Parliamentary Papers (inc. Command Papers)	Electronic	Available via the Public Information Online database in Lincoln's Inn and Middle Temple Libraries. Holdings for collections vary. Middle Temple has access to material via ProQuest: 18th and 19th Century House of Commons Papers, 20th Century Parliamentary Papers, House of Lord Papers 1800-1910.

Local, Personal and Private Acts

Local, Personal and Private Acts differ from Public Acts in many respects. They are published in different sources and are rarely available as in force.

The common feature of this legislation is that it deals with particular issues rather than those of national concern. Topics covered range from enclosure of common land, establishing turnpike roads, canals and railways, to divorce and naturalisation as a British citizen.

Many of these issues no longer need to be dealt with by legislation, but a number of Local Acts are published every year dealing with issues such as the City of London, statutory companies and universities, and infrastructure works such as harbours and railways. In view of their subject matter they may well be relevant to advice / litigation in some major matters.

Despite the fact that there has been a distinction between Public and Private legislation since 1539, in practice there has been a lot of overlap between the categories. For instance, in the C18th, many Private Acts contained a section deeming it to be a Public Act so that it would be officially printed by the King's Printer.

Since 1949 Private Acts have been referred to as Personal Acts, although very few have been published in recent decades

A number of Local Acts are still published. The most recent Acts were three published in 2018 (compared with 277 in 1899).

How to tell if you need a Local or Personal Act

- The subject matter
  If the Act deals with a specific individual (e.g. divorce or naturalisation) or an organisation (e.g. a port or university), the Act is likely to be a Private or Local Act.

- The numbering sequence
  From the C19th onwards, the following conventions have been observed in numbering Acts:

  - Public and General Acts have chapter numbers printed in Arabic numerals in regular type

    Companies Act 2006
    2006 CHAPTER 46

  - Local and Personal Acts - chapter number is printed in Roman numerals, e.g.

    Reading Borough Council Act 2013
    2013 CHAPTER iv

  - Private Acts - chapter number is printed in Arabic numerals in italics, e.g.

    Wellington Estate Act 1972
    1972 CHAPTER 1

Researching Local / Private / Personal Acts – key points

- The Act will rarely be published as in force.
- Not all Private Acts were published.
- The categories of legislation are not straightforward. If you cannot find an Act in the sequence you expect, try the other sequences

Finding copies of a Local, Personal or Private Act

Print versions

Print copies of the Acts are available in the Inn libraries (ask staff).

Electronic copies

- vLex Justis includes Local Acts from 1797 and Private Acts, if published, 1820 –
- www.legislation.gov.uk 1991 – (plus some earlier Acts)
- Westlaw, 1991 – (plus some earlier Acts)
- Current Law Statutes Annotated, 1991 (text only, no annotations)

Special collections

Local Acts relating to London are included in Halsbury's Statutes. A rare example of versions of Local Acts as amended.

Updating a Local Act

The main source for updating a Local Act is the Chronological Table of Local Legislation – available in print and at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/changes/chron-tables/local. The online version is complete to 2008; for subsequent changes, the best source is the Changes to Legislation page on the website.

This lists the Acts by chapter number within each year and lists later legislation amending or repealing the Act you are checking:

If the legislation has been repealed	Check the later legislation to see whether there are new provisions replacing the repealed text. If the later legislation provides new provisions, you will also need to check the Index entries for the amending legislation in case this has also been amended.
If the legislation has been amended	You will need to read the original legislation in conjunction with the amending legislation.

	You will also need to check the Index entries for the amending legislation in case this has also been amended.

Updating Private and Personal Acts

This is unlikely to be required as most of such Acts deal with a one-off event, such as an inclosure, a naturalisation as British citizen or to enable a marriage. Occasionally there will be cross-references to later private legislation. These can be found in the Chronological Table of Private and Personal Acts (1539-2006) available at:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/changes/chron-tables/private

Secondary legislation

Statutory instruments ('SIs'): Public SIs

These are the SIs you will encounter most frequently. They are the SIs which apply to everyone – often providing additional regulations to give effect to the provisions of Acts of Parliament, e.g. commencement provisions, prescribed forms, etc.

Note: SIs have been published from 1948. Prior to this, the equivalent source was known as Statutory Rules and Orders.

Sources for Public SIs as originally published		
Print	The Stationery Office copy	The official text of individual SIs. Most SIs are accompanied by a short explanatory note. Available in the Inn libraries.
Electronic	vLex Justis	Subscription database of legislation with PDFs of the official published copies of SIs. Includes some early Statutory Orders (predecessors of SIs). Collection largely complete from 1949 onwards.
Electronic	www.legislation.gov.uk	Free database of legislation in its original and form and as in force. Partial collection 1948 – 1986. Complete collection 1987 – present.

Sources for Public SIs as currently in force		
Electronic	Lexis+	Subscription database providing the text of Public SIs as in force, incorporating some features of Halsbury's SIs.
Electronic	Westlaw	A selection of UK SIs of general application published between 1948 and 1991. All subsequent UK (Westminster) SIs are included.
Electronic	www.legislation.gov.uk	Note: the consolidations are not always updated. Use with caution.
Print	Halsbury's Statutory Instruments	Available in Inner Temple Library.

Sources for Public SIs – summary of amendments / revocations		
Electronic	Lexis+	Notes at the bottom of the section (version in force) outline details of amendments / revocations.
Electronic	Westlaw	Notes at the bottom of the section (version in force) outline details of amendments / revocations. Note: coverage is not comprehensive before 1991.
Print	Halsbury's Statutes Instruments	Notes at the bottom of the section (version in force) outline details of amendments / revocations.

Sources for Public SIs as in force on a past date		
Electronic	Westlaw	Includes historical versions of some SIs from 1st January 1991 to date
Electronic	Lexis+	Historical versions of legislation are available from 1998 onwards. Historical versions prior to 1998 are available on request.
Print	Old editions of textbooks	May include copies of an SI as an appendix. Check publication details to see when the SI was updated
Print	Old editions of Halsbury's SIs	Available in Inner Temple Library.

Sources for commentary on Public SIs		
Electronic	Lexis+	Contains the notes to individual articles – usually relating to its status. Click on 'Books & Journals' (right hand menu) to access references to this section in sources included in your Lexis+ subscription.
Electronic	Westlaw	Contains the notes to individual articles – usually relating to its status. Click on 'Commentary' (left hand menu) to access references to this section in sources (including journal articles) included in your Westlaw subscription.
Electronic	Practical Law / Lexis Practical Guidance	Often include commentary on sections of legislation, particularly recent legislation and its likely implications.
Print	Textbooks and looseleaf encyclopaedias	Most books and looseleafs contain a Table of SIs enabling you to access commentary on individual sections.

Local SIs

Local SIs are of limited, local effect. There is no updating service and it is unlikely that you would find any commentary on a local SI.

There are two types of local statutory instruments: published and unpublished.

Official published copies of local SIs are included in the main sequence of SIs and are available in the Inn libraries.

Published local SIs from 1987 are also available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/

Both types of local SIs are listed in the official printed issues of SIs and SR&Os.

Occasionally researchers require unpublished SIs. These are of very limited effect and usually relate to one organisation, which is why they are not officially published. Usually, the only way of obtaining a copy of the document is to contact the organisation to which it relates and hope they still have a copy.

Other secondary legislation

Immigration Rules

A statement of practice to be followed in the administration of the Immigration Act 1971. The rules are accompanied by explanatory memoranda.

Published as either Command Papers or House of Commons papers.
You can track these online at:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-rules-statement-of-changes

Bye-laws made by local authorities or by particular bodies

Contact the maker for a copy, or use this email for advice: byelaws@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Traffic Regulation Orders

Traffic restrictions e.g. temporary road closures made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 by highway authorities. Other than for trunk roads and motorways the authority is usually the county council, and you should contact that body for a copy of the order.

Other forms of binding regulations and guidance

Regulations and advice from Government departments

In addition to legislation, the Government publishes a considerable amount of additional rules and guidance of relevance to specific sectors. This can take many forms, e.g.

- Specific advice on COVID-19 for employers.
- Guidance explaining how Government Departments interpret the law for practical purposes – e.g. the HMRC manuals.
- HMRC Extra-Statutory Concessions - which gives taxpayers a reduction in tax liability to which they would not be entitled under the strict letter of the law.
- Planning circulars which provide non-statutory advice and are used to explain policy and regulation more fully.

Regulations published by independent organisations

Further industry regulation is provided by a large number of bodies, established by statute, which have the power to make binding regulations on certain activities. Examples include:

- The Panel on Takeovers and Mergers, an independent body, established in 1968, whose main functions are to issue and administer the City Code on Takeovers and Mergers (the "Code") and to supervise and regulate takeovers.
- The Financial Conduct Authority, which regulates financial firms providing services to consumers.
- The Health and Safety Executive, the government agency responsible for the encouragement, regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare.

Finding Government publications and guidance

Most current guidance can be found on the websites of the departments and organisation concerned.

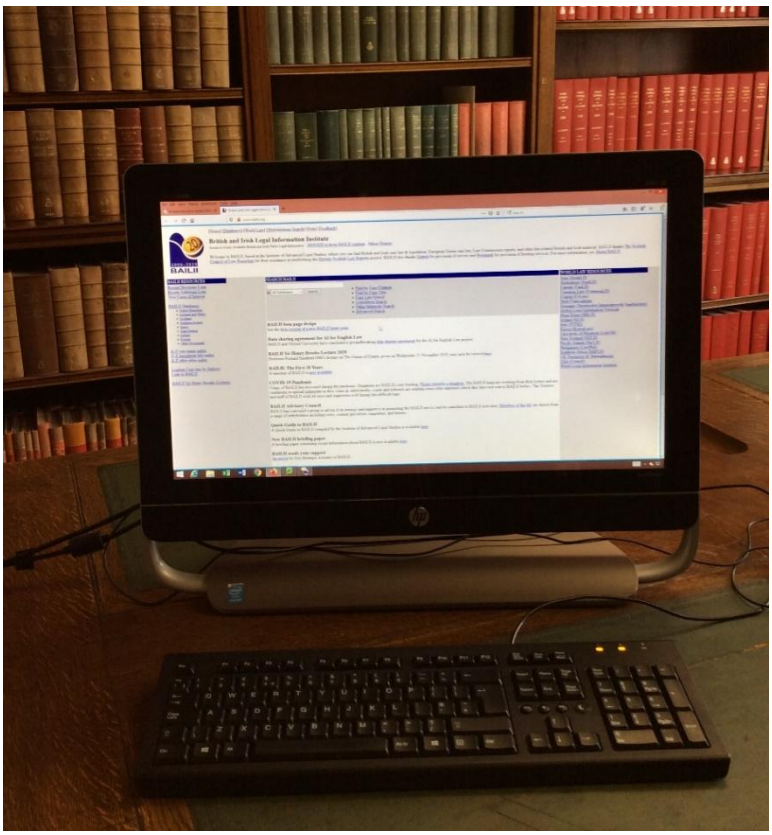
They may also be reproduced in secondary sources, particularly loose-leaf encyclopaedias and sources such as the Yellow and Orange tax handbooks.

As Government websites and loose-leafs usually only publish guidance as it is in force, it can be tricky to find historical versions.

See Chapter 8 (Free legal resources on the internet) for guidance on finding archived internet pages.

Check the Inn library catalogues as they may have printed historical versions in their collections.

Chapter 3 - Case law



Standard sources:
Finding case law is one of the most common research tasks for barristers. Many of the more frequently cited law report series are available online via **Lexis+** or **Westlaw**.

These databases can also be useful for identifying commentary on case law, e.g. books, journal articles or summaries.

Looking further afield:
Despite the many thousands of cases on Lexis+ and Westlaw, a significant number of older or more specialised law reports are only available in print or from online sources your law school or chambers may not subscribe to. For example:

- Lloyd's Law Reports - widely cited in cases relating to shipping, trade, and insurance, only available from i-law.com or in print.
- Commercial Law Reports (1981 – 1983), published by Oyez, still referred to and only available in print.
- Times Law Reports. Formerly available via Lexis but withdrawn by News International. Often cited and now only available online in a format unsuitable for court, or in hardcopy.

In each of the examples given above, the Inns of Court Libraries would be able to provide access to the required materials.

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What is the difference between a law report, a judgment, a transcript and a summary or digest?

Law reports

The Incorporated Council of Law Reporting defines a law report as "a record of a judicial decision on a point of law which sets a precedent". However, in addition to reproducing the text of the judge's decision, law reports usually include:

- Catchwords – these identify the legal subjects in the case, the issues considered and any words, phrases or legislation dealt with.
- A Headnote – this is a summary of the main legal principles in the case
- A list of cases cited
- A summary of the facts and judicial history of the case if applicable

Barristers are frequently instructed at short notice or otherwise pressed for time. These editorial features are designed to facilitate rapid understanding of the relevant points of a case.

Judgments

A judgment may be that part of a law report which reproduces the judge's decision. It may also refer to a separate document containing only the judge's decision, including legal reasoning and analysis, and not published as part of a law report with the attendant editorial apparatus. Many judgments are now available online in advance of being published as part of a full law report (assuming they are selected for publication). Lexis+, Westlaw and vLex Justis all publish judgments, while others are freely available via BAILII, Find Case Law from the National Archives, the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website or the Supreme Court website. Although it may be published online, unless or until a judgment appears in a law reporting series it is technically "unreported" and you will see references to "unreported judgments" (see further below – Unreported Cases).

Transcripts

A Transcript, sometimes called an Official Transcript, is a word for word transcription of the judge's decision taken from a recording made in the court. In practice, however, a judge will sometimes only deliver the bare decision orally in court and provide the full judgment and reasoning in writing at a later date. The terms Judgment and Transcript are sometimes used interchangeably.

Unreported cases

A great many cases are not only "unreported" in the technical sense of not being published in a law report, but are not published in any form. Of the thousands of cases heard in the courts every year, only a tiny proportion appear in law reports. The fact that a case has attracted publicity or involves large sums of money does not mean it will be reported. To quote the ICLR again: "Not all decisions taken in a court of law set a precedent, however interesting they may be in terms of the facts of the case or its consequences. A decision is only reportable if it lays down a new principle of law, or changes or clarifies the existing law".

It follows from this that decisions in the lower courts are not usually reported or published online as they will not constitute a binding precedent.

As a student you are unlikely to need to obtain cases such as these which are genuinely unreported. However, as a barrister you may need to do so from time to time. It is possible to order a transcript of an unreported case, though records are not retained indefinitely. Inner Temple Library has published a guide to obtaining transcripts.

A note on criminal cases

As there is a verdict rather than a judgment, criminal cases are not reported unless they go to appeal. However, sentencing remarks for cases heard in the Crown Court are available, though not for every case. These can be found on the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website. The specialist series reporting criminal appeal cases are the Criminal Appeal Reports and Criminal Appeal Reports (Sentencing), both available on Westlaw. However, criminal appeal cases also appear in the ICLR Appeal Cases, the Weekly Law Reports and the All England Law Reports. An occasional source of confusion is the citation Crim LR, sometimes taken to be "Criminal Law Reports". It stands for Criminal Law Review, a journal which specialises in criminal law and often contains useful commentary on recent criminal cases.

Summaries and Digests

Summaries or digests may be produced in advance of a case being fully reported and often before the judgment is available to read. Lexis+ includes the online-only All England Reporter service, where cases are cited as follows: Saxton v Bruzas [2018] All ER (D) 121 (Dec). It should be noted this is distinct from the All England Law Reports; the (D) stands for "digest" and there is no equivalent print version. The Incorporated Council of Law Reporting also publishes the WLR Daily case summaries. These can be accessed freely by non-subscribers via their website or by signing up to the ICLR's weekly Case Law Alert emails.

Even where the judgment is appended, case summaries or digests are for information only and have no status as law. They are intended to aid lawyers in keeping abreast of new legal developments but must not be cited in court or as part of legal advice.

Legal journals such as Counsel or the Law Society Gazette also publish summaries of recent cases.

Which report of a case should I use?

Barker v Corus UK Ltd
House of Lords • [2006] UKHL 20 • 3 May 2006
Positive/Neutral Judicial Consideration Significant
Subject: Negligence; Personal injury; Damages; Employment; Torts
Keywords: Apportionment; Asbestos; Causation; Mesothelioma; Risk; Self-employment; Several liability
Case Analysis | [2006] UKHL 20 | [2006] 2 A.C. 572 | [2006] 2 W.L.R. 1027 | [2006] 3 All E.R. 785 | [2006] 5 WLUK 75 | [2006] I.C.R. 809 | [2006] P.I.Q.R. P26 | (2006) 89 B.M.L.R. 1 | (2006) 103(20) L.S.G. 27 | (2006) 156 N.L.J. 796 | (2006) 150 S.J.L.B. 606 | [2006] N.P.C. 50 | Times, May 4, 2006 | Judgment

The Westlaw entry above lists an extensive list of reports for the case of Barker v Corus UK. All reports are for the same case – why are there so many and which should I use?
Westlaw lists the case reports in the order of authority. This largely corresponds to the level of detail in the reports.

(The list also features references which are not reports – the neutral citation number and the Westlaw number – see below for an explanation of these).

The most authoritative report – in this case [2006] 2 A.C. 572 (the Appeal Cases series) – is usually the last to be published, as it receives particularly rigorous editing and checking. The Times law report, by contrast, was published the day after judgment was given. It is a short report of the decision. The reports in between cover a spectrum of short reports in non-specialist legal periodicals such as the New Law Journal to fuller reports in specialist law report series, such as the Industrial Cases Reports.

As a student it matters less which report you cite, but as a practising barrister, if citing a case in court, you must follow the Practice Direction: Citation of Authorities [2012] 1 W.L.R. 780. This gives the following hierarchy when choosing which report of a case to cite in court:

1	Reports published by the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting ('ICLR', sometimes called the Official Law Reports)	e.g. Appeal Cases (A.C.) King's Bench (K.B.) Chancery (Ch.D.)
2	The Weekly Law Reports (W.L.R.) or the All England Law Reports (All ER)	
3	Any of the authoritative specialist series of reports which contain a headnote and are made by individuals holding a Senior Courts qualification	e.g. Lloyd's Law Reports (Ll.L.R.) Industrial Cases Reports (I.C.R.)
4	Where a judgment is not reported in any of the reports referred to in the paragraphs above, but is reported in other reports, they may be cited.	

The ICLR or Official Law Reports have been published since 1865 and are available from Lexis+ or Westlaw or from the ICLR's own website. They are also available in hardcopy from all the Inn Libraries.

Abbreviations and case citations

For convenience, the titles of law reporting series are usually abbreviated and you will often need to decipher these abbreviations in order to locate the case you are looking for or to check you have the correct report.

In some instances, notably family or criminal decisions, the citation may be more helpful in identifying the case than the names of the parties, e.g. **Re: C (a minor).**

The standard resource is now the Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations. Hardcopy sources such as Raistrick's Index to Legal Citations and Abbreviations can also still be helpful in identifying older reports or overseas sources.

If referring to a case in written submissions, you must reproduce accurately the names of parties together with the correct abbreviation, date and page reference of the report you are citing (having chosen the appropriate report in line with the Practice Direction). Barker v Corus UK Ltd, referred to above, would properly be cited as: **Barker v Corus UK Ltd, Murray v British Shipbuilders (Hydrodynamics) Ltd and others, Patterson v Smiths Dock Ltd and another [2006] 2 A.C. 572.** This is the second volume of the Appeal Cases for 2006, (published by the ICLR) at page 572.

Neutral citations

Barker v Corus UK (discussed above) has the neutral citation [2006] UKHL 20. This citation does not refer to a published law report but is a unique identifier for this particular judgment as having been the 20th case heard in the House of Lords in 2006.

So-called neutral citations were introduced by the courts when it became more common for judgments to be published online independently of appearing in law reports. It therefore became necessary for cases to be uniquely identifiable in the absence of being able to refer to the relevant law report.

Inner Temple Library has produced a Guide to Neutral Citations available on their website.

Westlaw case references

Among the other citations given on Westlaw for Barker v Corus UK is [2006] 5 WLUK 75. Such citations refer purely to the case digests which appear on Westlaw and are neither a citation for a law report nor a neutral citation for the judgment.

Searching for cases by subject

Lexis+ and Westlaw allow searching across the full text of huge archives of case law. Online searching is a powerful tool in as much as it will instantly locate documents containing your search terms no matter how large the database.

Lexis+ and Westlaw both then offer various options for narrowing down your search, including searching within your results, narrowing by topic, and showing your search terms in context. This can nevertheless prove a time-consuming way of locating relevant authorities.

It should be approached with caution and is often not the best place to start.

Example: You may have been asked to see if there is any case law on what buildings or parts of buildings do or do not fit in with their surroundings, and what does or does not have a "positive visual impact".

The first part of the question is not easy to formulate as a satisfactory online search, while a search on the phrase "positive visual impact" returns only one case on both Lexis+ and Westlaw.

Amending the search to "visual impact" leads to some 1,836 results on Westlaw and 1,775 on Lexis+.

While it might be possible to further edit the search and end up with a manageable number of cases to look at, it would still be difficult to be certain these were the only relevant authorities or the most important ones.

Where possible, if wanting to find case law by subject, it is usually better to identify a relevant work of commentary. The search above is a genuine example and is a planning law question. A better approach would be to consult a work on planning law. This would be likely to indicate leading authorities, including legislation, to clarify language (is "positive visual impact" a recognised phrase in planning?), provide useful background and explain the law concisely.

Where there is no obvious textbook on a particular subject, Halsbury's Laws of England is always worth checking and will refer you to any relevant case law. If you identify any cases from a textbook or Halsbury's, even if you have used the online version, you must carry out a separate check to ensure the cases are still good law (see below).

There is a place for free-text subject searches over all available case law, for example if your search terms are especially distinctive or you have exhausted other options. But this should not usually be your first port of call.

Finding cases which interpret or discuss the meaning of particular words or phrases

A dispute may turn upon the parties' differing understanding of a particular word or phrase, whether an everyday phrase or a legal one – e.g. a party may agree to carry out a contractual obligation using their 'best endeavours'.

You may therefore need to check for judicial definitions – i.e. to see whether a word or phrase has previously been defined by the courts. These are often not easy to search on full-text case databases, so it is worth starting with the following sources:

- The standard dictionaries of legal definitions, ***Stroud's judicial dictionary*** and ***Words and phrases legally defined***). These are an invaluable index to cases and statutes which have defined words and phrases in everyday usage.

- Law dictionaries, such as ***Jowitt's dictionary of English law*** and ***Osborn's concise law dictionary***, which contain definitions of legal terms.

- The **Index of Legal Terms** on Westlaw is a searchable database of Stroud, Jowitt, and Osborn, and also provides links to cases and commentary where the word is discussed. NB, the Index of Legal Terms may not be part of your Westlaw subscription.

- **Words and phrases legally defined** is also available on Lexis+.

Searching for judicial definitions on case databases

Unless you are looking for a very obscure word or phrase, an unstructured search risks retrieving an unmanageable number of results – many of which will be incidental uses of the word(s) and not a definition. There is no foolproof way around this, but the following strategies can be helpful:

1. **Westlaw**. Using Cases Search, enter your word or phrase in the Subject/keyword field. This will find cases where your word or phrase has been indexed by Westlaw as having significance in the case under discussion.

2. **Westlaw**. Using Cases Search, enter the following search in the Free Text field:
   "best endeavours" /15 (interpret! or mean! or constru! or defin!). In Westlaw, connectors such as **or** are not case sensitive.

3. **Lexis+**. In the main search bar in Cases, enter the following search:
   "best endeavours" /15 (interpret! or mean! or constru! or defin!) In Lexis+ connectors such as **or** are case sensitive and should always be in lowercase letters.

In these searches you are looking for the phrase 'best endeavours' within 15 words of meaning **or** interpret / interpreted / interpretation **or** construction / construe / construed **or** definition / define / defined

The drawback here is that it is possible for a case to consider the meaning of a word or phrase without mentioning terms such as interpretation, definition, etc.

Finding cases which cite legislation

This will usually mean you are looking for case law on a particular section of legislation.

Westlaw offers the simplest way of doing this, with pre-set fields for legislation title and provision number in the expanded options of its Case Search.

Using Lexis+, carry out a Legislation search to find the section you require, then select Cases from the 'Related Documents' menu on the right.

Top Tip

As ever, results from Lexis+ and Westlaw may not be identical, so it is worth checking both if they are available to you.

Another approach would be to identify a relevant textbook, e.g. if you are interested in the Marine Insurance Act, a book on marine insurance may well point you to any significant cases dealing with sections of the Act if you consult the table of statutes.

Alternatively, books which are "annotated guides" (or similar) to Acts will provide commentary on each section of the Act and may cite any relevant case law.

Checking whether a case is still good law

Also known as "noting-up" a case, this is the process of checking the judicial history of a case**. It is crucial that you do this before relying on an authority.**

As there is no single source of case reports and transcripts it can be difficult to be 100% sure you have checked every possible source, but you should check either Westlaw or Lexis+ as a bare minimum and, ideally, both.

For the purposes of your examined legal research trail, you must state how you have updated each case that you have relied on in your opinion.

Westlaw

The Case Analysis screen prominently indicates positive, negative or neutral judicial consideration and also allows you to click through to a graphical history.

Barker v Corus UK Ltd

House of Lords • [2006] UKHL 20 • 3 May 2006

Positive/Neutral Judicial Consideration (Significant)

Subject: Negligence; Personal injury; Damages; Employment; Torts

For Barker v Corus UK, this shows the progress from the Queen's Bench Division to the Court of Appeal to the House of Lords, allowing you to link through to each judgment.

Then, under a section headed Primary References, you can view Key Cases Cited, All Cases Cited, Key Cases Citing or All Cases Citing.

Lexis+

The Cases Search on Lexis+ also consolidates the information relating to a case, allowing you to move from an overview to the Judgment to a list of reports of the case.

The Overview also offers a Case History and lists of cases referring to this case, and cases considered in this case.

Other sources

Source	Notes	Available
vLex Justis	Specialises (among other things) in noting-up cases rather than offering as large an archive of case law as Lexis+ and Westlaw	At the Inn Libraries
BAILII	Free database of caselaw. NB contains judgments only, not full law reports, but often publishes cases before they available elsewhere and is sometimes the only source for particular judgments.	https://www.bailii.org/form/search_cases.html

What is meant by overruled / distinguished, etc.?

Lexis+, Westlaw, vLex Justis and older hardcopy sources employ the following terminology to indicate subsequent judicial treatment of a case:

- Applied – Indicates that the principle of law enunciated in the case referred to has been applied to a new set of facts and circumstances in the current case.
- Approved – the case referred to is considered good law.
- Considered – Indicates that the case referred to has been carefully considered and there is no adverse criticism of it.
- Disapproved – Adverse of Approved above.
- Distinguished – Indicates the earlier case is not necessarily doubted but there is an essential difference on facts or law between it and the case in which it is referred to.
- Doubted – does not indicate the case is wrong, but that it does not seem to be accurate
- Followed – Indicates the same principles of law are applied in the two cases but not implying the facts are identical in both cases.
- Overruled – When a higher court is considering substantially the same facts which occur in a case referred to and considers the latter's decision to be wrong.

What are the requirements for providing copies of cases for court?

The Practice Direction: Citation of Authorities [2012] 1 W.L.R. 780 states:

> Judgments reported in any series of reports […] should be provided either by way of a photocopy of the published report or by way of a copy of a reproduction of the judgment in electronic form that has been authorised by the publisher […] the advocate presenting the report [must be] satisfied that it has not been reproduced in a garbled form from the data source. In any case of doubt the court will rely on the printed text of the report.

In practice, this means that any authority presented to the court must either be a PDF version of the printed law report or, if none is available, a photocopy of the print version. Westlaw and Lexis+ both include PDF versions of the Official Law Reports and many other series of reports, but a PDF facsimile of the printed original is not always available, sometimes for licensing reasons or because it is not part of your subscription. A basic subscription to Westlaw for example does not include PDF facsimiles of the Fleet Street Reports.

In most instances, if you are not able to access a report online in a format suitable for court, you may find it via the Inn Libraries.

Chapter 4 - Commentary

Also known as secondary sources, a piece of legal commentary does not itself constitute the law but can be extremely helpful in explaining legal principles and drawing together relevant authorities. Although students are taught to cite primary sources (cases and legislation) in support of legal arguments, in practice textbooks are cited in court where it is felt they offer a particularly clear or helpful explanation of the law.

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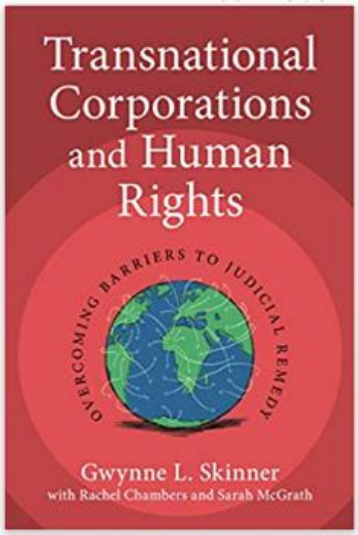
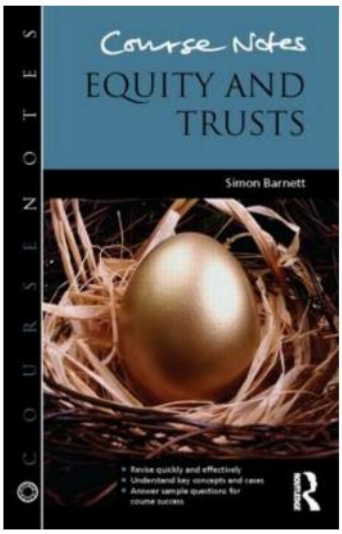
Textbooks

Textbooks, especially those aimed at practitioners, such as the Common Law Library series, are heavily used by barristers. Many books, though by no means all, are now available online via Westlaw, Lexis+ and other services.





Which textbook should I use?

The sheer choice of textbooks on some topics can be daunting, and on most occasions you will have to consult one or two authoritative practitioner texts. There are no hard and fast rules on what makes an authoritative source, but the following criteria are worth considering:

The intended audience	Some legal texts are aimed squarely at practitioners, others at students. Others take an academic approach. The level of detail in the book will be one indicator and there is usually a 'blurb' setting out the aims of the work.
The author(s) / editor (s)	Check the biographical details (usually summarised in the book, if not check online). Many practitioner texts are written or edited by leading barristers and solicitors practising in that area of law.
The publisher	This is not just a question of quality, but also of audience. There are several highly regarded publishers which specialise in practitioner law books, e.g. Butterworths/Lexis, Sweet & Maxwell, Informa, Bloomsbury.
How many editions?	Over the years many law books have built up great reputations with new editions issued. Number of editions is no infallible indicator, but it is no coincidence that Chitty on Contracts (first published in 1826 and now in its 35th edition) is the leading text on contract law.
Is it part of a well-known series?	A number of key practitioner texts are published as part of a series. Examples include the Common Law Library from Sweet & Maxwell and the Lloyd's Shipping Library from Informa.
Reputation	Ask colleagues or staff at the Inn Libraries for recommendations.
List of key texts	A (selective) list of key texts is provided in Appendix 1 of this guide.

When to use online textbooks, when to use print

This can be a matter of personal choice, and a question of what resources are available to you at the time.

There is sometimes a perception that online, full-text searching is superior to using hardcopy. Many online books replicate the structure of the version print, enabling users to browse, while offering the ability to retrieve any instance of a word or phrase in seconds. However, though powerful in terms of retrieval, results from a full-text search often present the problem of

establishing relevance and context, hence the ‘edit search’ or ‘search within’ functions of most online services.

There will be occasions when print textbooks allow practitioners to extract relevant information quickly and with precision. Typical features of a law book include:

- A detailed contents page and numbered paragraphs to assist understanding of the subject in hand and facilitate quick reference to specific passages or topics.
- A table of cases listing all case law referred to in the main text. This would for example, allow a barrister to identify the passages in Clerk & Lindsell on Torts which discuss Donoghue v Stevenson.
- A table of legislation listing statutes, SIs and any foreign or international legislation cited in the text. This allows the reader to identify discussion of any legislation, including any cases that have dealt with the legislation.
- Footnotes – these will normally include the full citation for any authorities referred to in the main text.
- Index – book indexes are manually compiled rather than computer-generated. The advantage of this is that they actively reflect the detailed structure of the book. In effect, the index is a series of pre-set or guided searches unlocking relevant content in the book. For example, in Richard Clayton’s book Civil Actions Against the Police, under the main index heading for Battery there are sub-headings including Assault, distinguished from; Cause of action; Consent, defence as; Definition of; Justified, and so on.
- Appendices – books will often reproduce supporting documents in appendices, such as forms and precedents, international treaties, standard contracts, or government publications. Merkin and Flannery on the Arbitration Act 1996 reproduces the Reports of the Departmental Advisory Committee (DAC) on arbitration law. The DAC drafted the Bill which became the Arbitration Act 1996, and published two Reports, still referred to by arbitration lawyers to aid interpretation of the Act.

TOP TIP: Check the supplement

Supplements – as most law books are only published in new editions every few years, supplements are often issued to take account of any changes in the law. The supplement follows the structure of the main work and includes any updated text under the relevant chapter or heading.

If a book has had a supplement issued and you fail to consult it, you risk missing potentially crucial changes in the law that have occurred since publication.

It is worth pointing out that online versions of books such as those on Westlaw also rely on supplements to provide updating material and are not automatically updated by virtue of being online.

Looseleafs

Looseleaf works, like supplements, were invented as a way of updating the text of a law book on a more frequent basis without having to re-publish the entire work. Many looseleafs aim to be an encyclopaedic reference work for the subject they deal with, e.g. the 8-volume Encyclopedia of Environmental Law. Accordingly, these contain not only commentary on the law but usually reproduce relevant statutes, statutory instruments, government materials, forms and precedents, and sometimes digests of key cases.

Arguably, the rationale for looseleaf publications with this encyclopaedic scope has diminished, as many of the supporting statutory and other materials can now easily be found online. An increasing number of looseleafs are now available online via Westlaw, Lexis+ and other services.

Halsbury's Laws of England

Halsbury's Laws of England is the Encyclopaedia Britannica of the legal world. Originally produced only in hardcopy, Halsbury's Laws is arranged alphabetically by subject in over 100 volumes, from "Agency" to "Wills". It is often a life-saver when researching the law.

- It contains commentary on virtually any aspect of the law where a standalone textbook does not exist. Volume 51, for example, covers Fire and Rescue Services and Fisheries and Aquaculture, areas on which there are few, if any, current textbooks.

- It offers substantial commentary on every major area of law such as contract or property, should you not have the standard textbook to hand.

- Both the online and print versions are regularly updated.

- Above all, Halsbury's Laws is a very useful starting point for research if you are unsure where else to look and offers detailed citation of authorities to support its expert commentary.

- The online version has the advantage of allowing you to link directly from the commentary to the relevant authorities.

- The print version benefits from an in-depth main index supplemented by individual subject indexes in each volume.

The online version is available from Lexis+, but note that it is a premium product which has to be purchased separately from the standard Lexis Bar Collection package, and your chambers may not subscribe to it.

Halsbury's Laws is available online and in print in all the Inn Libraries.

Journal articles

Journal articles can be a useful resource in legal research. Many are aimed at informing the busy practitioner about recent cases or changes to the law, and as such may contain material not (yet) available elsewhere. Articles such as these tend to be written in a concise and practical style in journals such as Counsel, the Law Society Gazette, or the Solicitor's Journal. Alternatively, longer articles may deal in relative depth with topics which are too specialised to warrant an entire book, for example in a journal such as Lloyd's Maritime & Commercial Law Quarterly.

As with law reports, journal titles are usually abbreviated and can be deciphered using the Cardiff Index.

Searching for journal articles

Both Lexis+ and (particularly) Westlaw contain a number of journals in full-text. However, the only comprehensive index of legal journal articles is the Journals Search on Westlaw, formerly known as the Legal Journals Index. This allows you to search for articles by subject or keyword but will not in all cases grant access to the full text. Westlaw can only publish content it owns or is licensed to reproduce. Where it cannot publish the full text it will provide an abstract of the article which will allow you to establish relevance. You should then check the Catalogue of any of the Inn Libraries, which will direct you to the Library which holds the journal you require.

Dictionaries

Having to find the legal definition of a word or phrase is a recurrent theme in legal research. When a contract says a party must use their "best endeavours", what exactly does this mean? Or where an insurance policy excludes "subsidence, heave, landslip or collapse" is there a legal, technical or other definition of any of these terms?

The standard legal dictionaries are:

- **Jowitt's Dictionary of English Law**
  First published in 1959, Jowitt is what is sometimes called an encyclopaedic dictionary, providing a substantial amount of detail over and above bare definitions. Available as part of Westlaw's Index of Legal Terms, but not part of a basic subscription.

- **Stroud's Judicial Dictionary**
  This book is primarily about how the courts have interpreted words and phrases, rather than providing statutory definitions, though it does include some of these. Also part of Westlaw's Index of Legal Terms.

- **Words and Phrases Legally Defined**
  This contains both judicial and statutory definitions and includes material from Commonwealth jurisdictions. Available from Lexis+ but not part of the standard Lexis Bar Collection package.

To take an example, the definition of “hearsay” is treated differently in each of the above. Words and Phrases gives a helpful and detailed definition, refers to the relevant Act, provides examples from case law and a reference to Halsbury’s Laws for further reading. Stroud curtly provides the statutory definition with no further detail or references. Jowitt prints a fully-referenced mini-essay covering the historical development and present-day definition of hearsay.

What to do if there is no definition in English law

If no definition can be found in English case law or legislation, it is permissible to look to definitions which may exist in other common law jurisdictions, which may be regarded by the courts as having “persuasive authority”. The first port of call in such instances is usually to investigate Commonwealth case law, hence the usefulness of Words and Phrases Legally Defined. However, definitions from United States case law can also be helpful, though should probably be approached with more caution due to a greater divergence from English law and terminology.

If seeking a legal definition in Commonwealth law and none can be found in Words and Phrases, you are best advised to contact either Lincoln’s Inn or Inner Temple Libraries as they hold the main Commonwealth collections for the Bar.

The standard US legal dictionary is Black’s Law Dictionary.

What to do if there is no legal definition

It will often be the case that you are seeking authority for a definition of a word or phrase which has not been dealt with by the law. If so, the standard procedure is to turn to the full edition of the Oxford English Dictionary as the recognised authority on English words. All of the Inn Libraries have either hardcopy or online access to the OED, as do many public libraries.

Chapter 5 - Procedural guides, Forms and Precedents

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As a practitioner you may have carried out your legal research thoroughly, but it is equally important to follow court procedure correctly, including completion and submission of all relevant forms or documentation. Guides to practice and procedure form a distinct branch of legal literature.

Procedural guides

Guides to court practice and procedure range from formal works setting out the rules of civil and criminal procedure to guides to specific courts and procedures. There are also less formal guides aimed at providing practical checklists.

Key titles include:

Source	Notes	Available
Civil Procedure ('The White Book')	The White Book is the leading work on the practice and procedures of the High Court and the County Court for the handling of civil litigation according to the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR), and is supplemented by substantial and comprehensive expert commentary.	In print Online (Westlaw)
The Civil Court Practice ('The Green Book')	An alternative to the White Book.	In print Online (Lexis+)
Archbold: Criminal Pleading, Evidence & Practice ('Archbold')	Archbold is the leading procedural guide to practising criminal law in the Crown Court. It details the Criminal Procedure Rules, supplemented by comprehensive, expert commentary.	In print Online (Westlaw)
Blackstone's Criminal Practice	A highly regarded alternative to Archbold, also published annually.	In print

		Online (Lexis+)
The Family Court Practice ('The Red Book')	The equivalent procedural guide to the Family Court.	In print Online (Lexis+)
Justice on GOV.UK	The Procedure Rules section of the Justice.gov.uk website publishes the rules on civil, criminal and family procedure. http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules This is an official source, but lacks the editorial apparatus and added value of the White Book and other titles.	Online (free website)
Lexis Practical Guidance	Concise guidance and checklists for many court procedures, with references and links to court rules and supporting materials.	Online (available at the Inn Libraries)
Practical Law	Concise guidance and checklists for many court procedures, with references and links to court rules and supporting materials.	Online (available in the Inn Libraries)

TOP TIP: Check the supplement

Most guides to court procedure are published annually, with supplements published at intervals throughout the year. **When using the print version, it is vital that you check the supplements.**

Forms and precedents

What are forms and precedents?

Forms, as in other contexts, are structured documents with blank spaces for the user to add information specific to the legal matter in hand. Some such forms are required by law, for example the Land Registry's TR1 Form for the transfer of title to a property.

Precedents are template wordings for standard contracts or other legal documents which may be used as examples to aid the drafting of new contracts or documents. Precedents to assist barristers in the drafting of pleadings are also available.

Rather than having to “re-invent the wheel” when drafting legal documents, precedents assist lawyers by saving time and making it easier for all relevant legal or procedural requirements to be accounted for.

Why as a barrister would I need to look at forms and precedents?

On the face of it, as a barrister you are most likely to be interested in court forms and precedents of pleadings, rather than the kinds of forms and precedents used by solicitors in non-contentious law. However, bear in mind that barristers can now become licensed for Public Access to do the kind of work formerly done exclusively by solicitors. Also, if representing a client in court, the dispute may turn on the interpretation of a standard legal agreement or a modified version of such an agreement.

The major sources of forms and precedents

The Encyclopaedia of Forms and Precedents

EF&P is a comprehensive source of legal forms and precedents relating to non-contentious matters. Arranged by subject in over 90 volumes and also available via Lexis+, your law school or chambers may not subscribe to EF&P, but it is available either in hardcopy or online in the Inn Libraries. In addition to forms and template wordings, the service contains detailed commentary and guidance on relevant law and practice.

Atkin’s Court Forms

Atkin’s is an encyclopaedia of forms and precedents of pleadings in civil litigation covering more than 130 practice areas. As well as offering court forms and drafting templates, the work includes substantial commentary on relevant law and procedure and reproduces the Civil Procedure Rules with full annotations. Well-used by barristers, it is also published online as part of Lexis+. Not all chambers subscribe to Atkin’s, but it is available either in hardcopy or online at all the Inn Libraries.

Bullen & Leake & Jacobs Precedents of Pleadings

Bullen & Leake provides a range of templates for drafting statements of case. It is supported by practical commentary incorporating any statutory requirements or developments in case law. Also available to subscribe to online as part of Westlaw.

Kelly’s Legal Precedents

Kelly’s is a single-volume compendium of the most commonly-used forms and precedents. Also available to subscribe to online as part of Lexis+.

Other sources of forms and precedents

- Court and tribunal forms may be found on the Gov.UK website, searchable by category, title or reference number.

- Practical Commercial Precedents. This is a four-volume looseleaf work containing a range of precedents, with commentary, for commercial agreements, including sales of shares and businesses, employment and private equity.

- Practical Law. Your law school or chambers may not subscribe to this online service. Originally aimed at solicitors, Practical Law is now increasingly used at the Bar, in part because of Public Access. The service covers most practice areas and in addition to concise commentary and procedural assistance, offers a wide range of highly regarded precedents updated to reflect changes in the law. All the Inn Libraries subscribe to Practical Law

- Lexis Practical Guidance. This is a similar service to Practical Law and fulfils a similar function. It is presently less well-used by barristers but does contain some material not found elsewhere. All of the Inn Libraries subscribe to Lexis Practical Guidance.

- Textbooks. Specialist books on particular areas of the law often contain sample wordings in their appendices, for example standard forms or contracts in insurance, shipping and construction. The Standard Conditions of Sale are frequently referred to and may be found in the *Law Society's Conveyancing Handbook* by Frances Silverman.

Chapter 6 – European Union law

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Legislation

The European Union (EU) has its own legal system. EU law, which merges elements of both civil and common law, has direct and indirect effect on the laws of the EU member states. Its main rules and principles are laid down in the founding Treaties, which together with general legal principles represent primary legislation. Alongside treaties, we also distinguish secondary legislation ('legal acts') and supplementary law. The three main types of 'legal acts' are regulations, directives and decisions.

CITATIONS

Since 2015 EU legislation is numbered in a conventional manner, using a single annual sequence, for example:

Directive (EU) 2019/2162 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on the issue of covered bonds and covered bond public supervision and amending Directives 2009/65/EC and 2014/59/EU

Prior to 2015, there were separate numerical sequences for each type of legislation (directives, regulations, decisions, recommendations and opinions), for example:

Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC

Commission Regulation (EC) No 4/2003 of 3 January 2003 establishing the standard import values for determining the entry price of certain fruit and vegetables

How do I find legislation?

The European Union database EUR-Lex is the best resource for EU legislation. Finding EU legislation can be a daunting task because of the long titles, various acronyms, and the colloquial names used instead of the actual title. If you are not sure about the exact title, try to search by using relevant words in the title or text via Advanced search on EUR-Lex and use narrow-down features.

You can also search by document number. If you are uncertain what the number may be, you can use other resources which may help, such as textbooks on EU law, or online platforms, such as Practical Law.

Treaties

Treaties are binding agreements between EU member states. They set out EU objectives, rules for EU institutions, how decisions are made and the relationship between the EU and its member states.

Treaties can be found on EUR-Lex – as originally enacted and in their amended (consolidated) versions.

What is EU consolidated legislation?
The consolidated text is a version of a treaty or a legal act which includes its successive amendments and corrigenda. This text has no legal value and is intended to be used as a documentation tool only.

Where can I find founding treaties?

All Treaties (founding Treaties, accession Treaties, those currently in force) are available on EUR-Lex.

Remember that founding Treaties such as the Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (1951); the Treaty Establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (1957); and the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community (1957) are only available in Dutch, French, German, and Italian because English was not an official language of the signatories.

The printed versions of these Treaties as in force on 1 January 1973, when the UK joined the EU, can be found at Middle Temple Library.

English translations of the 1950s Treaties can be found online via the United Nations Treaty Collection.

Regulations

Regulations are binding legislative acts which are directly applicable in all member states. They do not need to be transposed into national law and supersede national laws incompatible with their substantive provisions.

They can be found on EUR-Lex and searched by CELEX number, year & number, title or an official acronym (such as 'GDPR').

Directives

Directives are binding legislative acts which, in contrast to Regulations, must be transposed into national law. The choice of form and methods is up to the national authorities.

They can be found on EUR-Lex and searched by CELEX number, year & number, title or an official acronym (such as 'WEEE' directive).

Where will I find how a particular EU directive was transposed into national law?

Use the Advanced search in EUR-Lex and select 'National transposition' in the 'National law and case-law' menu from the 'collection' field. Enter the relevant directive and select the Member State for whose national transposition measures you are searching.

NOTE: This list is not entirely comprehensive. Sometimes the directive was implemented but there is a delay in the process of publishing the information on EUR-Lex

Where will I find the deadline by when national authorities have to transpose a Directive into their national law?

Open a Directive in EUR-Lex and check Document information for the Date of transposition.

Decisions

Decisions are legal acts which are binding on those whom they are addressed (member state, an individual, a company). They can be found on EUR-Lex.

TOP TIP

Decisions made up to the end of 1991 shared the same sequence number as Directives. When searching, specify that you are looking for a Decision.

There are many Decisions addressed to undertakings in the competition field. Some of those Decisions are issued directly by the European Commission. They mainly relate to mergers, state aid, antitrust/cartels. Even though these decisions are treated as legislation, some of them are also seen as cases.

Selected decisions are published on EUR-Lex. Additionally, it is possible to search for the competition cases via the European Competition website.

Checking for currency

How do I know that a specific piece of EU legislation is in force?

Similar to some English databases, EUR-Lex employs a traffic light system to indicate whether legislation is in force or no longer in force. This applies to all legal acts.

In force

No longer in force

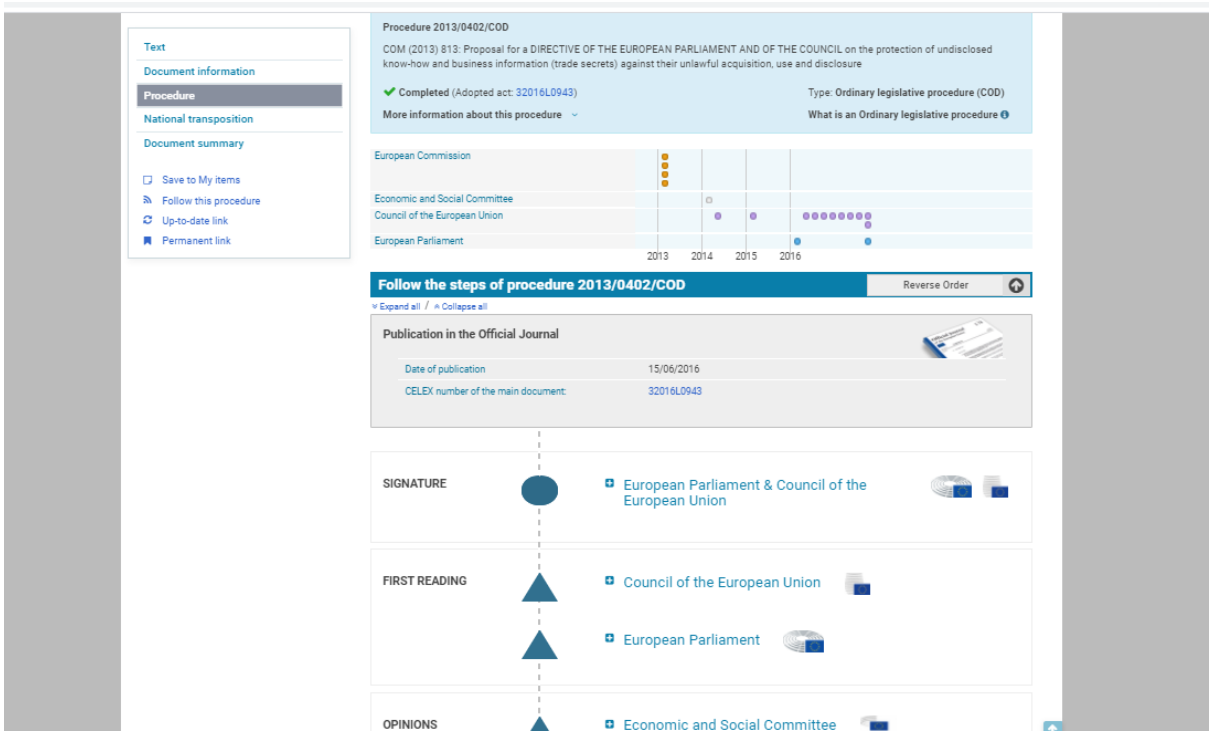
How do I find by what legislation repealed earlier legislation?

Open the legislation which is no longer in force on EUR-Lex. Under Title and reference you will find a link to the legislation which superseded the prior legislation.

Preparatory Acts

Preparatory acts are documents used to prepare EU legislation and are produced during the various stages of the legislative and budgetary process. Your research may require you to consult a new proposal or to review the preparatory acts of a piece of legislation already in force to gain background information – as you would look at a Bill or Hansard for a UK Act.

Typically, many documents are generated during the EU legislative process, but links to the main documents are helpfully gathered on EUR-Lex. To access these, locate the legislation you need and click on the link to 'Procedure' in the left-hand menu. This will retrieve an outline of the stages from first proposal to adopted (final) legislation. Links to documents are included as well as information about the type of the legislative procedure and chronological order.



One of the first documents listed will be the COM document. This is the text of the initial proposal with the addition of an explanatory memorandum, providing information on why the legislation is required and how it intends to address the issue.

As the proposal is amended by the different institutions involved, revised COM docs are often produced.

You will also find links to press releases as the proposal completes various stages and these can be a useful summary of how it is progressing.

The Official Journal (the 'OJ')

When researching EU law, you will often come across references to the *Official Journal* (the 'OJ'). This is the official collection of all EU legal acts.

You can find the electronic version of all issues of the OJ on EUR-Lex. The OJ was previously also published in print, but since 1 July 2013 only the electronic version is authentic and produces legal effects (Council Regulation 216/2013).

There are two series of the OJ: L series for legislation; C series for Information and notices.

The hard copies of the OJ in English from 1973 to 2013 are available in Middle Temple Library.

Legislation glossary

What is a CELEX number?

A CELEX number is a unique identifier for most documents on EUR-Lex. It can be used for searching for documents irrespective of their language. This number is assigned to both legislative documents as well as cases. For more information:
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/content/tools/eur-lex-celex-infographic-A3.pdf

What is ELI?

ELI stands for the European Legislation Identifier. ELIs are assigned to a wide range of legislation published in the OJ L series and consolidated acts.

What is a corrigendum?

A corrigendum is an instrument which corrects minor errors (translation-related issues such as grammar or spelling; clerical or obvious mistakes) in an already-adopted EU legal act. It does not affect the content of a legal act.

Case law

The Courts

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) was originally established in 1952 and has its seat in Luxembourg. It interprets EU law and ensures it is applied in the same way in all member states, it settles legal disputes between national governments and EU institutions and reviews the legality of the acts of EU institutions.

The CJEU consists of two courts[1]:

1. The Court of Justice
2. The General Court: created in 1988, until 2009 it was known as Court of First Instance

Case Citations

Official case citations comprise the symbol for the Court, the case number and the year in which the case was registered, e.g.
C-1/89; T-1/89; F-1/05

Cases beginning with a C are heard in the Court of Justice
Cases beginning with a T are heard in the General Court (previously known as the Court of First Instance)
Cases beginning with a F were heard in the Civil Service Tribunal.

Cases registered before 1989 consist only of a number and year – e.g. 383/88

Finding cases

There are three key online sources for EU case law

1. EUR-Lex
2. Curia - the Court of Justice's own website
3. ***The European Court Reports*** – the official printed reports, no longer published in print.

Older cases published in the ECR

Prior to 2012, the official series of EU law reports was the ***European Court Reports (ECR)***.

[1] There was also a third court – The Civil Service Tribunal (2004-2016) – which dealt with disputes between the EU and EU staff. Its jurisdiction was transferred to the General Court in September 2016. Reports of these cases were cited as follows **Case F-82/05 Thierry v Commission [2007] ECR-SC I-A-I-321**

In the early years of the Court, these were published in a single sequence and cited as follows:

Case 2/54 Italy v. High Authority [1954-1956] ECR 37

From 1989 and the creation of an additional court, the Court of First Instance ('CFI'), there were two main sequences of reports, cited as

Case C-6/90 Francovich and Bonifaci [1991] ECR I-5357 – a Court of Justice case

Case T-342/99 Airtours v Commission [2002] ECR II-2585 – a CFI case

Reports and citations for cases post-2012

From 1 January 2012 the Reports have been published exclusively in digital format on EUR-Lex and can be also accessed via Curia.

These electronic Reports of Cases are cited using the **European Case Law Identifier ('ECLI').**

This is a unique identifier which provides an unequivocal citation of judgments from European and national courts of the member states. It has been brought into use by each EU Court/Tribunal since 2014 and was harmonised between the Courts of the EU in 2016. It was also assigned retrospectively to old cases delivered by the Courts of the EU since 1954 as well as to the Opinions and Views of the Advocates General.

Example:

Council of the European Union v Gul Ahmed Textile Mills Ltd.
Case C-100/17 P-DEP.
ECLI identifier: ECLI:EU:C:2021:41

ECLI:EU:C:2021:41 (sometimes 'ECLI' is omitted in the citation, EU case before the Court of Justice, decided in 2021 as the 41st case of that year)

Are all cases CJEU published in the Reports of Cases (ECR)?

All cases were published in full in ECR until 2004. Since 1 May 2004 less important judgements and orders may not be included in ECR (e-ECR), however, they can be found on Curia or EUR-Lex.

How do I know that I have an official text on EUR-Lex?

Find the case in the Reports of cases section (use the search function at the bottom of the page).

The icons in the example below indicate that the text available is an official text. The lower document with the blank seal indicates that the official text is not yet available in the selected language.

Languages and formats available

* Language of the case

	BG	ES	CS	DA	DE	ET	EL	EN	FR*	GA	HR	IT	LV	LT	HU	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SK	SL	FI	SV
HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML	HTML
PDF																								

Document published in the digital reports of cases. They have official status.

How will I find pending CJEU cases?

You can find all the cases brought before CJEU in a numerical order on Curia; this list also includes pending cases. Via the Cases tab on InfoCuria. Looking at the filters tab on the left-hand-side, click on 'pending'.

How can I find all cases related to a specific piece of EU legislation?

Currently, due to a recent update to Curia, you can only search for 'legislation and case-law cited' for opinions and decisions. This is due to be updated in Spring 2026 with a multi-criteria advanced search tool. More information can be found here. Please do regularly check here for updates to Curia's search functions.

Opinions of the Advocates General

Over two thirds of cases before the Court of Justice are delivered in two stages – ahead of an actual judgment, an opinion of an Advocate General is published, sometimes even months earlier. The Advocates General present their views on the case and advise the Court of Justice on how that case should be decided.

These Opinions – even though not binding – are advisory and regarded as influential and followed in many cases. Therefore, they can provide good guidance but cannot be totally relied upon. The General Court does not have permanent Advocates General. However, that task may, in exceptional circumstances, be carried out by a Judge.

Opinions of Advocates General can be found on Curia as well as EUR-Lex. They are assigned an ECLI which differs from the ECLI of the judgment.

EU Law and Brexit

The UK left the EU on 31st January 2020 ('exit date') which was followed by a transition/implementation period, during which EU law still applied in the UK.

This implementation period lasted until 31st December 2020 ('IP completion date').

EU legislation which applied in the UK has been retained in UK law as retained EU legislation.

Where will I find retained EU legislation / UK legislation originating from the EU?

Selected retained EU legislation (EU legislation which applied directly or indirectly to the UK before 11pm on 31/12/20) is available on https://www.legislation.gov.uk/explore/legislatures/eu. You can find what changes have been made to legislation originating from the UK here.

You can find up-to-date information on how much legislation is derived from the EU and the actions taken to either reform, revoke or retain it via the Retained EU Law dashboard. From the 'REUL Explorer' tab you can see what legislation has been changed and how it has been changed (i.e. amended, repealed, replaced).

What is the EU exit Web Archive?

The EU exit Web Archive is a freely available web archive run by the National Archives which provides access to the selected EU law as it stood at IP completion day. It contains, among others, EU legal acts, treaties, case law and EFTA documents sourced from EUR-Lex.

Where will I find EU legislation as of UK exit date?

Selected EU legislation as it stood at IP completion day (31/12/2020) is available via the EU exit Web Archive.

Some commercial platforms offer useful resources on various aspects of Brexit and its impact on law in the United Kingdom. For example:

Practical Law - Beyond Brexit: the legal implications

You can also check commentaries on the law in the United Kingdom, such as textbooks, looseleafs and journals. Most of them reflect the changes related to Brexit and contain useful information specific for the given legal problem or area of law.

The most up-to-date information regarding the law profession and Brexit is freely available on the websites of the Bar Council and the Law Society.

Recommended resources

Catherine Barnard, The substantive law of the EU (OUP 2025)

Catherine Barnard and Steve Peers, European Union law (OUP 2023)

Elspeth Berry, et al., Complete EU law (OUP 2022)

Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, The ABC of EU law (Publications Office of the European Union 2018), Publications Office of the European Union, 2023. [Online]. [Accessed 3 February 2026]. Available from: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2c30cce5-3660-11ee-bbbf-01aa75ed71a1

Paul Craig and Gráinne de Búrca, EU law (OUP 2024)

Nigel Foster, Foster on EU law (OUP 2021)

Manuel Kellerbauer, Marcus Klamert and Jonathan Tomkin, The EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights: A commentary (OUP 2024)

K. P. E. Lasok, Lasok's European court practice and procedure (Bloomsbury Professional 2022)

Curia. [Online]. [Accessed 3 February 2026]. Available from: https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo1_6308/

European e-Justice Portal. [Online]. [Accessed 3 February 2026]. Available from: https://beta.e-justice.europa.eu/

European Union, Europa. [Online]. [Accessed 3 February 2026]. Available from: https://europa.eu/

EUR-Lex. [Online]. [Accessed 3 February 2026]. Available from: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html

Glossary of summaries. EUR-Lex. [Online]. [Accessed 3 February 2026]. Available from: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary.html#A

IALS. European Union: IALS Library Guides. [Online]. [Accessed 3 February 2026]. Available from: https://libguides.ials.sas.ac.uk/eu

Middle Temple's EU guide. [Online]. [Accessed 3 February 2026] https://www.middletemple.org.uk/sites/default/files/Uploads/2025EuropeanGuide.pdf

About the EU on Practical law. [Online via subscription]. [Accessed 3 February 2026]. Available from: https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/w-027-4796

Chapter 7 - Other legal systems

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European Human Rights

The Council of Europe

Although the name, the flag and even the anthem would suggest that the Council of Europe ('CoE') is part of the European Union, it is not. It is an international organisation, based in Strasbourg, which is entirely separate from the EU. It was founded in 1949 and currently has 46 members, after the suspension of Russia in early 2022.

CoE treaties, their explanatory reports, the status of signatures and ratifications, the declarations and reservations made by States, as well as the notifications issued by the Treaty Office since 2000 can be found on the CoE website. The list includes not only the Statute of the CoE but also probably the most famous CoE treaty, known as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Look for it under its original name: 'Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms' (1950).

The European Court of Human Rights

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is an international court. It was set up in 1959 and deals with applications alleging violations of the rights defined by the European Convention on Human Rights. The ECHR is also based in Strasbourg.

HUDOC – case law of the ECHR

The case-law of the ECHR can be accessed via the free database HUDOC.

HUDOC contains Grand Chamber, Chamber and Committee judgments and decisions, communicated cases, advisory opinions and legal summaries from the Case-Law Information Note, decisions and reports of the former European Commission of Human Rights (1954-1998), and resolutions of the Committee of Ministers.

Despite this coverage there are gaps. For example, decisions concerning single judge cases are not published. Commission decisions prior to 1960 are not included on the database and can only be found in the Court Archives. Committee decisions are available only from April 2010 onwards.

The user manual of how to search HUDOC can be found here.

Alongside the HUDOC database for ECHR cases, there are other useful, more specific databases which are available:

- HUDOC-CPT – provides access to documents relating to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- HUDOC-ECRI – provides access to documents relating to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
- HUDOC-ESC – provides access to documents of the European Social Charter
- HUDOC-EXEC – provides access to documents relating to the Department of the Execution of Judgments of the ECHR
- HUDOC-FCNM - provides access to documents relating to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
- HUDOC-GRECO - provides access to documents relating to the Group of States against Corruption
- HUDOC-GRETA - provides access to documents relating to the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
- HUDOC-GREVIO - provides access to documents relating to the Group of Experts on Action to Combat Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

Law reports

Cases decided by the ECHR are published in full or in extracted format and are available in the following official printed bilingual series (French & English):

European Court of Human Rights – *Publications, Series A: Judgments and Decisions* (1960-1996)

Publications of the European Court of Human Rights Series B, Pleadings, oral arguments, and documents (1960-1988)

European Court of Human Rights - *Reports of Judgments and Decisions* (1996-2015). Since 1999 these are also available online in pdf format.

From 2016 onwards cases are published online only. Some cases of high importance are selected to be published in the annual list of key cases which is available on the ECHR website.

There is still an ongoing commercial law report series published both in print and online (via Westlaw): *European Human Rights Reports* (1979-).

Further reading

Marten Breuer, The Council of Europe: its law and policies (OUP 2017)

Jacobs, White, and Ovey *The European Convention on Human Rights* (OUP 2021)

Human Rights practice looseleaf (S&M 2000 -)

Philip Leach, *Taking a case to the European Court of Human Rights* (OUP 2017)

European Court of Human Rights. Finding and understanding the case-law. [Online]. [Accessed 19 January 2026]. Available from: https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/CLIP_Finding_understanding_case_law_ENG.pdf

HUDOC user manual. [Online]. [Accessed 19 January 2026]. Available from: https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/HUDOC_Manual_ENG.PDF

Treaty Office of the Council of Europe. Guide to procedures applicable to the daily management of acts concerning the conventions of the Council of Europe. [Online]. [Accessed 19 January 2026]. Available from: https://rm.coe.int/16809fce94

US legal research

There is a rich diversity of resources for researching the law of the United States. The US has multiple legal systems and it is a particularly litigious jurisdiction, resulting in a proliferation of statutes, regulations and case law, as well the surrounding commentary sources.

Middle Temple Library specialises in material from the US – this includes an extensive collection of print resources as well as online subscriptions to key legal databases.

The US legal system

The United States has a federal system, with powers distributed between the states and the central government.

The central government is usually referred to as the federal government. The constitution divides the federal government into three branches: the executive (the President, Vice President and cabinet); the legislative branch (US Congress: Senate and House of Representatives); and the judicial branch (the federal courts, including the Supreme Court and the lower federal courts). Only the Supreme Court is constitutionally mandated.

Each of the 50 states also has its own executive, legislative and judicial systems. This means that there is a profusion of state laws and state cases as well as federal laws and federal cases. Effectively there are at least 51 separate legal systems (that is, federal and state).

The US Constitution sets out the powers of the federal government; those powers not expressly defined as federal in the Constitution are left to the states. Areas of federal law include bankruptcy, patents and copyright, immigration, and foreign and inter-state commerce.

The US, like the UK, has a common law legal system, in which cases are a binding source of law and there is a system of precedent. However, the US state of Louisiana has a partly civil law legal system derived from its French and Spanish history. Some other states have civil law influences too (such as California), and there are numerous Native American tribal governments.

Free resources

US legal information is generously represented with free online sources, some of which are official:

Website	Legislation	Cases
Caselaw Access Project https://case.law/		All state courts, federal courts, and territorial courts for American Samoa, Dakota Territory, Guam, Native American Courts, Navajo Nation, and the Northern Mariana Islands between 1658 and 2020. Overseen by the Harvard Law School Library

Cornell Legal Information Institute https://www.law.cornell.edu/	U.S. Code Uniform Commercial Code state regulations and state codes	U.S. Supreme Court Opinions 1990-onwards, and select historic decisions
CourtListener https://www.courtlistener.com/		U.S. Supreme Court Opinions U.S. Federal Appellate Court Opinions U.S. State Supreme and Appellate Court Opinions – coverage dependent on state Territory courts Military courts
FindLaw https://caselaw.findlaw.com/	U.S. Code state laws and state codes	Case law from federal and state courts, coverage dependent on court and state
Google Scholar https://scholar.google.co.uk/		U.S. Supreme Court Opinions, 1791- U.S. Federal district, appellate, tax and bankruptcy courts, 1923 - US state appellate and supreme court cases, 1950 -
GovInfo https://www.govinfo.gov/ **[official source]**	Slip laws (1995 -) Statutes at Large (1789-2021) US Code (1994 -)	U.S. Courts Opinions (opinions from selected United States appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts from April 2005 onwards)
House of Representatives, Office of the Law Revision Council http://uscode.house.gov/ **[official source]**	U.S. Code (current version)	
Justia https://www.justia.com/	U.S. Code and Constitution state codes and Statutes	U.S. Supreme Court Opinions U.S. Federal Appellate and District Court Opinions U.S. State Supreme & Appellate Court Opinions Links to external court pages
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/law/help/digitized-books/digital.php	Statutes at Large (1789 - 1951) US Code (1938-1995)	US Reports, official opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court (1754 - 2012)
US Supreme Court https://www.supremecourt.gov/		US Reports (1991 - 2017) Supreme court slip opinions (2018 onwards)

There are also extensive collections of open access commentary originating from US law school reviews, which are sometimes needed by UK practitioners. These are accessible via the Law Review Commons https://lawreviewcommons.com/ or the Digital Commons network: https://network.bepress.com/law/.

Subscription sources

Middle Temple Library subscribes to two US legal databases: Lexis US and Westlaw US, both of which provide access to a vast assortment of US legal resources. Almost all reported cases from the West regional law reporters (Atlantic reporter; Pacific reporter etc.) and the Federal reporter are available in Westlaw US, as well as many unreported cases. You can also access the United States Code Annotated and legislation from all 50 states.

Westlaw US also provides full-text access to a wide-ranging library of secondary sources. This includes treatises such as Williston on Contracts and McCormick on Evidence and annually issued practitioner manuals on specific areas of law. The Library also has online access to the Words and Phrases search facility, which is a very useful source of judicial definitions from US case law.

Lexis US provides access to US federal and state case law, along with similar legislative content to Westlaw US. It also contains a number of American Bar Association publications and access to the Shepards Citations service, allowing users to quickly ascertain whether a case remains valid and citable.

The Library also provides on-site access to HeinOnline for both primary and secondary material (including law school reviews) and LLMC Digital for mainly older law reports.

Printed sources

The Middle Temple Library holds a large collection of hardcopy law reports containing both federal and state cases. This includes the West regional reporters, the Federal reporter and other older state reporters going back to the 18th century. Some of this material is based in off-site storage – in most instances, alternative access will be available online via the library's database subscriptions (Lexis US, Westlaw US, HeinOnline and LLMC Digital). The Library no longer subscribes in print to the major law report series, but all are available online.

The Library also collects in print some legislation from Delaware as well as the Uniform Commercial Code which has been adopted in most states. Publications from the American Law Institute, who publish the influential Restatements of the law, are available in print as well as online through HeinOnline and Westlaw US – this series is often cited in UK courts. The Library also provides access to a selection of US law school texts as they provide useful summaries of the law with references to recent cases.

Commonwealth jurisdictions

All Inn libraries have some material for Commonwealth jurisdictions, but, many years ago, it was agreed that there was little point in each Library subscribing to everything. Since then, Inner Temple and Lincoln's Inn have shared the responsibility for collecting material for these jurisdictions.

INNER TEMPLE

Anguilla
Antigua
Bahamas
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belize
Bermuda
British Antarctic Territories
Canada
Cayman Islands
Dominica
Grenada
Guyana
Hong Kong*
India
Jamaica
Malta
Mauritius
Montserrat
Pakistan
St. Christopher & Nevis
St. Helena
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Seychelles
Trinidad & Tobago
Turks & Caicos Islands
Virgin Islands

LINCOLN'S INN

Australia*
Botswana
Brunei
Cyprus
Falkland Islands
Eswatini (Swaziland)
Fiji
Gambia
Ghana
Gibraltar
Kenya
Kiribati
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Nauru
New Zealand*
Nigeria
Papua New Guinea
Pitcairn
Sierra Leone
Singapore*
Solomon Islands
South Africa
Sri Lanka
Tanzania
Tonga
Tuvalu
Uganda
Vanuatu
Western Samoa
Zambia
Zimbabwe

* primary legislation and major series of law reports held by both Libraries

If you need to research Commonwealth materials, there are a number of options.

Free material on the internet

- Commonwealth Legal Information Institute http://www.commonlii.org/
  This is particularly useful for recent legislation and case law, less so for commentary. Coverage of the more authoritative law reports can also be patchy.
- Globalex guides provide information on the legal systems of various countries with links to materials https://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/flr.html

Subscription databases

Both Inner Temple and Lincoln's Inn subscribe to the Commonwealth content on Lexis+ and this content can be accessed in the two libraries. (We are unable to provide remote access). The Commonwealth Research Library brings together leading law reports, commentary titles, forms, precedents and encyclopaedic works, including Halsbury's Laws, from:

- Australia
- Canada
- Hong Kong
- India
- Malaysia
- New Zealand
- Singapore

A full list of sources on Lexis Commonwealth can be viewed at https://www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Lexis-Commonwealth.pdf

Inner Temple has access to a wide range of Caribbean caselaw via vLex and some Caribbean materials via Lexis+. The Laws of Mauritius are also available online at Inner Temple.

Printed sources

You can check the holdings of each Library via their online catalogues. The best starting point is the Library with primary responsibility for that jurisdiction, although there is more duplication of material for older sources.

Rather than attempt to collect every legal publication for a jurisdiction, the specialist collections now focus on

- material which might be cited in cases in England and Wales.
- material to support members appearing in litigation before Courts in certain Commonwealth jurisdictions – e.g. Caribbean tax havens.

As a result, collections concentrate on law reports, rather than legislation. For jurisdictions such as Canada and Australia, the collections contain reports for federal and state cases.

The libraries also purchase textbooks, encyclopaedias and journals. Again the focus is on topics such as contract and tort, which are more likely to be the source of persuasive precedent, than topics such as taxation, which will be of largely domestic application.

Both Inner Temple and Lincoln's Inn Libraries have access to the Halsbury's Laws encyclopaedias relating to various jurisdictions such as Canada, India and Australia. Access may be online via Lexis+ or in hard copy.

Document supply

In cases where members need a document which is not in any of the Inn libraries, it might be possible to obtain the document from another library. Ask Inn library staff for details; charges are likely to apply for this.

International Law

International law is also known as public international law or the law of nations. Originally concerned with questions of war, peace and diplomacy between sovereign states, international law now encompasses a range of subjects and international actors, including human rights, economic and trade issues, the environment, outer space, and international organisations.

As defined in Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, the sources of international law are:

1. International treaties and Conventions;
2. International custom as derived from the "general practice" of states; and
3. General legal principles "recognized by civilized nations".

Selected primary documents in international law

Diplomatic Relations	Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations
Human Rights And Self-Determination	Universal Declaration of Human Rights Core International Human Rights Instruments
International Criminal Law	Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
International Economic Law	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States
International Humanitarian Law	Geneva Conventions of 1949, Additional Protocols and their Commentaries
International Organisations	The Charter of the United Nations Constitutive Act of the African Union
Judicial Settlement of Disputes	Statute Of The International Court Of Justice

Law of the Sea	Conventions adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, 29 April 1958 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982
Law Of Treaties	Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties
Outer Space	Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies
State Responsibility	Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts

International Treaties and Conventions – useful terminology

Signature	Though a state may sign the original treaty, it will not necessarily be in force for that state.
Ratification	A state that has signed the original treaty and now wants to bring it into force will ratify it. Assuming a Convention is already in force there will be a provision to say how long after ratification a state must wait before it comes into force for that state. More generally, it is also worth noting a Convention may stipulate that it does not come into force anywhere in the world until a certain number of states have ratified it. The Convention on the Taking of Evidence Abroad came into force 60 days after ratification by a third state. It is therefore common to have to check whether a Convention has actually come into force yet.
Accession	This is the same as ratification for states who were not among the original signatories.
Denunciation	A state may decide not to continue to be a party to the Convention, often because it has become a party to a later Convention whose rules conflict with it. Denunciation usually takes effect a set period after it is made.
Succession	"Succession of states" means the replacement of one state by another in responsibility for the international relations of a territory. Succession is not automatic and is by declaration of the succeeding state. (Vienna Convention on State Succession, 1978, article 9). For example, the Czech Republic declared itself to be bound by the Convention on the Taking of Evidence Abroad as of January 1, 1993, the date of the division of Czechoslovakia.
Bilateral and Multilateral	Bilateral treaties are between two states and commonly relate to trade, investment or taxation. Multilateral treaties are those where three or more states are parties. The UN lists more than 560 multilateral

	treaties. Some, such as the Convention on the Law of the Sea, have as many as 160 signatories.
Travaux Préparatoires	These are the official documents recording negotiations, drafting, and discussions during the process of creating a treaty. They may be consulted and taken into consideration when interpreting treaties, as provided for under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. TPs for some Conventions are published but often difficult to obtain, while others remain unpublished. The Library of Congress provides a useful guide to researching Travaux Préparatoires.

Selected official sources for international law

Audiovisual Library of International Law	UN website providing a library of original documents supplemented by contextual essays and audiovisual materials. Easier to search than the UN Treaty Collection (below) but does not offer updated information on the status of treaties.
International Court of Justice	Includes the Statute and Rules of the Court together with a list of all cases and judgments.
International Criminal Court	Lists all cases and investigations plus all core legal texts of the Court.
UK Treaties Online	Provides an official record of the UK's treaty obligations under international law, sourced by the Treaty Section of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. Links to texts of Command Papers published in the UK Treaty Series from 1892. A helpful Treaties Enquiries Service is also available by phone and email.
United Nations Treaty Collection	Under Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, every treaty and every international agreement entered into by any Member is published as soon as possible by the UN. The site allows you to check the status of any treaty and provides certified true copies.

Selected library sources for international law

Introductory textbooks on international law appear in the key books list in Appendix 1 but below is a selection of standard reference sources available from one or more of the Inn Libraries.

NOTE: in contrast to English law, in international law there is less of a dividing line between academic and practitioner texts, and it is not unusual for barristers to refer to academic texts or articles if working on matters of international law.

British Yearbook of International Law	Through a scholarly work, BYIL offers valuable insight into developing UK state practice with regard to international law. Includes a wide selection of decisions in British courts and official statements of the UK position on international law, backed up by extended articles and commentary. Available at Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, and Inner Temple.
HeinOnline	Gray's Inn subscribes to the Foreign & International Law Resources database of HeinOnline, which includes the United Nations Law Collection, the World Treaty Library and World Trials Collection.
The International Law Reports	The ILR is the most comprehensive English-language source of judicial materials bearing on public international law. They include decisions of every international tribunal, ad hoc arbitrations between States, decisions of the ECHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, as well as "views" of the UN Human Rights Committee. The ILR is often the only published source for an international judgment or award. Held in hardcopy at Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn and Middle Temple and also online at Gray's Inn via vLex Justis.
International Legal Materials	Published by the American Society of International Law, ILM publishes a selection of the most significant documents in international law from around the world, supplemented by editorial commentary. It is accompanied by a blog, International Law in Brief. As with the ILR, ILM often contains materials which are unavailable elsewhere. All the Inn Libraries hold ILM either in hardcopy or online.
The Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law	Regarded as the definitive reference work on public international law, topics are arranged alphabetically from "Air law" to "Use of force" with entries written by specialist academics and practitioners. Available in hardcopy and online at Gray's Inn Library.
Ratification of Maritime Conventions	An invaluable collection of annotated international treaties and conventions which in fact goes significantly beyond maritime law, including instruments relating to international arbitration, investment disputes, conflict of laws and carriage by road, rail and air. Available at Middle Temple Library via i-law.

Research guides	The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and the Library of Congress both provide helpful guides to researching international law

.

International Arbitration

International arbitrations are between private corporations, states or state-owned enterprises based in different countries. This is a growth area for the English Bar as there is demand for barristers to act both as advocates and arbitrators in international arbitrations. There are numerous arbitral centres, institutions, rules, and international instruments. Information about these is freely available online from official sources.

Selected centres, institutions and rules

International Bar Association	The IBA has published a number of well-used guides and rules, including its Rules on the Taking of Evidence in International Arbitration. Its Arbitration Committee also publishes useful material.
International Chamber of Commerce	The ICC Arbitration Clause and Rules are widely used in international trade disputes.
International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)	A division of the World Bank, ICSID was established in 1966 by the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States (the ICSID Convention) and has administered the majority of all international investment cases.
LCIA	The London Court of International Arbitration was established in 1892 for the arbitration of "trans-national commercial disputes arising within the ambit of the City". Its Rules are a popular choice for commercial dispute resolution.
New York Arbitration Convention	A key instrument in international arbitration, the Convention applies to the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards and the referral by a court to arbitration. The Travaux Préparatoires are also available
UNCITRAL	The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law provides a Model Law and Rules for international commercial arbitration together with explanatory texts and the Travaux préparatoires for the UNCITRAL Rules.

There is considerable literature relating to international arbitration, with textbooks devoted to the different institutions, rules and procedures. Both Middle Temple and Gray's Inn Libraries have significant collections in international arbitration. In terms of subscription databases, there are two main resources:

Kluwer Arbitration	Contains a number of leading works including *International Commercial Arbitration* by Gary Born and *Redfern & Hunter On International Arbitration*, plus a range of journals. Kluwer reproduces arbitral awards, summaries of court decisions on arbitration, a wealth arbitration laws and rules, as well as significant coverage of Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs), many unavailable elsewhere. Gray's Inn and Middle Temple Libraries subscribe to Kluwer Arbitration.
Practical Law	The Arbitration Practice Area provides encyclopaedic coverage of international arbitration, drawing together primary materials with detailed commentary and guidance, including: • International arbitration legislation • Centres, institutions and rules • Treaties, conventions and other instruments • Procedural guides, checklists and toolkits • Sectoral guides for investment, commodities, energy, maritime, financial services and construction All the Inn Libraries subscribe to Practical Law.

Chapter 8 - Free legal resources on the internet

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Introduction

In the digital age, it is common practice to use search engines such as Google to locate information quickly and without cost. This extends to legal research, where free online resources can provide valuable information. However, it is essential to approach such resources critically, understanding their limitations and the importance of verifying the authority and currency of the material. More recently, we have seen the rise of information generated by AI and this is dealt with separately in the following chapter.

Official Sources and the use of Google

While Google should not be relied upon exclusively for accessing primary legal sources, it can effectively direct users to official and authoritative materials available online. Many government departments, Parliament, regulatory bodies, and non-governmental organisations publish reliable information on their websites. The internet is also a valuable source for materials in public international law

Key Questions to Ask When Using Free Online Resources

When conducting legal research using free online sources, consider the following questions:

1. **Is it authoritative?**
   Does the information come from a recognised and reputable source?
2. **Is the information accurate?**
   Has the content been verified or corroborated by reliable references?
3. **Is the material up-to-date?**
   Is the source regularly maintained and updated to reflect changes in the law?
4. **What sort of question you are trying to answer?**
   What is the aim of your research?

What is the aim of your research – is Free Online Information Suitable?

The suitability of free online resources depends on the nature and purpose of your research. Common reasons for lawyers to use Google include:

- As an easy way of refining search terms or seeing what information is available
- To gain a quick overview of a legal topic or issue
- To check recent developments or news related to a current legal matter
- To find an official source of information that is in the public domain.

While these uses are valid, it is important not to rely solely on free online information when preparing court cases or drafting legal opinions, which require the updating, consolidation and editorial apparatus provided by commercial law publishers.

Examples of free official primary sources online

- **The Civil Procedure Rules (CPR)**
  The official government website for the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR) is an authoritative and accurate source. However, it may not be fully up-to-date or presented in a consolidated form. For example, forthcoming rule changes may be noted but not yet incorporated into the text. Unlike commercial legal publishers, official sites may lack editorial updates or explanatory commentary, serving primarily as public information portals.

- **The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) Handbook**
  By contrast, the FCA Handbook is official, authoritative, *and* regularly updated source. It provides a consolidated view of FCA legal instruments, making it an essential resource for practitioners specialising in financial services disputes.

- **Public International Law resources generally**
  Public international law is less subject to change than English law and hence there is less of a requirement for continuous updating. Official databases, such the UN Treaty Database provide authoritative, accurate and largely up-to-date information on treaties and other instruments. The internet is therefore a valuable source for primary materials in public international law. (For further information, see Chapter 7 of this Guide.)

Examples of free secondary legal content

- **Wikipedia**
  Despite its crowd-sourced model, Wikipedia can serve as a useful starting point, e.g. its entry on the European Union is detailed and informative. Although it should never be cited in formal legal work, Wikipedia articles often include extensive footnotes, bibliographies, and links to official, authoritative sources which can then be used for further research.

- **Articles written by law firms and barristers' chambers**
  If you search Google by asking a legal question such as "what is an anti-suit injunction?" you will often retrieve articles published by law firms and barristers' chambers. Such articles are designed to demonstrate the expertise of the lawyers in question but are best treated as advisory rather than definitive as they are typically brief and receive no further updating. However, with these provisos, for the purposes of an overview, a refresher, or an update, this can be a quick way of obtaining concise and helpful legal content.

The top ten free websites

This is a selection of free websites likely to be of use to lawyers.

It is of course not exhaustive, and once you go into practice you may discover other sources on the web more relevant to your own work.

Please note other sections of this guide will mention websites covering other jurisdictions or practice areas.

Name	Jurisdiction(s)	Description
1) UK Legislation http://www.legislation.gov.uk	UK	Official source of current and historic UK legislation; aims to incorporate amendments to legislation within three months of those amendments coming into force.
2) BAILII http://www.bailii.org	UK, England & Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Saint Helena, Republic of Ireland, Europe, United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai), Qatar, Singapore, Cayman Islands	Free access to British and Irish judgments, legislation, EU case law, Law Commission reports, and related materials. Also includes content from other key jurisdictions. One of the most comprehensive sources of British and Irish primary legal materials online.
3) EUR-Lex https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en	European Union	The official database of EU law, including full-text access to the Official Journal of the European Union, preparatory acts, and international agreements. Official source of legislation and cases.
4) Find Case Law – from the National Archives https://caselaw.nationalarchives.gov.uk/	UK	Digital service from The National Archives in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, Courts & Tribunals Service, and the Judicial Office. Offers free public access to England and Wales judgments and tribunal decisions from 2001 onwards
5) LawCite http://www.lawcite.org/LawCite/	Multi-jurisdictional	Free citator developed by the Free Access to Law Movement. Case and article citator automatically generated from six million indexed cases, law reform documents and journal articles.

6) Eagle-i https://resources.ials.sas.ac.uk/eagle-i/search	Multi-jurisdictional	Multi-jurisdictional gateway site maintained by the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, providing links, to free legal websites.
7) WordLII http://www.worldlii.org/	Multi-jurisdictional	A single search facility for over 270 databases from 48 jurisdictions in 20 countries. Includes decisions of international Courts and Tribunals plus case-law, legislation, treaties, law reform reports, journals, and other materials.
8) GOV.uk https://www.gov.uk/	UK	UK public sector information website providing a single point of access to government services and publications.
9) CORE https://core.ac.uk/	Multi-jurisdictional	Comprehensive bibliographic database of the world's scholarly literature, collecting and indexing research from repositories and journals; the world's largest collection of full text open access research papers.
10) Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/	Multi-jurisdictional	Provides meanings of legal publication abbreviations from the British Isles, Commonwealth, U.S., and major foreign-language sources. Covers law reports, periodicals, and other legal materials. Updated regularly.

Finding older or superseded information online

Having cautioned against free online information that may be out of date, there are times when barristers specifically need to consult older materials. Example would include needing to prove a piece of information was in the public domain at a particular time or needing to research earlier versions of law or policy. Thus, information that has been properly removed from the web because it is no longer current may still be relevant to lawyers.

This is especially true of government publications, where official sites often provide only more recent documents. To access earlier versions:

- Use the UK Government Web Archive via the National Archives: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/

- Alternatively, the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine contains archived versions of more than 903 billion publicly accessible websites: https://archive.org/web/

Bear in mind these archives are not comprehensive. The most reliable access to older material may still come via subscription databases or printed sources. For older materials that cannot be easily located on the web, it is therefore recommended you contact one of the Inn Libraries for assistance.

Chapter 9 - Artificial Intelligence and legal research

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1. The rise of Generative AI (GAI)

In the last few years AI has, in many contexts, become synonymous with large language models ('LLMs'). These systems can be used to generate content by responding to user requests to produce all manner of written works. The AI achieves this by looking for patterns of words across enormous collections of written content.

The first popular version of this form of AI, ChatGPT was launched in 2022 and produced answers and material based on the content of the internet in late 2021. The vast quantity of text and data on the internet enabled ChatGPT to absorb a vast amount of language patterns. As a result, requests to create content on an obscure subject in a particular written style usually achieve very convincing results. However, the date limit for content was a drawback, as it meant that content was not updated.

Later versions of ChatGPT have had access to more recent data – the current default model, GPT-5.2 (as of January 2026) has coverage up to and including August 2025. Paid subscriptions enable ChatGPT to search the web for real-time data.

Despite these improvements in coverage and the technology's extraordinary facility for creating fluent and convincing content in a matter of seconds, it is vital to remember that this content is being created via language patterns and not on facts. This means that AI programmes can 'hallucinate' – i.e. create plausible but ultimately nonsensical assertions, based on the patterns they have identified and predicted. These might include non-existent legal citations.

2. AI and student assignments

Generative AI has many uses but by producing written content for you, it is not necessarily a good learning tool. If you have to write an opinion on an area of law with which you are unfamiliar, ChatGPT would probably produce something which looked superficially convincing, but it is important to consider whether you would have gained much in terms of knowledge, and you may not know or understand the reasoning behind the answer.

It is also important to know that, although free AI tools have access to huge amounts of legal sources on the internet, including some primary sources, many legal sources are owned by the legal publishers and only available via their databases and printed sources. Relying on AI would deprive you of some of the key information you need.

Assignments are designed to increase your own legal knowledge, research skills and drafting skills. Anyone can type a question into an AI tool but only someone with legal knowledge and research skills will be able to evaluate whether it is correct. If lawyers are to be able to charge fees for legal advice in the world of AI, they need to be able to offer something more.

3. AI in the workplace

AI has been a feature of the legal workplace for quite a few years with uses including contract review and knowledge management systems. There has been much interest from the profession and from publishers in how they might harness the potential of generative AI. Thomson Reuters, LexisNexis and vLex have invested heavily in developing products.

Such legal publishers have the advantage that they can develop machine learning tools which are linked to the legal content on their databases. This means that, unlike AI tools freely available on the internet, results on their products are using the relevant sources and will not be compromised by the mass of incorrect or misleading available on the internet at large.

Recent products from legal publishers include some impressive features but it is worth remembering that this is still very new technology. If you do incorporate research or drafting using a legal AI product in your work, be very careful. It is still very important to carefully consider and check the contents of any generated answers, to ensure they are correct and relevant.

Remember that you need to be able to stand by your work and justify any advice you give. If an AI tool has drafted a document for you, make sure that the style of drafting is professional and accurate.

It is also crucial to remember your ethical duties as a barrister when using generative AI tools. Confidential, personal or privileged information should never be uploaded to an LLM, as there is a risk of these inputs being used to generate outputs in future, thereby exposing the information. The Bar Council has published ethical guidance on generative AI which discusses this and other issues, and is well worth a read.

4. Be aware of the risks of relying on AI for research

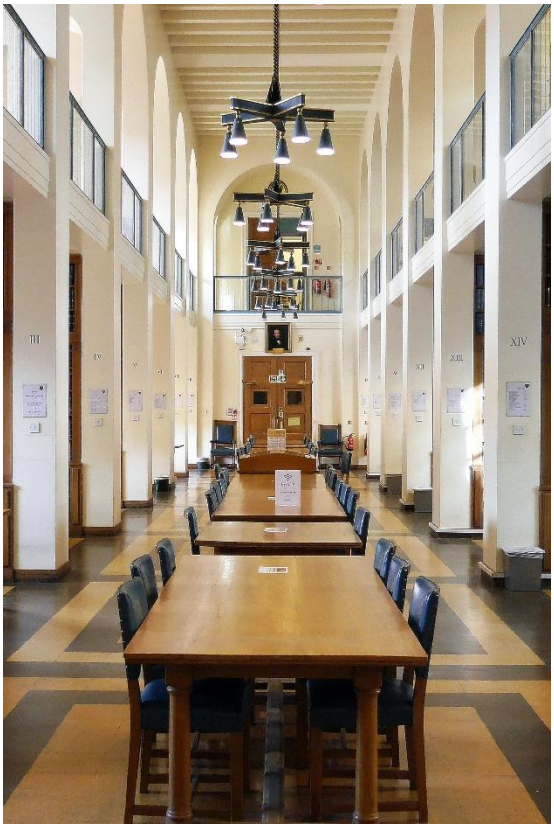
The Inn librarians have already seen barristers trying to track down non-existent case citations – a stark reminder that AI matches language, not facts. In these cases, it had 'hallucinated' and created citations which sounded plausible, but which were entirely non-existent.

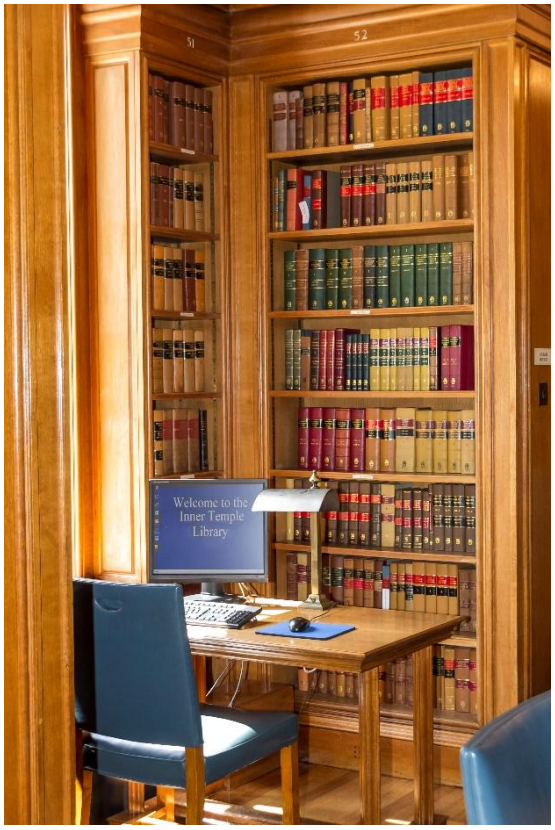
Moreover, there have already been instances where lawyers have produced lists of citations in court which have included non-existent cases. In May 2025, a barrister was referred to the Bar Standards Board following a case in which she submitted several fake citations; there have been similar incidents in other jurisdictions.

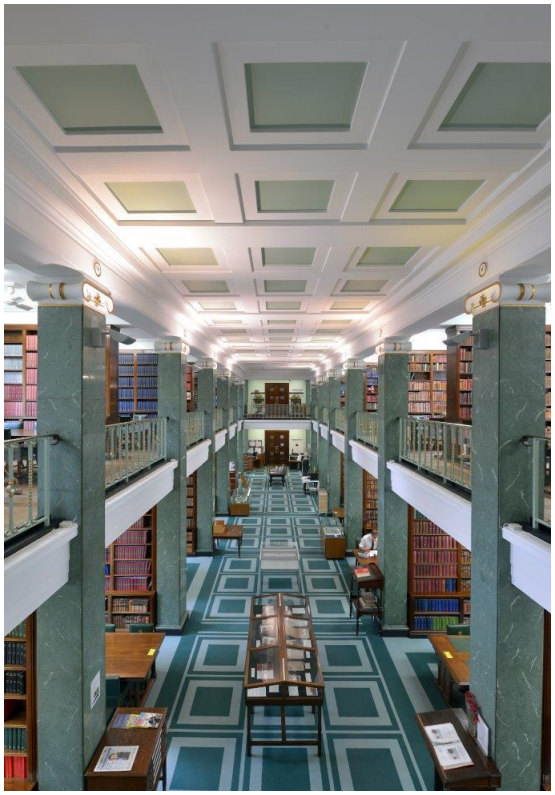
All the usual caveats of relying on secondary sources in legal research apply here: check everything that the AI tool has produced and read round the subject to make sure you understand the context. Follow up leads to primary sources, and check that your interpretation

of them matches what the AI tool is telling you. While AI can be a very useful tool, it is wise to remember that it is a complement to traditional legal research rather than a replacement.

Chapter 10 - The four Inn libraries







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Introduction

Each Inn of Court has its own library. Co-operation between the libraries is overseen by the Inns of Court Libraries Liaison Committee, which aims to make the best use of the libraries' extensive resources for the benefit of the Bar as a whole, and to ensure that the services that are offered meet the needs of students and practitioners.

The libraries cooperate with each other on many levels, including on collecting material, providing legal research training and library tours for members. Additionally, one Inn library is open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday during the legal term, according to an agreed rota. The rota can be found on the library websites or printed booklets in the libraries.

All libraries are equipped with in-house computers, free Wi-Fi access, photocopying and most offer scanning facilities. All four libraries also offer a distance supply service. Subject to copyright restrictions, scanned copies of texts can be sent via e-mail. Each library provides different materials according to their collections and under different conditions and charges. For further information contact individual libraries.

Special collections

Students are welcome to use all Inns of Court libraries. Each library is a bit different not only because of its appearance but also because of the material it collects.

Please check available resources freely online by consulting library individual websites and electronic catalogues. All Inns of Court libraries hold a basic collection on all areas of English and Welsh law and provide access to major legal databases, such as Westlaw, Lexis+, vLex Justis and HeinOnline and digital platforms, such as Practical Law.

In addition to these resources, each library specialises in areas of law and jurisdictions.

For example, Inner Temple Library and Lincoln's Inn Library share responsibility for the coverage of the Commonwealth countries.

This arrangement means that the collections of the libraries are not unnecessarily duplicated.

The specialised library offers more comprehensive collection on the given topic/jurisdiction than the other libraries. Additionally, it may offer access to extra databases or modules within databases.

Gray's Inn Library

Address:
5 South Square
Gray's Inn
London
WC1R 5ET

Telephone: 020 7458 7822
E-mail: library@graysinn.org.uk
Website: www.graysinn.org.uk

Social media:

Opening hours:
During Legal Terms:
Mon - Fri 9:00am - 8.00pm.
Saturdays in rotation with other Inns.

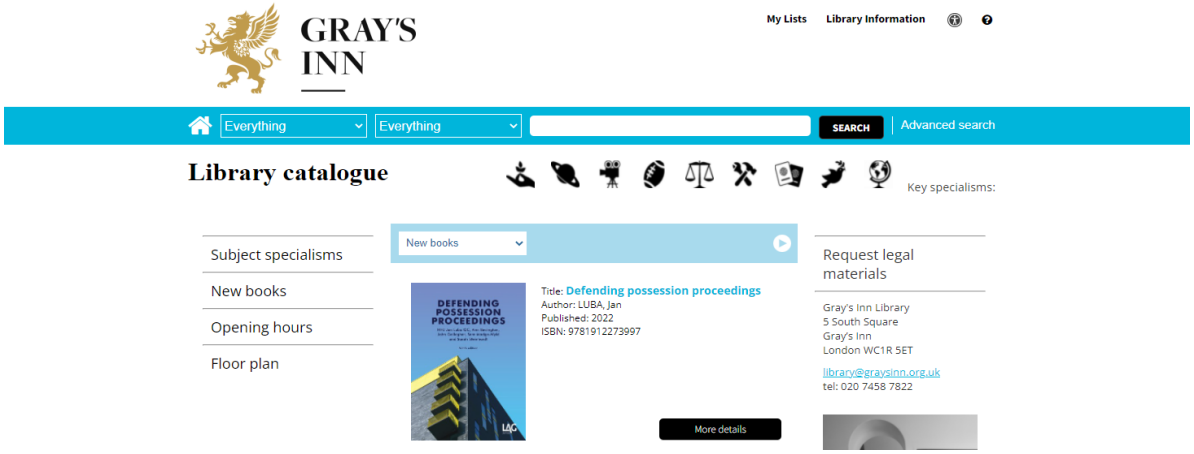
Outside Legal Terms:
Mon - Fri 9:00am - 5.00pm.
We do not open on bank holidays or over the Christmas period and occasionally need to close early for special events, such as Call.

Loans: Most current legal textbooks and bound periodicals may be loaned for either an hour during opening times or overnight from an hour before closing until an hour after opening, on the production of appropriate ID.
Books from the Griffin Collection are available for two week loans.

Other services:
Document Supply Service This service is offered for the purpose of judicial proceedings and private research. This service is discounted for students.

Library catalogue

The Library catalogue can be accessed via https://www.graysinnlibrary.org.uk.



Specialist areas of law: England and Wales

Air and Space	Energy Law	Information Technology
Conflict of Laws	Entertainment and Media Law	Local Government
Constitutional and Administrative	Environmental Law	Planning Law
Construction Law	Highways	Rates and Council Tax
Consumer Law	Housing Law	Social Security and Welfare
Data Protection	Human Rights	Sports Law
Education	Immigration and Nationality	Telecommunications

Specialist areas of law: Jurisdictions

Northern Ireland	Foreign Law (not at the other Inns)	International law

Selected specialist electronic resources

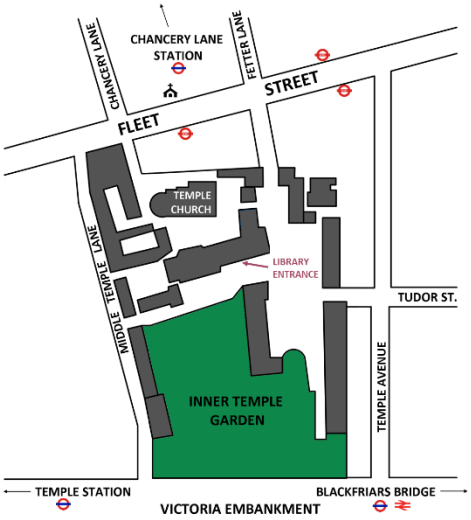
Kluwer Arbitration Service	vLex Justis – International Law Reports	i-Law – International Construction Law Review
Kluwer Law Online - Air and Space Law	Kluwer Law Online - International Encyclopaedia of Laws	Oxford Reports on International Law
Electronic Immigration Network (EIN)	Lexis+ – Immigration and Human Rights, Valentine: All Laws of Northern Ireland	HeinOnline – International Materials

Inner Temple Library

Address:
Crown Office Row
Inner Temple
London EC4Y 7HL

Telephone: 020 7797 8217
E-mail: library@innertemple.org.uk
Website: www.innertemplelibrary.org.uk
Social media:

Opening hours:
Legal Terms: Mon - Thu 9:00am - 8.00pm, Friday 9.00am - 7.00pm; Saturday in rotation with other Inns.
Vacation: Mon - Fri 9.00am - 5.30pm



Loans: All users can borrow books.

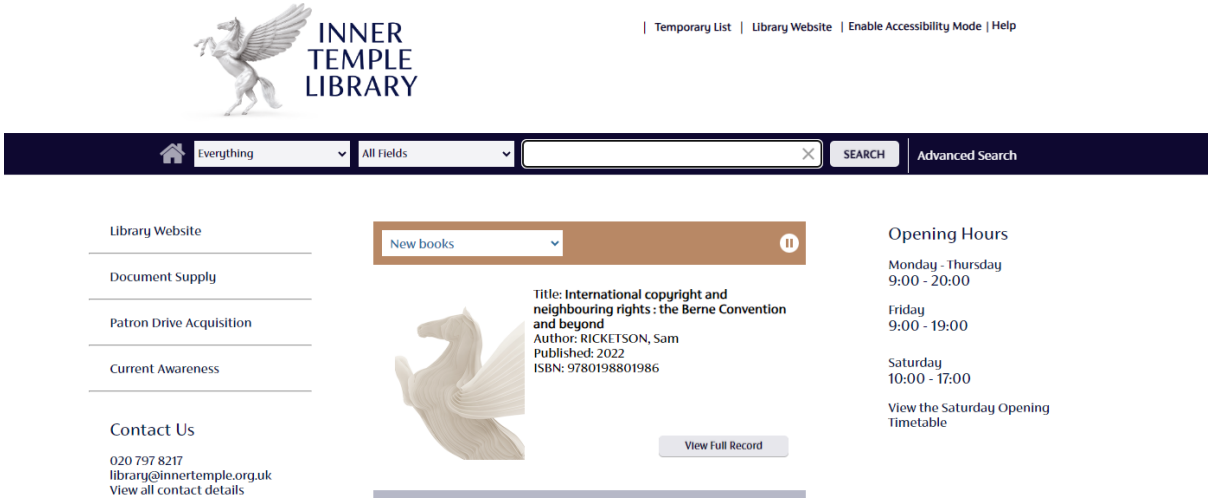
Other services:

Document Supply Service This service is offered for the purpose of judicial proceedings and private research. This service is discounted for students.

Current Awareness Blog A selective blog, updated daily, providing information on new case law, changes in legislation, and legal news, as well as articles, case comments and conference papers from chambers' websites and selected lectures and events.

Library catalogue

The Library catalogue can be accessed via Inner Temple Library



Specialist areas of law: England and Wales

Armed Forces	Food and Drugs	Personal Injury
Coroners	Forensic Science and Medicine	Prison Law
Criminal Law	Intellectual Property	Product Liability
Criminology	Licensing	Professional Negligence
Customs and Excise	Medical Law	Road Traffic
Defamation	Mental Health	Sentencing
Family Law		

Specialist areas of law: Jurisdictions

Scotland	Commonwealth countries (see listing in chapter 7)	

Selected specialist electronic resources

vLex Justis – Caribbean cases and judgments	Lexis+ – Laws of Mauritius	Lexis+ International (containing resources from a range of Commonwealth jurisdictions)
Westlaw Canada	Westlaw – Kemp	Criminal Law Week

Lincoln's Inn Library

Address:
Lincoln's Inn
London
WC2A 3TN

Telephone: 020 7242 4371
E-mail: library@lincolnsinn.org.uk
Website: www.lincolnsinn.org.uk

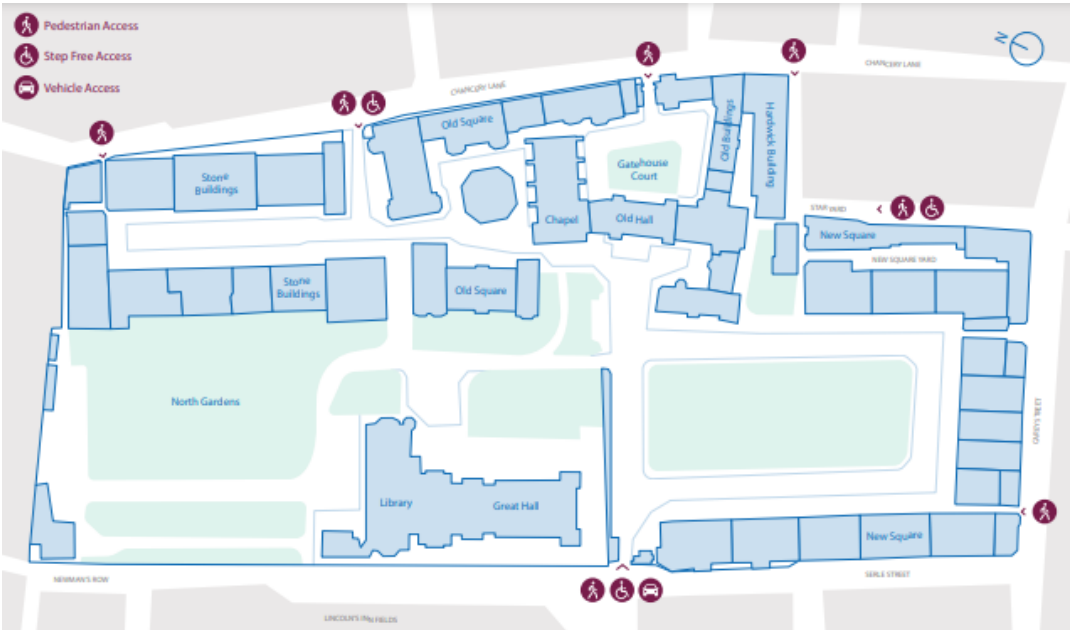
Social media:

Opening hours:
Legal Terms and Vacation:
Mon-Fri 9.00am – 7.00pm;
Saturday in rotation with other Inns

August to mid-September:
Mon-Fri 9.00am – 6.00pm

Loans: Students are not allowed to borrow law books

Other services:
Document Supply This service is offered for the purpose of judicial proceedings, private research and non-commercial research. Copies can be also requested for research on an opinion or advice, but a fee by the Copyright Licensing Agency will be charged for this.



Library catalogue

The Library catalogue can be accessed via https://www.lincolnsinnlibrary.org.uk

Specialist areas of law: England and Wales

Agriculture	Equity and Trusts	Pensions
Animal Law	Insolvency	Real Property
Charities	Landlord and Tenant	Taxation
Company Law	Parliamentary Materials	Wills and Probate
Conveyancing	Partnership Law	

Specialist areas of law: Jurisdictions

Channel Islands	Commonwealth countries (see listing in chapter 7)	Isle of Man

Selected specialist electronic resources

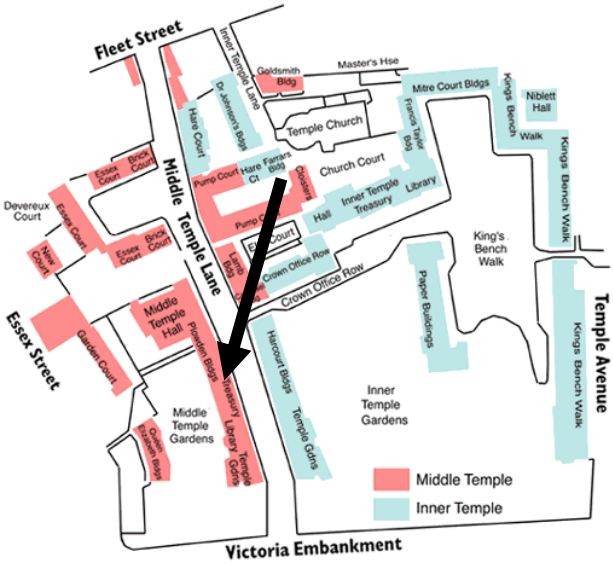
Cayman Islands Judicial Administration	Jersey Legal Information	Lexis+ International (containing resources from a range of Commonwealth jurisdictions)
Public Information Online		

Middle Temple Library

Address:
Middle Temple Lane
Ashley Building
London
EC4Y 9BT
Telephone: 020 7427 4830
E-mail: library@middletemple.org.uk
Website: www.middletemplelibrary.org.uk

Social media:

Opening hours:
Legal Terms: Mon - Thu 9.00am - 7.00pm;
Friday 9.00am - 7.00pm;
Saturday in rotation with other Inns
Vacation: Mon - Fri 9.00am - 5.30pm



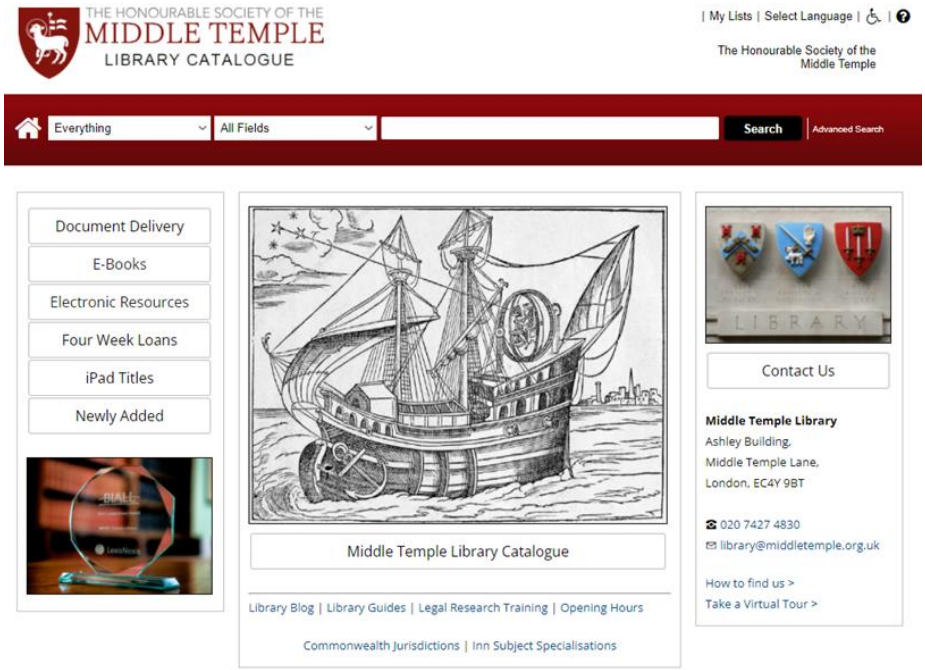
Loans: Members of all four Inns may borrow current textbooks overnight. Books can be borrowed one hour before closing time and must be returned the following working day by 10 am. There is also a range of books on offer for a one-month loan. These are indicated with orange labels.

Other services:

- Document Delivery Service This service is offered for the purpose of judicial proceedings, private research, personal research, for non-commercial purposes, or private study. This service is discounted for students.
- Middle Temple Library Blog
- Links for Lawyers An updated list of useful legal links

Library catalogue

The Library catalogue can be accessed via https://www.middletemplelibrary.org.uk



Specialist areas of law: England and Wales

Accountancy	Commercial Law	Finance and Financial Services
Agency	Competition Law	Health and Safety
Arbitration	Ecclesiastical Law	Insurance Law
Banking	Employment	International Trade
Carriage of Goods	Equal Opportunities	Maritime and Shipping Law

Specialist areas of law: Jurisdictions

Ireland	European Union and Member States	United States

Selected specialist electronic resources

i-Law – Commercial and Maritime Law	i-Law Insurance and Reinsurance Law	HeinOnline – US Materials
Kluwer Arbitration	Kluwer Competition Law	Lexis US
LLMC Digital (US)	Oxford Legal Research Library	Public Information Online
UK Parliamentary Papers	Westlaw US	

Appendix 1 - Key books by subject

Please note this list is intended to be an indicative guide rather than exhaustive. Many alternative or more specialised titles can be found by searching the Catalogues of the Inn Libraries or consulting the Library staff.

You should always check to see whether you are consulting the latest edition. If in doubt, staff at the Inn Libraries can advise. **The editions given below are current at time of publication.**

Arbitration
Redfern and Hunter on international arbitration / Alan Redfern … [et al.]
Oxford University Press, 7th ed., 2022

Merkin and Flannery on the Arbitration Act 1996 / Robert M. Merkin, Louis Flannery
Informa, 6th ed., 2020

Arbitration law (looseleaf) / Robert M. Merkin
Informa

Brown & Marriott's ADR Principles and Practice / Henry Brown
Sweet Maxwell, 4th ed., 2018

Aviation
Air law (looseleaf) / Christopher N. Shawcross / K. M. Beaumont
LexisNexis

Margo on aviation insurance : the law and practice of aviation insurance, including hovercraft and spacecraft insurance / Rod D. Margo
LexisNexis, 4th ed., 2014

Banking and finance
Byles on bills of exchange and cheques / Jonathan Mark Phillips, Richard Hanke, Ian Higgins
Sweet & Maxwell, 30th ed., 2020

Principles of Banking Law / Ross Cranston
Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 2017

Encyclopaedia of banking law (looseleaf)
Sir Peter Cresswell
LexisNexis

Paget's law of banking / Sir John Paget
LexisNexis, 16th ed., 2023

Financial Services Law / George Walker, Robert Purves, Michael Blair
Oxford University Press, 4th ed., 2018

Civil Procedure
Civil procedure / The White book (annual)
Sweet & Maxwell

The Civil court practice / The Green book (annual)
LexisNexis

Civil litigation / John O'Hare, Kevin Browne
Sweet & Maxwell, 21st ed., 2024

Disclosure / Paul Matthews, Hodge M. Malek
Sweet & Maxwell, 6th ed., 2024

Injunctions / Sir David Bean
Sweet & Maxwell, 15th ed., 2025

Commercial injunctions / Steven Gee
Sweet & Maxwell, 7th ed., 2021 + 2022 supplement

Limitation periods / Andrew McGee
Sweet & Maxwell, 9th ed., 2022 + supplement 2024

Commercial Law
Benjamin's sale of goods / Judah Philip Benjamin
Sweet & Maxwell, 12th ed., 2024 + supplement 2025

Bowstead and Reynolds on agency / William Bowstead, F. M. B. Reynolds, Peter Watts
Sweet & Maxwell, 23rd ed., 2023 + supplement 2025

Goode and McKendrick on commercial law / Sir Roy Goode, Ewan Mckendrick
LexisNexis, 6th ed., 2020

Company
Principles of modern company law / L.C.B. Gower … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 11th ed., 2021

Gore-Browne on companies (looseleaf)
Sir Francis Gore-Browne
Jordans

Palmer's company law (looseleaf)
Sir Francis Beaufort Palmer
Sweet & Maxwell

Constitutional and Administrative Law
Administrative Law / Paul Craig
Sweet & Maxwell, 10th ed., 2025

Constitutional and administrative law / A. W. Bradley
Pearson, 18th ed., 2022

De Smith's judicial review / S.A. de Smith
Sweet & Maxwell, 9th ed., 2023 + supplement 2024

Judicial review handbook / Michael Fordham
Hart, 8th ed. ed., 2025

Competition
Competition law / Richard Whish
Oxford University Press, 11th ed., 2024

European Union law of competition / Sir Christopher Bellamy
Oxford University Press, 8th ed., 2018

Competition Litigation: UK Practice and Procedure / Mark Brealey, Nicholas Green
Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 2019

Conflict of laws
Dicey, Morris and Collins on the conflict of laws / Albert Venn Dicey … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 16th ed., 2022 + supplement 2025

The conflict of laws / Adrian Briggs
Oxford University Press, 5th ed., 2024

Consumer Law
Consumer and trading standards : law and practice 2025 / Jonathan Kirk
LexisNexis, 13th ed., 2025

Consumer credit law and practice / General editor R.M. Goode
Butterworths (loose-leaf)

Woodroffe and Lowe : consumer law and practice / Geoffrey Woodroffe … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 10th ed., 2016

Contract
Chitty on contracts / Joseph Chitty
Sweet & Maxwell, 36th ed.

The interpretation of contracts / Kim Lewison
Sweet & Maxwell, 8th ed., 2024

The law of contract / Sir Guenter Treitel, Edwin Peel
Sweet & Maxwell, 16th ed., 2025

Criminal law
Archbold : criminal pleading, evidence and practice (annual) / John Frederick Archbold
Sweet & Maxwell

Current sentencing practice (looseleaf)
D.A. Thomas
Sweet & Maxwell

Blackstone's criminal practice (annual)
Oxford University Press

Smith, Hogan and Ormerod's criminal law / John C. Smith … [et al.]
Oxford University Press, 17th ed., 2024

Employment
Industrial relations and employment law (looseleaf)
R. J. Harvey
LexisNexis

Selwyn's law of employment / N. M. Selwyn
Oxford University Press, 22nd ed., 2022

Tolley's employment handbook
Annual
LexisNexis

Equity and Trusts
Hanbury and Martin: modern equity / Harold Greville Hanbury … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 23rd ed., 2024

Snell's equity / Edmund Henry Turner Snell
Sweet & Maxwell, 35th ed., 2025

The principle of equitable remedies : specific performance, injunctions, rectification and equitable damages / I. C. F. Spry
Sweet & Maxwell, 9th ed., 2014

Lewin on trusts / Thomas Lewin
Sweet & Maxwell, 20th ed., 2020 + 2024 supplement

Evidence
Phipson on evidence / Sidney L. Phipson, Hodge M. Malek
Sweet & Maxwell, 20th ed., 2022 + 2024 supplement

Cross and Tapper on evidence / Sir Rupert Cross, Colin Tapper, Roderick Munday
Oxford University Press, 13th ed., 2018

The modern law of evidence / Adrian Keane
Oxford University Press, 15th ed., 2024

Family and Children
Clarke Hall and Morrison on children (looseleaf) / Sir William Clarke Hall
LexisNexis

The Family Court practice (The red book) (annual)
LexisNexis

Rayden and Jackson on relationship breakdown, finances and children (looseleaf)
LexisNexis

Health & Safety
Redgrave's health and safety / Alexander Redgrave … [et al.]
LexisNexis, 10th ed., 2021 + 2023 supplement

Human Rights
Human rights law and practice / Anthony Lester, David Pannick, Javan Herberg
LexisNexis, 3rd ed., 2009

Human rights practice (looseleaf) / Jessica Simor
Sweet & Maxwell

Immigration
Butterworths immigration law service (looseleaf)
LexisNexis

Immigration law and practice in the United Kingdom / Ian A. Macdonald, Stephanie Harrison
LexisNexis, 11th ed., 2025

Immigration law handbook / Margaret Phelan
Oxford University Press, 11th ed., 2023

Insurance
MacGillivray on insurance law : relating to all risks other than marine / E. J. MacGillivray … [et al.]
Sweet and Maxwell, 16th ed., 2025

Law of marine insurance and average / Sir Joseph Arnould, Jonathan C.B. Gilman
Sweet and Maxwell, 21st ed., 2024

Colinvaux's law of insurance / Raoul Colinvaux … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 14th ed.,2025

Intellectual property
Copinger and Skone James on copyright / Walter Arthur Copinger … [et al.]
Sweet and Maxwell, 19th ed., 2025

Laddie, Prescott & Vitoria : the modern law of copyright / Adran Speck … [et al.]
LexisNexis, 5th ed., 2018

Terrell on the law of patents / Thomas Terrell … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 20th ed., 2024
+ 2025 supplement

Morcom on trade marks / Christopher Morcom
LexisNexis, 6th ed., 2021

Landlord and Tenant
Hill and Redman's law of landlord and tenant (looseleaf)
LexisNexis, 18th ed., 1988 -

Licensing
Paterson's licensing acts / James Paterson … [et al.]
LexisNexis, 134th ed., 2025

Medical
Medical negligence / Michael A. Jones
Sweet & Maxwell, 6th ed., 2021

Principles of medical law / Judith Laing, Jean McHale (formerly Kennedy & Grubb)
Oxford University Press, 4th ed., 2017

Public International Law
Brownlie's principles of public international law / Sir Ian Brownlie, James Crawford
Oxford University Press, 9th ed., 2019

Basic documents in international law / Sir Ian Brownlie
Oxford University Press, 6th ed., 2008

International law / Malcolm N. Shaw
Cambridge University Press, 9th ed., 2021

Property and planning
Emmet and Farrand on title (looseleaf)
Lewis Emmanuel Emmet
Sweet & Maxwell

Megarry & Wade: the law of real property / Robert Megarry … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 10th ed., 2024

Woodfall's law of landlord and tenant (looseleaf) / William Woodfall
Sweet & Maxwell

Ruoff and Roper on the law and practice of registered conveyancing (looseleaf) / Theodore B. F. Ruoff, Robert B. Roper
Sweet & Maxwell

Telling and Duxbury's planning law and procedure / A.E. Telling, R.M.C. Duxbury
Oxford University Press, 16th ed., 2018

Road Traffic law
Encyclopaedia of road traffic law and practice (looseleaf)
Sweet & Maxwell

Wilkinson's road traffic offences / G. S. Wilkinson, Philip Bown, Kevin McCormac
Sweet & Maxwell, 32nd ed., 2025

Shipping
Admiralty jurisdiction and practice / Nigel Meeson, John A Kimbell
Informa, 6th ed., 2025

Scrutton on charterparties and bills of lading / Thomas Edward Scrutton, David Foxton
Sweet & Maxwell, 25th ed., 2024

Tax
De Voil's indirect tax service (looseleaf)
Paul W. De Voil
LexisNexis

McCutcheon on inheritance tax / Barry D. McCutcheon, Aparna Nathan, Marika Lemos
Sweet & Maxwell, 8th ed., 2025

Sergeant and Sims on stamp taxes (looseleaf) / E.G. Sergeant
LexisNexis

Simon's taxes (looseleaf)
John Allsebrook Simon
LexisNexis

Tolley's annuals (separate volumes on capital gains tax, corporation tax, income tax, inheritance tax and value added tax)
LexisNexis

Whiteman & Sherry on income tax (looseleaf) / Michael Sherry
Sweet & Maxwell

Tort
Clerk & Lindsell on torts / J. F. Clerk, W. H. B. Lindsell, Michael A. Jones
Sweet & Maxwell, 24th ed., 2023 + supplement 2025

Gatley on libel and slander / J. C. C. Gatley … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 13th ed., 2022 + 2025 supplement

McGregor on damages / Harvey McGregor … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 22nd ed., 2024 + 2025 supplement

Jackson and Powell on professional liability / Rupert Jackson … [et al.]
Sweet & Maxwell, 9th ed., 2022 + 2026 supplement

Wills & Probate
Williams on wills / William James Williams, Francis Barlow
LexisNexis, 11th ed., 2022

Theobald on wills / Sir Henry Studdy Theobald, Alexander Learmonth
Sweet & Maxwell, 20th ed., 2026

Tristram and Coote's probate practice / Thomas Hutchinson Tristram … [et al.]
LexisNexis, 33rd ed., 2025

Appendix 2 - Legal databases – search term connectors

Lexis+

Operator	Symbol	Example	Effect
AND	**and** or **&** or **[SPACE]**	KPMG **and** Bolkiah or KPMG Bolkiah	Finds only documents mentioning both these terms
OR	**or**	Reinsurance **or** insurance	Finds documents including **either** insurance **or** reinsurance and those with **both** terms
AND NOT	**and not**	Slander **and not** libel	Finds documents including slander but not libel
Phrase	**“ ”**	“insider dealing”	Finds exact word or phrase
Truncation	**!** or *****	Fraud**!**	Finds variants on the root of a word – fraud, frauds, fraudulently, etc.
Word Proximity	**/n** **(or: w/n)**	Innocent! **/10** misrepresent!	Finds variants on innocent **within 10 words** of variants on misrepresent
Word Proximity	**/s** **(or: w/s)**	Innocent! **/s** misrepresent!	Finds variants on innocent **within the same sentence as** variants on misrepresent
Word Proximity	**/p** **(or: w/p)**	Innocent! **/p** misrepresent!	Finds variants on innocent **within the same paragraph as** variants on misrepresent
Parenthesis	**( )**	(cartel or price fixing) AND lysine	All results will contain the word lysine and **either** cartel **or** price fixing

Connectors in Lexis+ are case-sensitive – only use lower-case.

For the Word Proximity operators, adding “pre” before the operator will find the terms in the same order as in the request, and adding “not” will find documents where the two terms are not in the same sentence, paragraph, or within the specified number of terms.

For information about the order in which operators are applied, see the document linked from **View all connectors and commands** on the advanced search screen.

Westlaw

Operator	Symbol	Example	Effect
AND	**&** or **[SPACE]**	KPMG **&** Bolkiah or KPMG Bolkiah	Finds only documents mentioning both these terms
OR	**OR**	reinsurance **OR** insurance	Finds documents mentioning **either** insurance **or** reinsurance and those which include **both** terms
AND NOT	**%**	slander **%** libel	Finds documents containing slander but not libel
Phrase	**“ ”**	“insider dealing”	Finds exact phrase
Truncation	**!**	Fraud**!**	Truncation symbol – used to find variants on the root of a word
Universal Character	*****	Organi*ation	Used to replace one character – useful for including US spellings
Word Proximity	**/n**	Innocent! **/10** misrepresent!	Finds variants on innocent **within 10 words** of variants on misrepresent
Word Proximity	**/s**	Innocent! **/s** misrepresent!	Finds variants on innocent **within the same sentence as** variants on misrepresent
Word Proximity	**/p**	Innocent! **/p** misrepresent!	Finds variants on innocent **within the same paragraph as** variants on misrepresent
Parenthesis	**( )**	(cartel or price fixing) AND lysine	All results will contain lysine and **either** cartel **or** price fixing
Search for words in the title	**TI( )**	TI(securitisation)	Finds documents with the term in the title
Turns off plurals and equivalents	**#**	#securitisation	Finds securitisation but not securitisations

For the Word Proximity operators, substituting + for / will find the terms in the same order as in the query.

Practical Law

Operator	Symbol	Example	Effect
AND		KPMG Bolkiah	Automatically assumes **AND** – finds only documents with both terms
OR	**OR**	Reinsurance **OR** insurance	Finds documents mentioning **either** insurance **or** reinsurance and those which include **both** terms. Must be typed in upper case
Phrase	**“ ”**	“insider dealing”	Finds exact phrase
Truncation	**!**	fraud!	Automatically searches on the root of the search term
Word Proximity	**/p**	Innocent! **/p** misrepresent!	Finds variants on innocent **within the same paragraph as** variants on misrepresent
Word Proximity	**+p**	Innocent! **+p** misrepresent!	Finds variants on innocent **within the same paragraph and preceding** variants on misrepresent
Universal Character	*****	Organi*ation	Used to replace one character – useful for including US spellings
Term in Title	**TI( )**	TI(securitisation)	Find documents with a particular term in the title
Turn off plurals and equivalents	**#**	#securitisation	Finds securitisation but not securitisations

Appendix 3 - How to produce a research trail

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Introduction

When you practice as a lawyer it is entirely up to you how you record your research. The test is whether you can identify the authorities on which you rely, remember the sources and strategies you used and be able to replicate your research should you need to update it. As long as your research record works for you, that is all that matters.

During part 2 of the ICCA Bar Course, however, you will need to demonstrate your research skills to the examiners. The Professional Statement for Barristers which sets out the knowledge, skills and attributes that all barristers will have on 'day one' of practice and is used to structure Bar educational courses, states at para. 1.12

Using either paper or electronic media, they will be able to recognise and identify relevant legal issues as well as recognise the need to research areas beyond the law that are relevant to their work. They will undertake any research accurately and efficiently. This will involve assessing the quality and relevance of sources, interpreting and evaluating the results of the research and presenting those results clearly and accurately.

For various assignments you will be asked to produce research trails to demonstrate that you have these skills. You will need to provide evidence that you have:

a) consulted appropriate sources,
b) found material which supports your case,
c) evaluated material and sources as your research has progressed, and
d) checked that any references are still good law.

There is not set BSB guidance on how you do this, but the following tips may assist.

1. Break the scenario down into its component legal issues.

2. Research each issue in turn, noting your sources, searches and references as you go.

3. Corroborate your findings.

4. Check your references are up-to-date.

TOP TIP

DO log your research as you carry it out.

DON'T leave it to the end and try and remember what you did. This is a recipe for disaster.

1) Break the scenario down into its component legal issues

List the legal issues and tackle each in turn. You may at this point list the main sources you propose to consult during the research.

2) Research each issue in turn, noting your sources, searches and references.

This is where it is crucial to demonstrate to the examiners that you have carried out your research in a logical way and consulted a range of suitable sources.

a) Where do you start researching each issue?

Many of the scenarios you are given will involve areas of law which are largely unfamiliar to you. You will therefore want to start with some commentary. Halsbury's Laws of England (available on Lexis+) is an excellent starting point if you are entirely new to an area. There are also a considerable number of key practitioner textbooks available to you on Westlaw and Lexis+, listed in your research guide. You can also browse or search the sources list online.

Alternatively, you can run keyword searches across the entire commentary on Westlaw or Lexis+ and identify likely sources from these results. This is only likely to be successful if you have quite specific keyword searches. If you do try this route, note down your search strategies.

What do I do if I need clarification on some factual point in the scenario?

You may well find instances where there is not sufficient information in the scenario for you to be certain how the law applies. In such cases, note the additional information you would request from the client and outline the possible alternative legal arguments, noting the source references.

b) Once you have found a good source

- Note the details – author, title, publisher and – crucially – the date. Check if the online publication is updated or reproduces the work as originally published.
- **The fact that a textbook is online does not mean that it is continuously updated.**
- Record how you found relevant material in the text. This might be browsing the online table of contents or via a keyword search. If the latter, record your search and note the number of hits.
- Once you have found relevant commentary, note the paragraph number or any other reference which will allow you, or anyone else, to locate the same information directly.

3) Corroborate your findings

TOP TIP

Remember that this is a research exercise, so you are expected to look at more than one source. You are also expected to look at both secondary sources (commentary) and primary (legislation and case law).
If you think you have answered all the points in a scenario from a single source the chances are that you have interpreted the question too narrowly. Go back and look again!

- Check additional sources on the topic (textbooks or journal commentary) for further information and to check that it agrees with your research findings so far.

- Follow up any references to primary sources (case law / legislation). Textbooks are not infallible and if you cite a case or piece of legislation you should not rely on another's summary but check the original.

Will the examiners expect very complicated search strategies for databases?

Not necessarily, but they will expect you to show evidence of how database searching works.
If you only record very general searches which produce large numbers of hits, this is not going to demonstrate competence at research, unless you show how you narrow down the results – by adding further terms or using a method of filtering the results.

> Example: a Westlaw case search on **copyright** is not going to demonstrate any skill in database searching.
> By contrast a search for cases on copyright and typographical arrangement (e.g. **copyright /s typograph!**) with more keywords and use of search operators (see Appendix 2 of your research guide) will demonstrate this.

Trying a number of different searches and noting the number of results you get is a good way of both achieving a sensible number of relevant results and demonstrating your research process.

4) Check your references are up-to-date

If you are relying on case law or legislation, you will need to check that it is still good law.

- Case law: as neither Westlaw or Lexis+ is comprehensive in coverage of case law, you should check both to see if your cases have been over-ruled or distinguished.
- For some questions you might consider running a keyword search for recent case law. You should definitely do this if your area of law is unsettled or is being rapidly changed by the Courts.
- Legislation: when checking legislation be alert to any stop press notices about forthcoming amendments. Also check any existing amendments incorporated into the text.
- Legislation: do not rely on the version on www.legislation.gov.uk

5) What should the research trail look like?

How long should it be?
This will depend on the complexity of the scenario you have been given, but as a rough guide:

- About 1 to 2 sides A4 would be appropriate for the scenario in your induction week
- About 3 sides A4 would be appropriate for the trails to accompany your opinions

Does it have to be written out as a narrative or can it be in bullet points?
This will depend on what you think works best, but the examiners are not looking for a blow-by-blow account of every single thing you did. They want to see:

- How you identified the questions to research,
- Evidence that you consulted a range of sources,
- Evidence of how you got from your starting point to specific pieces of information.

They may also want to replicate elements of your search strategy from your notes, so ensure these are clear.

Should I include quotations of relevant content in my research trail?
You should avoid this. The research trail needs to demonstrate how you went about your research and which sources you consulted. Chunks of quotations will obscure this, but you should provide accurate references to material which you rely on in your opinion.

Is it acceptable to use abbreviations for references to sources?
Yes – but ensure that such references are clear. The best way to achieve this it to cite the statute / work in full the first time you mention it and then give the abbreviation you are going to use in brackets, e.g. Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 **('CDPA')**
Woodfall on Landlord and tenant **('Woodfall')**

Anything else I should know about presentation?
Remember that the examiner will be marking a whole stack of opinions and research trails. The more you can do to make it easier for him / her to follow your opinion and research trail the better. Think about the presentation:

- Don't use small fonts and stick to fonts which are clear and easy to read (Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial).
- Divide up the content sensibly with headings.
- Space paragraphs and sections neatly.
- Number paragraphs.
- Include page numbers.
- Follow a consistent format for quotes and citations.