

The School of Law Organisational Plan 2014-2017

Vision

Since its establishment in 1993, the School of Law at the University of New England has developed an important position in Australia's scholarly community. As the largest distance provider of legal education, it provides opportunities to undertake Australian legal studies for people living anywhere on the continent and beyond. It boasts very high levels of satisfaction from its students. It also provides a unique, supportive face-to-face teaching environment, with small class sizes and committed teachers for those students who are able to study on the UNE campus at Armidale in the New England.

As a community of highly qualified scholars, the School combines genuine collegiality and friendship, with a strong commitment to research. Enjoying a growing cohort of research higher degree students and a unique specialisation in the legal issues relevant to rural communities, the School is delivering an increasing amount of high-quality and high-impact legal scholarship. Above all, through this Vision and Plan, the School affirms its commitment to the role of law, and the promotion of the highest standards of ethical conduct, professional responsibility, and community service.

Our future sees us building on these strengths. We intend to: further advance our broad intellectual horizons, encompassing doctrinal, institutional and interdisciplinary projects in research and teaching; build far greater recognition of the UNE School of Law as a centre of legal scholarship; and strengthen our internal capacity to embrace the challenges of an increasingly competitive higher education environment.

Goals

1. Remain the national leader in high quality distance delivery of legal scholarship, and to provide high quality on-campus learning, as envisaged in the UNE Strategic Plan.
2. Achieve a strong positive image for the School as a centre of scholarly excellence, in the mind of potential students, legal employers and the scholarly community.
3. Maintain and further develop a strong and effective collegial team, with adequate resources and a positive scholarly and community culture.

The School's 5 key strategies and implementation plans

<p>1. To achieve a "4" ERA ranking in the FOR18 Code by 2017</p> <p><i>Implementation Targets</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% of academic staff are to be designated 'research active' by disciplinary norms by 2017.• Hosting of no less than one scholarly conference or event each year.• Publish no less than 10 high quality journal articles within the IJRLP each year.• Successful supervision of a cohort of >20 PhD students per year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research mentoring and support for individual staff on ERA focused research productivity.• Strengthen our hosting of scholarly activities (conferences, International Journal of Rural Law and Policy, seminars) and scholarly visits.• Maintain or increase external grants and contracts to support research within the FOR18 Code.• Provide additional administrative support for research including grant writing, and conference organisation).• Further team research in rural law (including environmental law) and legal history research; and potentially in technology-enabled legal pedagogy.• Strengthen our culture of esteem for our increasingly significant research performance and innovation.
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<p>2. An EFTSL load of >1200 pa, maintaining a high student satisfaction rating</p> <p><i>Implementation Targets</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all T&L systems are efficient and AQF compliant, on an ongoing basis. • Streamline and make more reliable our workloads and EFTSL management, to maintain loads within the 33EFTSL level. • Develop and promote the LLM program,. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and upgrade our school system for workload estimation and allocation (to achieve all workloads below 33 EFTSL). • Review and upgrade T&L systems, with particular attention to potential improvements in student examination and assessment systems. • Implement a structured approach to continuous improvement in pedagogical methods, including through the use of T&L forums within the School, to become leaders in legal pedagogy and the use of technology for distance delivery. • Increase the LLM cohort, particularly by targeting international students through collaborative arrangements.
<p>3. Maintain and strengthen our collegial effectiveness</p> <p><i>Implementation Targets</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient deliberation and decision making by all committees. • Effective independent oversight and review, leading to useful advice, from the Advisory Board. • Efficient internal systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a streamlined committee and decision-making structure, including an effective Advisory Board. • Prioritise continuous improvement in our internal systems, particularly those that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of student management (e.g. assessment and examination methods). • Foster a School environment that is comfortable and professional, and social and scholarly events, conducive to celebrating success and encouraging friendship. • Increase the percentage of staff who are full time, on campus staff with high level scholarly qualifications.
<p>4. A distinctive brand as the leading law school which combines world recognised research and distance delivery.</p> <p><i>Implementation Targets</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a ‘branding’ plan for the School by 2014. • Engage with and involve the Law Alumni in developing the School’s brand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a positioning statement, imagery and materials for the School reflecting its unique stance as leaders in providing access to high quality legal scholarship, including rural law and justice research and education. • Diversify and strengthen our media channels and media presence, including rural media. • Use the 20 year celebrations as a keystone for our repositioning and brand building.
<p>5. Evaluate and implement ‘game-changing’ innovations in our strategy to meet competitive challenges</p> <p><i>Implementation Targets</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law School Executive to lead reviews of potential innovations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement technological and pedagogic innovations to enhance our efficiency, effectiveness and competitive positioning. • Exploit disciplinary synergies in research, teaching and positioning, across UNE. • Explore collaborative offerings of postgraduate degrees (e.g. cotutelles and cross recognition).

Summary: Structure and Supervision

Responsibility for developing and implementing the School strategy, and for independent oversight of the School, lies with four committees reporting to the Head of School. Committees and the Head of School report to the Faculty through School meetings, where School strategy and policy and other matters are discussed and issues of common concern are resolved in a collegial and transparent manner.

Committees are responsible for developing policy and strategy within their area of responsibility, for implementation and administration of these decisions when ratified, and for evaluation and reporting on the achievement of their goals and execution of their plans. Within each of these committees may be formed subcommittees or working groups to which particular tasks may be delegated. These report through the relevant Committee.

<p>Teaching and Learning Committee leads and coordinates the teaching and learning activities of the School at undergraduate and masters level, including leading of innovation in teaching, and teaching administration.</p> <p>Subcommittees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undergraduate education working group, 2. Masters education working group, 3. Educational innovation working group. 	<p>Law School Executive is responsible for overall coordination and integration across the School</p> <p>Subcommittees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategy and positioning working group, 2. Standards and governance working group, 3. Workloads working group, 4. Administration working group, 5. Facilities and infrastructures working group, 6. Library sub-committee, 7. Technology and innovation working group. 	<p>Law School Advisory Committee provides independent oversight and advice, to the Head of School.</p>
<p>Research Committee leads and coordinates research, research resourcing and capacity development, of staff and doctoral candidates within the School.</p> <p>Subcommittees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff research working group, 2. HDR committee. 		

Detailed plans and implementation

Each Committee (other than the Advisory Committee) is responsible for developing and implementing its particular component of the School strategic plan. These are adjusted annually within the context of the five year strategy, which will be revised as required but no less than once every 2 years.

1. **Teaching and Learning**
2. **Research**
3. **The Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law (AgLaw)**
4. **School Executive Committee**

1. Teaching and Learning Committee, 2014-2017

Our vision of teaching and learning

The School of Law is committed to offering a well-rounded degree that satisfies diverse aspirations including, and going beyond, traditional legal practice. We seek to provide our students with a strong grounding in doctrinal law and also the broader contexts which inform law. We also aim to provide students with opportunities to develop a range of generic skills essential for the diversity of law-related jobs that our graduates undertake, along with legal skills such as legal research, drafting and mooting.

Postgraduate coursework and research degrees are an important element of our law school e.g., the Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law provides a thriving research environment where a number of our postgraduate students are located.

Our School of Law aims to be a leader in both off- and on-campus legal education. The School is committed to having academics teach in the areas in which they have a scholarly reputation. We are committed to the use of technology and innovative learning to assist off-campus students thereby enjoying an interactive learning experience. The Law School is committed to providing on-campus students with exceptional student–teacher ratios, offering opportunities for interaction between staff and students through small-group teaching and through staff involvement in the residential colleges.

Goals

Our teaching and learning goals for 2014-2017 are:

1. Ensure that the Undergraduate and Post-graduate programs are AQF compliant;
2. Develop pedagogically sound technological practices;
3. Review the teaching workload to achieve a fair allocation for all staff members and to, where possible, encourage staff to undertake teaching aligned with their research;
4. Introduce discussion on teaching pedagogy and teaching scholarship as it relates to distance learning, and encourage and facilitate staff to disseminate their reflections on teaching practice through ‘lunch and learn’ and other similar seminars; publications; and apply for teaching grants, where appropriate (teaching scholarship);
5. Strengthen and promote the LLM;
6. A quality on campus experience;
7. A curriculum that is socially inclusive.

Key strategies and actions

Action	Details	Responsibility
Ensure that the Undergraduate and the post-graduate programs are AQF compliant.	Identify unit pre-requisites; review learning outcomes, skills and graduate attributes relating to units; review unit offerings with a view to implementing a scaffolded learning experience for students; recode undergraduate units at levels 100, 200, 300 or 400, and Masters Units at 500 level; and ensure that units that are needed for commencing students are offered across all 3 trimesters.	Chair of T & L; Undergraduate Course Convenor; and Academic Manager.
Upgrade the use of technology in all units.	<p>Through the Educational Innovation Officer staff will pilot technological / pedagogic innovations.</p> <p>LS100, LS160, LS352 and LS364 will be offered as part of the Future Campus project. LS352 and LS364 will be subject to Courseware Redevelopment in Semester 1, other units to follow. This investigation will now take the form of reviewing the Law School's Intensive School Policy.</p> <p>We will evaluate the pilots and LS352 and LS364's pedagogical and technological initiatives, for further adoption. We will encourage all units to use technology innovatively, where appropriate, to present lectures, offer tutorials and mark assessment.</p>	Undergraduate Course Convenor and Educational Innovation Officer
Better manage staff members' teaching allocations and unit projected requirements.	<p>Improve accuracy of estimated student numbers for workload management, aiming that individual teaching load does not exceed 33 EFTSL. Liaise with CIU regarding the information they provide</p> <p>Better manage support staff availability; and alignment between teaching and research where possible.</p>	Chair of T & L; Undergraduate and Undergraduate Course Convenor
Promote and facilitate Teaching Scholarship and develop a law school community of practice.	<p>Showcase teaching strategies e.g., providing seminars that explain moderation using a standards-setting exercise; AND offering 'lunch and learn' seminar where staff share 'best practices'.</p> <p>Encourage and provide support to staff with respect to attending conferences; publishing on legal/technological pedagogy; and applying for teaching awards and teaching grants;</p>	Chair of T & L; Undergraduate Course Convenor; and Educational Innovation Officer,
Strengthen and promote the LLM.	Promote international candidatures, focused initially on China.	Primarily the HOS with the aid of the LLM by coursework coordinator.

<p>Provide an academic experience for on campus students</p>	<p>Develop a set of student and staff expectations that specifically outlines a minimum face to face experience for on campus students; and accessibility to teaching staff</p> <p>Ensure that law staff are introduced to law mentors in the Colleges.</p> <p>Use Guest Lecturers in units where relevant</p> <p>Encourage student involvement with the Law Students Society</p>	<p>Chair, T & L Committee</p>
<p>Social inclusiveness</p>	<p>Work with representatives from the Oorala Centre to incorporate an Indigenous focus into selected law units.</p> <p>Promote Indigenous student attendance at the BAR Association's World Indigenous Conference</p> <p>Develop opportunities for international involvement in the undergraduate curriculum [Bhutan and the University of South Wales]</p>	<p>Nominated members of the T & L Committee</p>

2. Research Committee 2014-2017

Our Research Vision

It is a core belief of the School that scholarly enterprise is an essential characteristic of a university. Moreover, the School sees its research performance as essential to its success. It provides a potential differentiating factor from competitors (as is the currently the case as a result of our ERA 2012 score).

Broadly, the School's research falls within two broad categories (which are not mutually exclusive). The first relates to rural/regional law and policy research, especially in the field of rural environmental and social justice matters. The primary vehicle for this research will be the Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law. During the period of the plan the AgLaw Centre will continue its already successful mission by maintaining its range of research outputs and external funding for research. It will also aim to increase the opportunities for collaboration with partner institutions along the lines of the successful collaboration with Penn State University. This research aligns with goal 1 (building research culture and capability across the university and achieve research excellence in identified priority areas) and goal 2 (articulating the contribution that UNE makes to rural and regional innovation and prepare and implement a UNE rural and regional innovation strategy) of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015.

While the rural/regional law and policy research of the AgLaw Centre is an integral part of our research profile, it is important that the School support alternative areas of research. In particular, research into more doctrinal areas of law may have much more resonance with many of our external students who may think the prioritisation of rural/regional issues makes us parochial (a particular concern in law). The School has a research profile in a number of these areas – intellectual property and tort law for example – and the School will continue to support such research. However, the School recognises that there are benefits – not least in terms of external research quality assessment such as the ERA – to having also a number of areas where the School professes a particular expertise. With this in mind, during the currency of this plan the School will aim to build on its profile in legal history so that by the end of the plan the School will be seen as one of the leading, if not the leading, legal history law school in Australia. This goal also aligns the goal 1 of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015 (building research culture and capability across the university and achieve research excellence in identified priority areas).

Our overarching commitment is to quality irrespective of the area of law researched or the research approach adopted, such a commitment being sensitive to the factors considered in external assessment of our research. At the end of the period covered by the plan, this approach should put the School in a good position to achieve a 4 or equivalent in the next ERA or equivalent research assessment exercise. This aligns with the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015 in which ERA performance is seen as central to the university's research success.

Goals

Our research goals for 2014-2017 are:

1. Maintain and enhance our research outputs with the aim of increasing our score in the next research assessment exercise to an ERA 4 or equivalent;
2. Promote appropriate sub-discipline areas (e.g. legal history) to promote the research profile of the School;
3. Develop research support systems to allow staff to achieve their full research potential.

Key strategies and actions

Action	Details	Responsibility
1. Improve score in research performance assessment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide advice for academic staff to maximise the score for the ERA FOR 18 code, including consideration of the balance between journal articles, book chapters and other kinds of research output, and between funded and unfunded research. 2. Develop and implement guidelines on Law School 'Research Active' criteria. 3. Develop the International Journal of Rural Law and Policy as a prestige publication outlet. <p>This action goes to the core of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015 in which ERA performance is seen as central to the university's research success. It is consistent with goal 1 (building research culture and capability across the university and achieve research excellence in identified priority areas) and goal 2 (articulating the contribution that UNE makes to rural and regional innovation and prepare and implement a UNE rural and regional innovation strategy) of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015.</p>	HOS, Research Committee
2. Support for academic staff in producing and reporting research outputs.	<p>Appoint a staff member (fractional or casual) to assist with grants, conference and seminar arrangement, and to ensure that research outputs are reported and publicised appropriately.</p> <p>This action is consistent with goal 1 of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015 (building research culture and capability across the university and achieve research excellence in identified priority areas) and goal 2 (articulating the contribution that UNE makes to rural and regional innovation and prepare and implement a UNE rural and regional innovation strategy) of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015. In particular, it aligns with goal 1.1 (mentoring our people) and goal 1.2 (providing support) of that plan.</p>	HOS, Finance Officer for the School, Chair Research Committee
3. Host conferences in areas of research priority.	<p>Hold at least one major conference each year during the period of the plan with appropriate financial support from the School, in areas of targeted research (e.g. rural landuse (2013) legal history (2014)).</p>	HOS, Finance Officer for the School, Chair Research Committee

<p>Host conferences in areas of research priority continued</p>	<p>This action is consistent with goal 1 (building research culture and capability across the university and achieve research excellence in identified priority areas) and goal 2 (articulating the contribution that UNE makes to rural and regional innovation and prepare and implement a UNE rural and regional innovation strategy) of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015.</p>	
<p>4. Increase HDR students in areas of expertise.</p>	<p>The School (through its own funds or central university funds) should provide at least one fully funded PhD scholarship in the area of legal history and should seek to provide up to another two such scholarships in other areas of expertise within the School.</p> <p>5 PhD/Prof Doc completion by 2015, and 5 inductions.</p> <p>This action is consistent with goal 3 of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015 (grow the number of international HDR students and provide them with increased support).</p>	<p>HOS, Finance Officer for the School, Chair Research Committee</p>
<p>5. Financial support for key scholarly endeavours.</p>	<p>Funding for Kirby and Sir Frank Kitto Annual Public Lecture series, and for conference support to be maintained.</p> <p>Evaluate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for visiting academics for short periods (up to three months) Funding available to academic staff to present seminar and conference papers at high quality international academic conferences; • Fully funded School PhD scholarships in target areas. <p>This action is consistent with goal 1 (building research culture and capability across the university and achieve research excellence in identified priority areas), goal 2 (articulating the contribution that UNE makes to rural and regional innovation and prepare and implement a UNE rural and regional innovation strategy) and goal 3 (grow the number of international HDR students and provide them with increased support) of the UNE Research Plan 2012-2015. In particular, it aligns with goal 1.1 (mentoring our people) and goal 1.2 (providing support) of that plan.</p>	<p>HOS, Finance Officer for the School, Research Committee</p>

3.The Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law (AgLaw), 2014-2017

Our research vision

The AgLaw Centre is a scholarly research and post-graduate education centre concerned with the laws and associated institutions that impact upon rural communities and industries. Its contributions to the Law School and University are:

1. ERA credible academic outputs and demonstrable impact in targeted fields of scholarship;
2. HDR student graduations;
3. Leverage of Law School research resources, through external grants and consultancies, and
4. Support for the achievement of other School research outputs.

Situation

The Centre is well established and highly productive. Our 2015 challenge is to consolidate, to prepare the next level of growth through to 2017. Key considerations are:

1. Our team is productive and increasingly well-recognised particularly in environmental governance circles, but is over-stretched. This poses risks to the ability to maximise ERA value, and to securing substantial funded projects. We need support and researcher resources in place and productive to maximise our potential;
2. Whilst our operating funding is sound for the next 2 years, we will need to secure multi-year, substantially funded projects starting in 2016, to maximise our contribution to the School and to UNE;
3. Our major opportunities include: a possible program on “Human and Institutional Dimensions of Natural Resource Governance”; leadership of the World Commission on Environmental Law Specialists Group on Soils and Agricultural Systems; and a number of international research collaborations. Issues in rangelands (rather than urban or peri-urban or forests), are a focus for many of these opportunities, and
4. Targetted themes areas:
 - a. Legal and institutional arrangements for participative governance of rural natural resources. This incorporates issues of resource conflict, ‘negotiated localism’, community deliberative democracy, and community based resource management. It also includes industry and NGO collaborative governance and hybrid governance, with an emphasis upon effective institutions and integrity mechanisms. Coordinator: Amanda Kennedy,
 - b. Landscape (particularly rangelands or extensive agriculture) Governance. This incorporates the concepts developed in our existing Landscape Governance work; the World Commission on Environmental Law “Soils and Agricultural Systems” program, issues of ‘connectivity’ and tenure-free management; issues of on-country livelihoods; food systems; innovations to improve resourcing, coordination, transaction costs and efficiency and behavioural effectiveness; and risk (both substantive and policy risk). International targets – Mongolia, USA, Brazil, Sth. Africa and Canada. Coordinators: Paul Martin and Jacky Williams,
 - c. Non-doctrinal environmental law methodology. This builds on the existing methods for institutional analysis and policy risk, the work done on objective evaluation for the IUCN Environmental Law Centre, and our LLM units. Coordinator: Paul Martin,
 - d. Indigenous rural livelihoods. This incorporates the existing projects on Culture and Knowledge, but will aim to expand to address legal and institutional issues of livelihoods ‘on country’, if feasible. Coordinator: Jacky Williams and Paul Martin.

Goals

Our goals for 2014-2017 are:

1. Increase ERA-credible outputs, focused on the 1801 field of research. Our focus for 2015 and 2016 is to improve publisher quality ratings;
2. Successful management of funded research projects, meeting contract objectives;
3. A higher research degree program with ~10 candidates;
4. Financially viable LLM units in natural resource governance;
5. Agreed commitments to support for the Law school research strategy (mentoring, programmes, journal, conferences).

Key strategies and actions

Action	Details	Responsibility
To meet funded project requirements, producing substantial publications, and replace that funding.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete and acquit the ARC Linkage "Next Generation Landscape Governance" and ARC DECRA on mining/farming conflict. 2. Manage and acquit the Invasive Animals CRC research program 4, completion mid 2017. 3. Create a major multi-year funded program bid, targeted commencement in 2016. 4. 1 FTE Postdoc (2 people) as strategic resource required for major funded projects. 	<p>PVM, JW, AK</p> <p>PVM</p> <p>PVM, JW, AK</p> <p>PVM</p>
To further strengthen the Aglaw PhD program.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3 completions 2015, 2 completions 2016. 2. Recruit up to the target of 10 high quality targeted candidates. 	<p>PVM, JW, AK</p> <p>PVM, JW, AK</p>
To further strengthen the LLM offerings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refine units to be suitable for more international candidates. 2. Expand our LLM unit numbers. 	<p>PVM/JW/AK/MV</p> <p>PVM/JW/AK</p>
To provide impactful research strategy support to the School.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct at least one school conference or workshop each year. 2. Establish the International Journal of Rural Law and Policy as a credible outlet. 	<p>PVM/AK/MV</p>

4. Executive Committee, 2014-2017

Our collegial vision

The School of Law has an exceptionally warm culture and a commitment to collegiality in the running of the School. This is combined with a genuine commitment to excellence. In the face of intensifying competition we aim to add to our strengths by continuing to attract high-quality legal scholars, employing an increasing level of management sophistication and coordination, greater use of expanding technological capabilities, and innovative educational and research offerings. The role of the executive is to support the Head of School in 2 key areas necessary to achieving this vision: Leadership (including and positioning, standards and governance, and social inclusion) and resourcing (including human resources, administration, facilities and infrastructure (including library and information) and technology leadership).

Goals

Our executive goals for 2014/2016 are:

1. To implement effective strategic planning and decision-making through the Executive,
2. To ensure adequate and effective administration, human, physical, information and technology resource management, to implement School strategies,
3. To significantly improve our Indigenous student success rate measured in terms of avoided discontinuation in Law subjects.

Key strategies and actions

Action	Details	Responsibility
Executive to evaluate strategy implementation (quarterly).	Quarterly reporting to the executive by key committees. Reporting by the executive of performance indicators to the school.	HOS, School Executive Committee
Establishment and implementation of a School marketing plan.	Marketing/positioning strategy to be developed incorporating alumni engagement, 6 monthly implementation report to school.	HOS, Working Group
Continuation of the School Library Committee (working group).	Continuation of library and information reports.	Library Committee
Implement a school Indigenous research and teaching plan.	Indigenous research and participation plan to be developed incorporating alumni engagement, 6 monthly implementation report to school.	HOS, Working Group
Ensure effective administrative support.	Review administrative functions and roles.	HOS, Executive Committee