

University of New Hampshire School of Law Information Literacy Plan

“The institution ensures that students use information resources and information technology as an integral part of their education. The institution provides appropriate orientation and training for use of these resources, as well as instruction and support in information literacy and information technology appropriate to the degree level and field of study.”

---NEASC Standard 4.6

Introduction

UNH Law’s mission is to graduate highly capable, confident professionals who will serve clients, employers and the public with integrity and excellence. Although the legal profession has identified legal research as one of ten fundamental lawyering skills (*Legal Education and Professional Development: An Educational Continuum*) and emphasizes the need for future lawyers of be “client ready,” (*Best Practices for Legal Education*) recent studies indicate law school graduates lack fundamental research skills. With the explosion of online information output and resources, legal professionals in the 21st century must learn how to acquire, manage and analyze large quantities of information from multiple sources. The expansion of information is moving so rapidly that the ability to locate relevant information from disparate sources and quickly form a coherent whole has become a critical skill in a knowledge-based society. A comprehensive information literacy plan ensuring students possess the skills needed to be successful creators and consumers of information is important to UNH Law’s mission.

To date UNH Law’s librarians have taken the lead in providing instruction in legal research tools and search strategies inside and outside the classroom. It is time to build on this success and design a more comprehensive and integrated approach to information literacy beginning with the first year and building incrementally through the student's academic career. This plan relies on user-centered, interactive learning opportunities incorporating problem-based strategies and the competencies set forth in the *Association of College and Research Libraries' Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education* (hereinafter “*ACRL Standards*”). The plan solidifies institutional commitment and advances the current program. In addition to curricular instruction that is discipline or assignment based, it provides for increased and evolving non-curricular learning opportunities that are relevant and focused. Faculty members are invited to collaborate with librarians on information literacy goals and expected outcomes. The library’s Liaison Program will continue to assist in promoting stronger ties by providing library consultants for faculty and students.

ACRL Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education

Information literacy is defined by ACRL as the ability to recognize and define an information need and to identify, locate, evaluate and use information effectively. These skills

are the foundation of an academic career, as well as the defining characteristics of life-long learners. According to the *ACRL Standards* the information literate student is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

Students arrive at UNH Law with varying levels of library skills, requiring an introduction to both academic tools and research strategies at this important stage of their legal education. As they move through the law school curriculum, additional competencies are required to identify, locate, access and evaluate the appropriate resources for their assignments and entry into the legal profession. The *ACRL Standards* focus on the needs of students at all levels and list a range of outcomes for assessing student progress toward information literacy. They provide the foundation of UNH Law's information literacy plan.

Comprehensive Information Literacy Plan Outline of Instructional Components

All levels and types of instruction will be user-centered and interactive, integrating principles of problem-based learning and information technology, as appropriate. The *ACRL Standards* will serve as the foundation for all instruction.

Level 1: First-Year Law Student Experience First Semester

Objectives:

Introduce basic search strategy; primary and secondary legal authority; mandatory and persuasive authority; accessing, evaluating and updating secondary legal sources; accessing, evaluating and updating case law, statutory law and administrative law; developing a coherent research strategy; and appropriate choice of electronic versus print formats.

Outcomes:

Students will be able to: determine the extent of legal information needed; access the needed legal information effectively and efficiently; evaluate legal information and its sources critically; incorporate selected legal information into one's knowledge; use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; and understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally.

Methodology:

Legal Research & Information Literacy Course

Required two credit course taught by library faculty introducing basic legal research sources and tools.

LEXIS & Westlaw Optional Training Classes and Tutorials

Vendor presentations targeted to reinforce first year legal research topics

Super Searcher Series Optional Training Classes

Librarian presentations targeted to supplement first year legal research topics

Second Semester

Objectives:

Reinforce first semester legal research objectives in context of moot court writing problems; introduce practice-based research tools and strategies to make students client-ready

Outcomes:

Students will be able to: determine the extent of legal information needed; access the needed legal information effectively and efficiently; evaluate legal information and its sources critically; incorporate selected legal information into one's knowledge; use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; and understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally.

Methodology:

Fundamentals of Lawyering Courses

Practice-based research presentations and exercises delivered by library faculty as bolt-on to 3 credit Fundamentals of Lawyering course to ensure students have found and used legal resources and practice materials.

Research Presentation for Legal Writing Sections

Library faculty review basic legal research strategies and introduce specialized research tools for moot court problems to jump-start student research.

LEXIS & WESTLAW Required Training Class

Vendor presentations providing advanced online strategies in context of moot court problem research.

LEXIS & Westlaw Optional Training Classes and Tutorials

Vendor presentations targeted to reinforce first year legal research topics.

Super Searcher Series Optional Training Classes

Librarian presentations targeted to supplement first year legal research topics.

Level 2: Second and Third Year Law Student Experience

Objectives:

Provide more in-depth exploration of basic legal research skills; exposure to specialized topical research tools and databases; develop more sophisticated search strategies; and convey transferrable nature of research skills for lifelong learning.

Outcomes:

Students will be able to: determine the extent of legal information needed; access the needed legal information effectively and efficiently; evaluate legal information and its sources critically; incorporate selected legal information into one's knowledge; use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; and understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally.

Methodology:

Advanced Legal Research Classes

Law Practice Information Literacy

One credit elective mini-courses with unique practice area focus taught by library faculty providing instruction and exercises designed to prepare students for cost-effectively completing research tasks they will face in various areas of practice such as intellectual property law, international law, criminal practice, general practice, etc.

Mining Patent Information

Two credit elective taught by Intellectual Property Librarian providing experiential training in multiplicity of patent and non-patent literature sources.

IP Research Tools & Strategies

Three credit elective taught by Intellectual Property Librarian providing experiential training in multiplicity of intellectual property information resources and patent and trademark literature sources.

Patent Landscape Clinic (Basic & Advanced)

Four credit clinical electives taught by Intellectual Property Librarian and Director of ITTI Clinic providing experiential training in preparation of patent landscape analyses for life science clients.

Research Presentations Throughout Law School Curriculum

Library faculty invited to provide customized presentations in specific law school courses including the Advanced Writing & Information Literacy Requirement courses to introduce specialized research tools and

databases. Librarians coordinate with faculty to meet particular course research requirements and prepare web based course research guides.

Research Boot Camp

Non-credit one day program taught by library faculty providing problem-based approach to make students client ready to handle the top ten research tasks asked of summer associates.

LEXIS & Westlaw Optional Training Classes and Tutorials

Vendor presentations targeted to reinforce first year legal research topics.

Super Searcher Series Optional Training Classes

Librarian presentations targeted to supplement second and third year legal research topics.

Level 3: Graduate Student Experience

Objectives:

First Semester: Introduce basic search strategy; primary and secondary legal authority; mandatory and persuasive authority; accessing, evaluating and updating secondary legal sources; accessing, evaluating and updating case law, statutory law and administrative law in the context of intellectual property law. Begin to develop an understanding of the important relationship between research skills and writing skills. Sensitize students to the important research roles of librarians.

Second Semester: Provide more in-depth exploration of basic legal research skills; exposure to specialized topical research tools and databases; develop more sophisticated search strategies; convey transferrable nature of research skills for lifelong learning. Continue to build the connection between research skills and writing as well as advocacy skills.

Outcomes:

Students will be able to: determine the extent of legal information needed; access the needed legal information effectively and efficiently; evaluate legal information and its sources critically; incorporate selected legal information into one's knowledge; skillfully weave acquired information to effectively accomplish more perfected writing abilities; to further understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and to access and use information ethically and legally.

Methodology:

Graduate Legal Research & Writing Course

First semester required course taught by Graduate Program faculty introduces primarily international students to the fundamentals of legal research including print and on-line sources through class demonstrations, library exercises and computer training room workshops.

Graduate Litigation Analysis Course

This second semester required course taught by Graduate Program faculty builds on the foundation of the first semester but pushes students to research local court rules as well as research and employ existing pleadings and discovery in cases to help develop templates to employ along with more sophisticated research techniques to meet a practitioner's need.

WESTLAW First Semester Required Training

Three vendor presentations targeted to instruct basic WESTLAW content and searching

Advanced Legal Research Classes

Law Practice Information Literacy

One credit elective mini-courses with unique practice area foci taught by library faculty providing instruction and exercises designed to prepare students for cost-effectively completing research tasks they will face in various areas of practice such as intellectual property law, international law, criminal practice, general practice, etc.

Mining Patent Information

Two credit elective taught by Intellectual Property Librarian providing experiential training in multiplicity of patent and non-patent literature sources.

IP Research Tools & Strategies

Three credit elective taught by Intellectual Property Librarian providing experiential training in multiplicity of intellectual property information resources and patent and trademark literature sources.

Patent Landscape Clinic (Basic & Advanced)

Four credit clinical electives taught by Intellectual Property Librarian and Director of ITTI Clinic providing experiential training in preparation of patent landscape analyses for life science clients.

Research Presentations Throughout Law School Curriculum

Library faculty invited to provide customized presentations in specific law school courses including the Advanced Writing & Information Literacy Requirement courses to introduce specialized research tools and databases. Librarians coordinate with faculty to meet

particular course research requirements and prepare web based course research guides.

Research Boot Camp

Non-credit one day program taught by library faculty providing problem-based approach to make students client ready to handle the top ten research tasks asked of summer associates.

LEXIS & Westlaw Optional Training Classes and Tutorials

Vendor presentations targeted to reinforce previously introduced legal research topics.

Super Searcher Series Optional Training Classes

Librarian presentations targeted to supplement previously introduced research topics.

Faculty Collaboration

Given the importance of the UNH Law faculty in the information literacy process, it is critical the faculty are information literate themselves or their students will not be. Librarians and faculty will seek to create and support collaborative partnerships to integrate information literacy concepts into the curriculum with a sustained focus throughout the students' educational experience at UNH Law.

Promoting Faculty Information Literacy

1. *Librarian Liaison Program*

Under the library's Liaison Program, each faculty member is assigned a librarian who can help with requests for research or materials to support teaching and scholarship. This help ranges from database searching and tracking down esoteric materials to handling in-depth research projects and working with faculty research assistants. Librarians also offer customized sessions on use of the Internet and other electronic sources as well as in-class research presentations.

2. *Presentations to Introduce Library Services and Resources*

Monthly during fall and spring semesters the teaching librarian(s) will make a brief presentation at faculty meetings to increase faculty awareness of relevant library services and resources. The presentation may include an "Ask the Librarian" segment.

3. *Librarians Collaborating with Teaching Effectiveness Committee*

A teaching librarian should be included on the Teaching Effectiveness Committee to engage faculty in ways to promote information literacy classroom opportunities.

Faculty Participation in Information Literacy

1. Increase Faculty Integration of Research Presentations Throughout the Curriculum

Faculty are encouraged to invite the teaching librarians to provide customized presentations in their courses to ensure students are exposed to specialized research tools and databases and prepare them for practice. The goal is to progressively increase the number of research presentations available throughout the curriculum.

2. Increase Faculty Incorporation of Information Literacy Goals and Assessment Throughout the Curriculum

Faculty are encouraged to target specific *ACRL Standards* in their courses, identify them in their course syllabi and build-in assignments where they assess student mastery of the specific information literacy goals. Teaching librarians will consult with faculty on the design of built-in research-based assignments and exercises and are willing to provide information on library resources. The goal is to increase the number of built-in research assignments throughout the curriculum.

Information Technology Collaboration

While information literacy is related to information technology skills which enable students to use computers, software applications, databases and other technologies to achieve a wide variety of academic, work-related and personal goals, information literacy is the “intellectual framework for understanding, finding, evaluating, and using information – activities which may be accomplished in part by fluency with information technology, in part by sound investigative methods, but most important, through critical discernment and reasoning.” Information literate students necessarily develop technology skills which are increasingly interwoven with and support information literacy. Therefore, it is critical that librarians, faculty and information technology staff collaborate to ensure students have the appropriate information technology support essential to the success of UNH Law’s Information Literacy Plan.

Assessment

Assessment is an essential component of UNH Law’s Information Literacy Plan. In order to demonstrate that students who receive information literacy instruction finish with the knowledge needed to be highly capable, confident legal professionals and lifelong learners, this plan provides mechanisms for measuring outcomes of instructional components at every level.

Level 1 Assessment Mechanisms

Graded Required Research Courses such as Legal Research & Information Literacy

- Faculty or TA evaluated in-class worksheets, research practicums and graded research assignments
- Student self-assessed research narrative as part of final graded research assignment
- UNH Law course evaluations

Built-in Research Assignments in Graded Non-Research Courses such as Fundamentals of Lawyering

- Faculty evaluated research assignments
- UNH Law course evaluations

Research Presentations by Library Faculty in non-Research Courses

- Librarian designed and administered brief survey for student evaluation of presentation effectiveness
- Faculty evaluation of research for research based writing assignments
- Library director will evaluate web-based research guides prepared for presentations

Optional Research Training such as Super Searcher Series

- Librarian designed and administered brief survey for student evaluation of presentation effectiveness

Level 2 Assessment Mechanisms

Graded Research Courses such as Law Practice Information Literacy and Mining Patent Data

- Faculty evaluated research assignments
- UNH Law course evaluations

Built-in Research Assignments in Graded Non-Research Courses

- Faculty evaluated research assignments
- UNH Law course evaluations

Research Presentations by Library Faculty in non-Research Courses

- Librarian designed and administered brief survey for student evaluation of presentation effectiveness
- Faculty evaluation of research for research based writing assignments
- Library Director will evaluate web-based research guides prepared for presentations

Optional Research Training such as Super Searcher Series and Research Boot Camp

- Librarian designed and administered brief survey for student evaluation of presentation effectiveness

Level 3 Assessment Mechanisms

Graded Required Research Course/ Graduate Legal Research & Writing

- Faculty evaluated research assignments
- Student self-assessed research narrative as part of final graded research assignment
- UNH Law course evaluations

Graded Research Courses such as Information Literacy for Legal Practitioners and Mining Patent Data

- Faculty evaluated research assignments
- UNH Law course evaluations

Built-in Research Assignments in Graded Non-Research Courses

- Faculty evaluated research assignments
- UNH Law course evaluations

Research Presentations by Library Faculty in non-Research Courses

- Librarian designed and administered brief survey for student evaluation of presentation effectiveness
- Faculty evaluation of research for research based writing assignments
- Library Director will evaluate web-based research guides prepared for presentations

Optional Research Training such as Super Searcher Series and Research Boot Camp

- Librarian designed and administered brief survey for student evaluation of presentation effectiveness

Overall Program Performance

- The teaching librarians will incorporate a section on research skills into the library's student survey conducted every three years and will simultaneously hold student focus groups for feedback on research skills.
- The teaching librarians will track LSSSE results for student feedback on research training
- At the end of each summer, students working in legal jobs will be given a survey relating to the adequacy of their research skills. The same survey will be administered to students completing externships. This survey will be developed by the teaching librarians and administered in conjunction with the Career Services Office and/or the Externship Director.
- The teaching librarians will explore possible use of standardized assessment tools such as ACRL's Project SAILS. SAILS is a knowledge test with multiple-choice questions targeting a variety of information literacy skills and is based on the *ACRL Standards*.
- Starting from the year of its approval by the faculty, the UNH Law Information Literacy Plan will be reviewed every three years by an *ad hoc* committee appointed by the Dean to determine if the plan is working and make needed revisions to ensure its ongoing success.

Publication

The University of New Hampshire School of Law Information Literacy Plan will be published on the law school's website.

Approved by Law Faculty - May 2009