1. **Title of the module**

LAWS5840 (LW584) Forensic Science in Criminal Trials

1. **School or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

Kent Law School

1. **The level of the module (e.g. Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 6

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

15 credits (7.5 ECTS Credits)

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Autumn or Spring

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

There are no prerequisite or co-requisite modules.

1. **The programmes of study to which the module contributes**

All single and joint honours Law programmes. Also available option to all Social Science Students

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
   1. Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the development of the use of forensic evidence in the criminal justice process.
   2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the issues surrounding the use of established and new techniques of forensic science in the criminal justice process
   3. Critically evaluate the operation of forensic evidence in the criminal law in the social context
   4. Engage in reasoned and informed discussion on the major themes surrounding the presentation of forensic evidence in criminal trials
   5. Demonstrate detailed accounts of the major issues surrounding forensic evidence in court making appropriate reference to legal and academic source authorities.
2. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
   1. Undertake detailed and critical legal research using interdisciplinary research tools
   2. Present critical legal argument and debate in writing
   3. Demonstrate potential alternative conclusions for particular situations, and provide supporting reasons for them.
   4. Critically identify and retrieve up to date information, using paper and electronic sources;
   5. Utilise relevant legal terminology with care and accuracy;
3. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

This module considers how criminal law makes use of science. Forensic evidence is a rapidly developing area in criminal trials – new techniques are continually being developed and forensic evidence such as DNA profiling is increasingly presented as evidence. This rapid expansion has resulted in forensic evidence becoming increasingly debated in the media and by the criminal justice process – from articles hailing DNA profiling as preventing or undoing miscarriages of justice to those questioning a lay jury’s ability to make a judgement in cases involving highly complex scientific or medical evidence.

The module will be broken down into 4 parts:

1. Initially, analysis of the historical development of the use of forensic evidence will be made along with explanation of both what constitutes forensic evidence and the basic scientific techniques involved.
2. Consideration of the way in which forensic science has developed as a useful tool within the criminal justice process
3. Analysis of the difficulties of placing emphasis on forensic science within the trial system – cases in which forensic science has resulted in subsequently questioned decisions.
4. Current issues surrounding the use of forensic science: This section of the course will be devoted to considering the questions which arise out of the use of forensic evidence such as:

* Who should decide whether a new scientific technique should be admissible evidence,
* Who are the experts who present the evidence to juries
* To what extent does the admission of forensic evidence assists juries.

1. **Reading list (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

A Jackson & J Jackson, Forensic Science (Prentice Hall, Current edition)

• Journal of Evidence and Proof

• Criminal Law Journal

• Oxford Journal of Legal Studies

• New Law Journal

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total study hours: 150

Total contact hours: 20

Private study hours: 130

1. **Assessment methods.**

13.1 Main assessment methods

Assessment Pattern A – 100% coursework:

Unseen paper 1 – 1250 words (25%)

Unseen paper 2 – 1250 words (25%)

Written coursework, 2500 words (50%)

Assessment Pattern B - 100% Dissertation:

Dissertation, 5000-6000 words (100%)

13.2 Reassessment methods

Like-for-like

1. ***Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods (section 12) and methods of assessment (section 13)***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module learning outcome** | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 9.1 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 9.5 |
| **Learning / teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lectures |  | x |  | x |  |  |  |  |  | x |
| Seminars | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Private Study | x | x | x |  | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Assessment Pattern A** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unseen paper 1 (25%) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Unseen paper 2 (25%) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Written Coursework (50%) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| **Assessment Pattern B** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dissertation (100%) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The School recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

**a) Accessible resources and curriculum**

1. Preference will be given to electronic resources that meet minimum accessibility standards and support the use of assistive technologies.
2. Module outlines will be made accessible at least four weeks before the module starts.
3. Prioritised reading lists will be made available sufficiently in advance to accommodate the provision of alternative formats and support those with a slow reading speed.
4. Lecture/seminar slides/outlines will be made available in electronic format in advance to allow all students to prepare (particularly students with notetaking difficulties).
5. In accordance with the KLS school-level statement on Lecture Capture, lectures will be recorded to assist notetaking unless one or more of the lectures contains sensitive material. The module convenor will notify students in advance of any lectures that will not be recorded.

**b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods**

The inclusive practices in the guidance (Annex B Appendix A, section b (1) and (2)) have all been considered in order to support all students in their assessments on this module.

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered:**

Canterbury

1. **Internationalisation**

The module allows students to familiarise themselves with both theoretical and practical insights into the treatment of forensic evidence at an international level. Students are also able to select an international comparative study as a dissertation assessment. Students are strongly encouraged throughout the module to make use of international reports and articles where appropriate.

**FACULTIES SUPPORT OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6 & 7 cover sheet) |
| 25/01/18 | Major | September 2018 | 8, 9, 11 | No |
| 05/12/18 | Minor | September 2019 | 6, 13, 14 | No |