

Finding Legal Information

Library Guide

Whether you are studying for a law degree or just taking a single law module, legal information can be hard to find.

This guide will help you find law books, law cases, legislation and journal articles in University of Ulster libraries.



Information Services

Library

This booklet is available online from the Library's Law web page: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/soc/law/>

<http://library.ulster.ac.uk>

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Getting Help

If you have a problem or get confused, don't panic. Talk to your subject librarian or come and see the law librarians on your campus. Ask for them at the Library's Information Point or contact them by email at: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/soc/contact/>

In addition, each faculty has a Library subject team. See the links below:

Art, Design & the Built Environment: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/adbe/>

Arts: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/arts/>

Computing & Engineering: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/eng/>

Life & Health Sciences: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/sci/>

Social Sciences: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/soc/>

Ulster Business School: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/bus/>

For help with library services in general, including information about opening hours, borrowing limits, loan types, fines and renewals, ask for a copy of the **Guide** at the Information Point in your campus library or go to the Library website <http://library.ulster.ac.uk>.

Getting Started

First things first

Your student ID card doubles as your library card – you'll need it if you want to borrow any library material, book a study room or use IT labs late at night.

Always start by logging into the **Portal**: <http://portal.ulster.ac.uk/> using your student ID and network password (the same one you use for Blackboard Learn). Select the Learning Resources (Library) tab to access the full range of library services including the library catalogue, online reading lists, past exam papers, electronic journals, databases and specialist subject help.

Much of the Library's legal information is available online both on and off-campus, with access controlled via Athens authentication. You are automatically authenticated when you log in via the Portal. If you have any access problems, please contact the Library.

Law Books

An up to date **legal textbook** is always the best place to start your research. It will provide an introduction to the law, and discuss key cases and legislation. It is also important to check unfamiliar legal terminology in an authoritative **legal dictionary**.

The University libraries have a number of legal dictionaries including the *Oxford Dictionary of Law* (available online and in print), *Stroud's Judicial Dictionary* and *Words and Phrases Legally Defined*. The major legal practitioner **encyclopaedia**, *Halsbury's Laws of England* (also online and in print), will provide a more detailed overview of the law topic by topic.

Use the **Library Catalogue** to find out what books (including ebooks) are available in the library and their location. You can search by author, title or keyword. There are differing loan periods for books and many of your core or recommended texts will be on One Week Loan or Short Loan status. There are limits on how many of these you can borrow at the same time, so be flexible and plan your work because you may not always be able to borrow a legal textbook for long periods.

If the book you need is already on loan, be sure to make a **reservation** for it, otherwise the current borrower will be able to renew the book and you may miss out. You should also use the **Inter-Campus Loan** (ICL) service to request books from other campus libraries.

The library enforces a heavy fines policy for overdue books so check your University email frequently – we send out warnings 48 hours in advance of the due back date. You can also renew books online or by phone.

Legal Abbreviations

Abbreviations are commonly used in law references and if you are unsure you should look them up in the **Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations** (see p10). The Cardiff Index will also tell you the preferred abbreviation for UK and international law reports and journal titles where there are several alternatives.

Tip: Your lecturers will normally refer you to UK publications.

Legislation

The changing constitutional arrangements for Northern Ireland mean that legislation applying here can come from several sources. Key sources to remember are:

- UK Statutes and UK Statutory Instruments (p4)
- Northern Ireland Statutes and Northern Ireland Statutory Rules (p8)
- European Union legislation (p9)

Always be very careful that you are citing correct (and up to date) sources in your work.

UK Statutes (or Acts) & Statutory Instruments (SIs)

Many Acts of the UK Parliament (Westminster) will apply either in whole or in part to Northern Ireland. Statutory Instruments (SIs) are UK secondary legislation (also called subordinate or delegated legislation). SIs contain details too unwieldy to include in Acts.

Acts are cited by Short title and year, and each Act in the year is given a Chapter (c.) number. The main part of an Act is divided into sections (s.), then subsections and paragraphs. For example, Human Rights Act 1998, c.42, s.12(1)(a) refers to section 12, subsection 1 paragraph a, of the Human Rights Act 1998, chapter 42.

Schedules and tables are also often found at the end of an Act and provide further detail, such as repeals and amendments to previous legislation.

You can find out if an Act applies to Northern Ireland by checking the **Short title, commencement and extent** section, which can be found near the end of the Act, just before any Schedules. In addition, Acts may not come into force on the date given at the start (the date of Royal Assent). Again, check the **Short title, commencement and extent** section for more detail. Often Acts, or parts of an Act, will come into force by way of Commencement Orders (a type of Statutory Instrument).

Finding UK legislation

Library databases are the best place to find UK Statutes and Statutory Instruments:

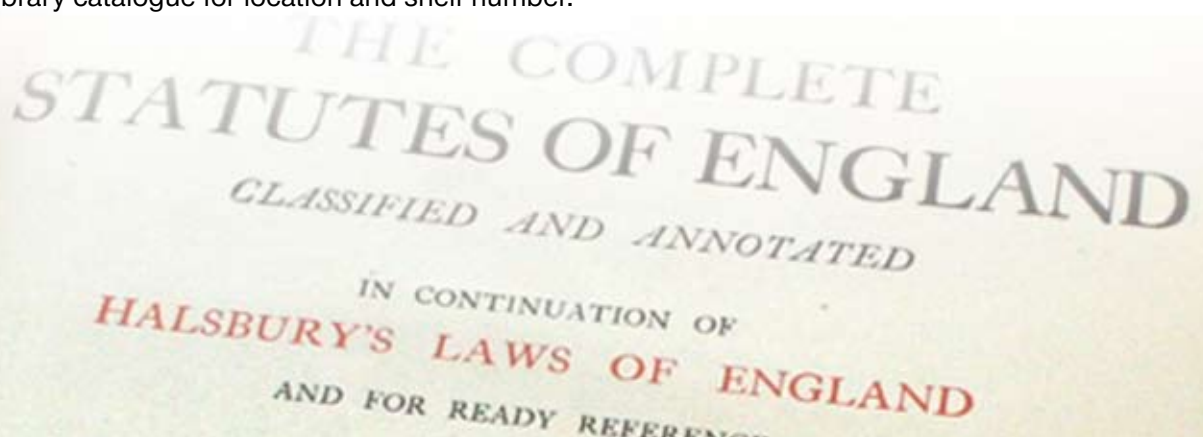
- **LexisLibrary** for UK legislation currently in force.
- **Westlaw** for UK legislation currently in force.
- **Justis** for UK legislation as enacted, including sections no longer in force.

Find out more about library databases on pages 6 - 7.

Print sources are also available in the University libraries.

- **Public General Acts** for Acts as originally enacted.
- **Current Law Statutes** for Acts as originally enacted.
- **Halsbury's Statutes of England and Wales** for legislation currently in force.

Check the library catalogue for location and shelf number.



Case Law

Law report citations

Law reports are also sometimes called law cases or judgments. You can usually recognise them by their reference (or citation). A **law report** citation is written like this:

Airedale NHS Trust v Bland	[1993]	1	All ER	821
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Names of Parties	Year Reported	Volume	Law Report Abbrev.	Page

This means the case of Airedale NHS Trust v Bland was reported (**published**) in the All England Law Reports, 1993, volume 1, starting at page 821. Only cases which raise an important point of law will be reported.

Neutral citations

Neutral citations are used for the huge number of cases from 2001 onwards which are made available via the many free Internet sites. A **neutral** citation might look like this:

Convery v The Irish News Ltd	[2008]	NICA	14
↓	↓	↓	↓
Names of Parties	Year heard	Court Abbrev.	Case no. (for that year)

This means that Convery v Irish News Ltd was the 14th case heard in 2008 by the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal. Neutral citations from courts in England and Wales may also include an abbreviation for the division, e.g. Douglas v Hello! Ltd [2003] EWCA Civ 139.

Finding law reports

Library databases are the best place to find cases. Use:

- **LexisLibrary** for cases from England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland.
- **Westlaw** for cases from England and Wales and very old cases (English Reports).

Print sources include most of the major law reporting series, and are available in the Library Journals collection. Search the library catalogue using the full title of the law reporting series to find out the location and shelf number.

If an individual case is on your reading list and not available elsewhere, your law subject librarian may have arranged for the case to be added to the **Offprint** collection in your campus library or **scanned** onto your reading list in Blackboard Learn. Ask the law subject librarians for more help with Offprints and scanned material.

Finally, don't forget that textbooks and casebooks often provide useful summaries of the most relevant cases on a topic.

Law Journals

Why do I need to use articles or other non-textbook sources?

Legal information changes constantly. Using journal articles, which are published more frequently than textbooks, will help you produce an up to date and well researched assignment.

How do I know I am looking for a journal reference and not a book?

Journal references generally follow a standard format. Here is an example:

A Ashworth, 'Ignorance of the Criminal Law, and Duties to Avoid it' (2011) 74 MLR 1

This article was written by A Ashworth (the author) and is about ignorance of the law as a criminal defence (the article title). You can find it in the 2011 volume of a journal called Modern Law Review (MLR). The volume number is 74 and the article begins at page 1.

It is important to cite journal references correctly in your own work (see p11).

How can I find a journal reference I have been given by my lecturer?

- Confirm the **full** journal title using the **Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations**.
- See if the journal title is available online using the **Electronic Journals** listing.
- If it's not online, check the library catalogue for the print journal.
- If a journal article is not available in print or online AND is part of your weekly reading, a copy may have been scanned to your online reading list.

How can I find relevant articles on a legal topic?

Don't try browsing through individual journal issues – this is extremely time-consuming. Instead use one of the **legal databases** to search hundreds of journals at the same time. Since most databases are available off campus, this also means you can look for articles at home or at work.

- **Westlaw** is the best database to use for journal searches. It indexes over 800 UK, Irish and European journals in English. If you cannot get the journal full-text directly from Westlaw or any legal database, note the reference and check the Electronic Journals listing to see if the journal is available online from another source.
- **LexisLibrary** provides access to around 45 UK full text journals.
- **HeinOnline** is a valuable journals archive, especially useful for international law or human rights law.

What if I can't get an article or case from Ulster print or electronic resources?

Complete a yellow Document Delivery form (available at the Issue Desk) with the details of the article or case you want. You will be notified when it arrives.

Law Databases

Are databases the same as electronic journals?

Not exactly. The Electronic Journals listing only tells you *if* we hold a particular journal title electronically and provides a link to the relevant database if we do. It does not search through the **contents** of the journal. If you need information for an assignment topic but have no references, always use a **database**. These allow you to search through hundreds of journals, cases or legislation sources at once. All databases are available from the A-Z list on the Learning Resources tab. See p12 for details of law databases.

Before you start using databases

- Read a recommended legal textbook first so that you are familiar with the correct legal terminology, key cases and legislation.
- Less is more. Don't put too much in the search boxes to start with.
- Legal references are often inaccurate. Think laterally and check the citation!

Key Legal Databases

Westlaw

- **Best for**
Journal articles (Legal Journals Index), UK cases, UK (Westminster) legislation.
- **When starting**
Don't use the basic search box on the Home page. Instead choose the relevant section (e.g. Cases, Legislation, Journals) to get better search options.
- **Too many hits?**
Use the Advanced search option to refine your search or use the 'Search Within Results' option to add additional keywords to focus your search.
- **Be sure to use the Analysis section**
It will tell you the judicial history of a case, including if it has been overruled by a higher court, any journals relevant to a case and much more. For legislation, you must open individual sections to find the Analysis option.
- **Westlaw International**
Use the Services menu at the top of the screen to access international sources.

LexisLibrary

- **Best for**
NI cases, UK Cases, UK (Westminster) legislation.
- **When starting**
Don't use the Quick Find search boxes on the Home page. Always choose the relevant section (e.g. Cases etc) to get better search options.
- **Too many hits?**
When case searching use the Summary search box to restrict your search to keywords appearing in the catchwords or headnote. Use the Results column on the left to narrow your search by publication type, topic and more. You can also use 'Search within results' to add more search terms.
- **Looking for Northern Ireland cases?**
Always use LexisLibrary for reported and unreported Northern Ireland judgments.
- **International sources**
Use the Sources tab to access the international material on LexisLibrary.
- **Commentary sources**
Lexis provides access to a number of major practitioner books online, including *Wylie Irish Land Law* (4th ed) and the major legal encyclopaedia *Halsbury's Laws of England*.

Justis

- **Best for**
UK legislation as enacted, including full text of legislation no longer in force.
- **Enter title details correctly**
Check the full title of the legislation in a reliable textbook – don't use colloquial titles. For example to find Deasy's Act you would search for the Landlord and Tenant Law Amendment (Ireland) Act 1860.

Northern Ireland Legal Sources

Northern Ireland's complex constitutional background means that it has developed its own body of legislation and case law from a variety of sources. The following sections detail the major sources of Northern Ireland law with which you need to be familiar.

Books

Most legal textbooks reflect the law in England and Wales but there are specific subject areas where Northern Ireland law is different. SLS is the main legal publisher of law books relating to Northern Ireland including the *Digest of Northern Ireland Law*, *Law in Northern Ireland* by Brice Dickson and more. To find a full listing of their publications in the library do a keyword search in the Library Catalogue for SLS.

Northern Ireland Legislation

In addition to legislation passed by the UK Parliament at Westminster (see p4), Northern Ireland has its own primary and secondary legislation, the **Northern Ireland Statutes** and **Northern Ireland Statutory Rules** (called Statutory Rules and Orders until 1972).

Northern Ireland Statutes may come from the following legislative bodies:

- Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont 1921-1972
e.g. Electoral Law Act (NI) 1962 c. 14
- Measures passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly 1974
e.g. National Insurance Measure (Northern Ireland) 1974 c.4
- Acts from the various Northern Ireland Assemblies 2000 -
e.g. Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2002 c.3
- UK Parliament at Westminster by way of Orders in Council 1973-1998, 2002-
e.g. Dogs (NI) Order 1983 S.I. No. 764 (N.I. 8)

Handy tip: If the words “Northern Ireland” or “NI” appear BEFORE the word “Act” in the title, the legislation originated at Westminster. If they occur AFTER, it was passed by Stormont.

Finding Northern Ireland legislation

Warning! Northern Ireland legislation is not adequately covered by Westlaw or LexisLibrary, so these databases are not recommended.

Electronic resources

- **Legislation.gov.uk**, the official government website, is the best online source for both updated and originally enacted Northern Ireland legislation.
- **The Bulletin of Northern Ireland Law** database provides summaries of new legislation with links to any available full-text on the web. It also includes weekly lists of new bills and commencement orders.
- **Valentine's All Law of Northern Ireland** CD contains annotated legislation (both primary and secondary) from 1921 onwards that wholly or mainly relates to Northern Ireland. Ask the law librarians on your campus for more information.

Print resources

- **Statutes Revised Northern Ireland 2nd ed.** comprises the legislation in force on March 1981, with amendments listed separately in Cumulative Supplements. Also available on BAILII website **without** the updating supplements.
- **Northern Ireland Statutes** (as enacted) are available from 1921 onwards. A Chronological Table of the Statutes (by year) and Index to the Statutes Northern Ireland (by subject) help you find relevant Acts.
- **Halsbury's Statutes of England and Wales.** Volume 31 contains revised legislation wholly or primarily relating to Northern Ireland.
- **Northern Ireland Statutory Rules** from 1974 onwards. A Chronological Table of Statutory Rules (by year) and Index to the Statutory Rules and Orders of Northern Ireland (by subject) help you find relevant Rules.

Northern Ireland Case Law

The two main law reporting series for Northern Ireland are the **Northern Ireland Law Reports** and the **Northern Ireland Judgments Bulletin**.

Finding Northern Ireland cases

- **LexisLibrary** is the best database for NI cases and covers Northern Ireland Law Reports since 1945 and unreported judgments since 1980.
- **The Bulletin of Northern Ireland Law** database provides a summary of cases from 1996 onwards with links to the full text if freely available online.
- **BAILII**, a free website, contains selected NI cases ranging from the Crown Court to the Supreme Court from 1998 onwards, as well as selected tribunal decisions.
- The **NI Courts and Tribunals Service** website has selected recent Crown Court, High Court and Appeal Cases.
- The **print** versions of the Northern Ireland Law Reports and the Northern Ireland Judgments Bulletin are available in the Journals section in the library and they are accompanied by an **Index to Northern Ireland Cases 1921-1997** which provides a party names and subject index.

Northern Ireland Journals

Northern Ireland produces few specific journals. The most useful include *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly*, *Folio* and *The Writ*. Journal articles about Northern Ireland legal issues can also be found in many of the other print and online journals available from the Library. You can search for them using the Legal Journals Index in Westlaw.

European Legal Sources

European Union (EU) legislation such as treaties and directives may affect the UK. You may also need to find case law from the European Court of Justice (European Union) and the European Court of Human Rights (Council of Europe).

The following library databases are best for EU and ECHR material:

- **LexisLibrary** for EU legislation and cases, ECHR cases.
- **Westlaw** for EU legislation and cases, ECHR cases.
- **Justis** for EU legislation, cases and the Official Journal.

Recommended Web Links

Library Law Guide

<http://library.ulster.ac.uk/soc/law/>

- These web pages provide even more information about library resources, including video guides illustrating how to use database resources, help with citing references, and extensive web links for cases, legislation and specific legal topics.

Library Law Blog

<http://ulsterlaw.jiscinvolve.org/wp/>

- Up to date information from your librarians on new resources, help with assignments and reading, search tips and advice. Comments are very welcome.

Citing & Referencing Help

- Oxford System: <http://www.law.ox.ac.uk/publications/oscola.php>
- Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations: <http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/>
- Cardiff Information Literacy Resource Bank: <https://ilrb.cf.ac.uk/index.html>

Best for Case Law

- BAILII: <http://www.bailii.org> (contains links to UK and other case law sources)
- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service: <http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/>
- European Court of Justice: <http://curia.europa.eu/>
- European Court of Human Rights: <http://www.echr.coe.int/>

Best for Legislation

- Legislation.gov.uk: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/> (especially for NI legislation)
- Eur-Lex (Portal to EU Law): <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/>

Best for Journals

- SSRN Social Science Research Network: <http://www.ssrn.com/>
- Google Scholar: <http://scholar.google.co.uk/> (limited legal sources covered)

For more high quality legal websites try

- Lawlinks: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/lawlinks/>
- LawBore: <http://lawbore.net/>

These and MANY more recommended sites can be found in the Library Law Guide:

<http://library.ulster.ac.uk/soc/law/>



Referencing for Law Students

The **Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities** (OSCOLA) system of referencing is the preferred method of referencing used by the University's Law School. It should be used for referencing legal materials such as Law Reports (Cases), Legislation (Acts of Parliament) and to indicate the sources of all Legal Journals/ Books/Reviews, which you have used in your research. The FULL and DETAILED guide to the **OXFORD** style is available from: <http://www.law.ox.ac.uk/publications/oscola.php>. A BASIC reference list is also available from the same site.

However, students from other Schools and Departments might use Harvard or other referencing styles. Always check with your lecturer to ensure that you are using the correct style. Help with referencing is available from: <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/training/>

Correct and consistent use of a standard referencing system is **essential** in producing an essay, report or thesis. Whenever you use **any** words, ideas or information from **any** source in your work, you **must** reference those sources. If you use the exact words of an author, if you paraphrase their words or if you summarise their ideas, you must provide a complete reference. It is one of the main ways to avoid being accused of cheating through improperly copying other people's work. So learn to reference **fully** and **properly**.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is **PROHIBITED**. University of Ulster policy defines plagiarism as:

...the act of taking or copying someone else's work (including other students') and presenting it as if it were your own. Typical plagiarists use ideas, texts, theories, data, created artistic artefacts or other material without acknowledgement so that the person considering this work is given the impression that what they have in front of them is the student's own original work when it is not. Plagiarism also occurs where a student's own previously published work is re-presented without being properly referenced. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is dishonest.

The University **does not tolerate** plagiarism of other people's work. Such behaviour is not only outside the spirit of serious scholarly activity, it is also an offence under the university's disciplinary code and could well constitute an infringement of copyright. You will be severely penalised if you are found to have plagiarised work. For more information see: <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/Policies.html>

The University of Cardiff's Information Literacy Resource Bank has produced a number of excellent guides, exercises and tutorials on what constitutes plagiarism and how you can avoid it. It is highly recommended. See: <https://ilrb.cf.ac.uk/plagiarism/index.html>

Finally...

It is important that you develop effective legal research skills during the course of your law studies. This guide will help you get started, but make sure you also go to any library sessions specially arranged for you to find out more about the law resources provided by the University of Ulster libraries.

However we know that legal information can often be hard to track down, so ALWAYS ask for help from the librarians when you need it.

Which database should I use to find.....?

Many other law reports and journals are available. Check Electronic Journals listings or browse database contents.

	LexisLibrary	Westlaw	Justis	HeinOnline	Swetswise	Building Law Reports
CASE LAW e.g.				No case law	No case law	
Law Reports (AC,QB, Ch, Fam)	1865-	1865-				
N Ireland Law Reports (NI)	1945-					
Weekly Law Reports (WLR)		1953-	1953-			
All England Reports (All ER)	1558-					
European Court Reports (ECR)	1960-	1951-	1951-			
Eur Human Rights Rep (EHRR)		1979-				
Irish Reports (IR)	1919-					
English Reports (ER)	1220-1865	1220-1865	1220-1865	1290-1865		1976 -
Building Law Reports (BLR)						
LEGISLATION e.g.						
UK Statutes and Statutory Instruments	All statutes and SIs in force	1267- in force	1235- as enacted	No legislation	No legislation	No legislation
FULL TEXT JOURNALS e.g.						No Journals
UK Journals	45+	100+		60+	30+	
International Journals	700+	700+		1000+	100+	
Cambridge Law Journal (CLJ)		1998-		1921-2006	1998-	
Euro. Journal of Int'l Law (EJIL)	1998-	2002-		1990-1997	1998-	
Int'l & Comp. Law Quart. (ICLQ)		1986-		1952-2007	1996	
Law Quarterly Review (LQR)		1986-		1885-1935		
Modern Law Review (MLR)				1937-2006	1997-	
N Ire Legal Quarterly (NILQ)				1936-2009		
Oxford Jnl of Legal Stud (OJLS)	1999-	2002-		1981-1998	1999-	
Public Law (PL)		1986-				
LEGAL INDEXES (not full-text)						
Legal Journals Index		1986-	This is a selection of the material available in the major law databases which the library provides for students at Ulster. The library has many more databases in a wide range of subject areas. Please contact your subject librarians for help choosing the right database for your topic.			
Current Law Case Citator	1986-					
Current Law Legislation Citator	1986-					
Legal & Regulatory Devel.Index	1986-					
Index to Legal Periodicals	1978-					