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# In support of A-level Law

Universities don't like A-level Law – fact or fiction?

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March 2014

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**We know there is a misconception amongst some students and teachers that universities have a negative view of A-level Law:**

*'Universities would rather students came with no prior knowledge of Law before they study a Law degree.'*

*'A-level Law is viewed as a 'soft subject' if a student is hoping to study something other than Law.'*

**To dispel these rumours, we have gathered evidence and supporting statements from respected institutions including Russell Group universities, to set the record straight and stop students from being put off from studying law.**

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## University of Cambridge, Faculty of Law

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"While we are aware of the perception by some that studying Law at A-level might be considered a 'negative', we are somewhat puzzled by this. The clear view taken here in Cambridge on Law at A-level is a 'neutral' one. So taking Law as an A-level subject does not put students at a disadvantage for admission to read law at Cambridge, nor does it provide an advantage."

## Nottingham Trent University, Law School

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"The view that students should not read law at A-level before university is misguided; it represents the incorrect opinion that the law is ONLY an academic discipline. The law is in fact a dynamic vehicle for carrying rights, responsibility, obligations and punishments in the real world. It lives, it is and it should be learnt without discrimination.

I have never actually yet met an admissions person who does discriminate against A-level Law in any way (bar some Scottish universities who do not accept English or Welsh A-level law).

So, in terms of students electing not to take law in case HEIs don't accept it? In my view, this is nonsense and double nonsense. Please will you correct any careers 'experts' in your schools who tell you otherwise? They are about 40 years out of date in the advice they give."

## University of Surrey, School of Law

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"About eight years ago, we drew up a list of preferred A-levels: Law was on that list. We now no longer have a list of preferred A-levels – beyond not including general studies and critical thinking – as we ask for AAB [grades]. Many of our students do have Law A-level.

On balance, as long as students arrive at university realising that the A-level does not mean they don't have to study hard during their undergraduate degree, the study of A-level Law is a positive step. The people that do it are far less likely to drop out during the course of their studies because they know what studying Law is like. That said, students do not need to have studied A-level Law in order to undertake our LLB."

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## University of Nottingham, School of Law

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“We too frequently come across these [negative] views regarding law A-level. The view of this School is that A-level law is not a positive advantage for student intending to read law at university, but equally it is not a disadvantage. We are very happy to accept, and do accept, applications from candidates offering A-level law as one of their qualifications.”

## Queen’s University, Belfast, Admissions Service

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“While A-level Law is not a prerequisite for entry to undergraduate LLB Law degrees at Queen’s University Belfast, we welcome applications from candidates taking A-level Law as part of their portfolio of qualifications for entry to all degree programmes at this institution.”

## From ‘A-level Law Review’, April 2009

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“It has always seemed to me odd that universities might regard having studied A-level Law as a bad thing for taking the subject at undergraduate level. It would have been quite perverse if I had discriminated against A-level lawyers at [either of the university Law departments I have been involved with]. I can see that if a student with a good A-level in Law coasts through the first weeks of an undergraduate course, it may be difficult to identify the correct moment to ‘kick on’: however, it does seem to me that the upside outweighs all of this.

Students taking A-level Law have some idea whether they like the subject and the subject likes them. My arrival at [university] to study the LLB was a leap of faith: it happened to work for me, but it did not have to be so. A-level studies would have allowed my decision to be based on much firmer ground.

To regard A-level Law as a ‘bad thing’ seems illogical. Even if it is sometimes regarded as a ‘soft subject’, whatever that may mean, it is badged by QCA with the same intellectual requirements as other A-levels. If a Law degree is supposed to be a good discipline for entering careers away from the legal world (as more than 50% of graduates do), suggesting that A-level Law is not good for the same sort of purpose and, worse, not good for studying law at university, seems bizarre.”

*Reproduced courtesy of Philip Allan/Hodder Education, [www.hoddereducation.co.uk/lawreview](http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/lawreview)*

## From ‘A-level Law Review’, January 2010

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“The most highly selective universities in the country do, by a large majority, treat A-level Law like any other A-level and, better still, they are willing to commit themselves to a [public list of institutions that do so](#).

Research findings [by Coulsdon College] show that the vast majority of law degree-awarding institutions are happy to accept A-level Law and that many institutions see it as expressly advantageous. The research also confirms that there are small pockets of resistance to A-level Law in higher education: however, these comments are by far the exceptions rather than the norm.

Despite media coverage to the contrary, A-level Law is regarded as equal to other A-levels by Ofqual, the examining boards and the vast majority of British universities, with some going further by seeing it as expressly advantageous. The message to A-level Law students from these research findings is clear: your qualification is highly valued by higher education institutions and

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will, with a good grade and support from good grades in other subjects, provide the foundations for degree-level study and access to the legal profession.”

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**We hope that these endorsements help you to make a more informed choice about studying A-level Law. If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at [law@aqa.org.uk](mailto:law@aqa.org.uk) or 01483 477 750.**

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## University Law Departments and A-level Law

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Below is a list of all the institutions that have confirmed that A-level Law will be perfectly acceptable as an entry qualification for their law courses.

Aberdeen University  
Aberystwyth University  
Anglia Ruskin University  
**Balliol College, Oxford**  
Bangor University  
Birmingham City University  
Bournemouth University  
Bradford University  
**Brasenose College, Oxford**  
Buckinghamshire New University  
**Cardiff University**  
**Christ Church, Oxford**  
**Christ's College, Cambridge**  
**Churchill College, Cambridge**  
City University  
**Clare College, Cambridge**  
**Corpus Christi College, Cambridge**  
**Corpus Christi College, Oxford**  
Coventry University  
De Monfort University  
**Downing College, Cambridge**  
Dundee University  
**Durham University**  
East Lancashire Institute of Higher  
Edge Hill University  
Edinburgh Napier University  
Education at Blackburn College  
Emmanuel College, Cambridge  
**Exeter College, Oxford**  
**Exeter University**  
**Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge**  
**Girton College, Cambridge**  
Glasgow Caledonian University  
**Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge**  
**Harris Manchester College, Oxford**  
**Hertford College, Oxford**  
**Homerton College, Cambridge**  
Huddersfield University  
**Hughes Hall, Cambridge**  
**Jesus College, Cambridge**  
**Jesus College, Oxford**  
**Keble College, Oxford**  
Keele University  
**King's College London**  
**King's College, Cambridge**  
Kingston University  
**Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford**  
Lancaster University  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
**Lincoln College, Oxford**  
Liverpool Hope University  
Liverpool John Moores University  
**London School of Economics**  
London South Bank University  
**Lucy Cavendish, Cambridge**  
**Magdalen College, Oxford**  
**Magdalene College, Cambridge**  
**Manchester University**  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
**Mansfield College, Oxford**  
**Merton College, Oxford**  
Middlesex University  
**Murray Edwards College, Cambridge**  
**New College, Oxford**  
**Newcastle University**  
**Newnham College, Cambridge**  
Northumbria University  
Nottingham Trent University  
**Oriel College, Oxford**  
Oxford Brookes University  
**Pembroke College, Cambridge**  
**Pembroke College, Oxford**  
**Peterhouse, Cambridge**  
**Queens College, Cambridge**  
**Queens University, Belfast**  
**Regent's College, Oxford**  
**Robinson College, Cambridge**  
**Selwyn College, Cambridge**  
**Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge**  
**Somerville College, Oxford**  
Southampton Solent University  
**St Anne's College, Oxford**  
**St Catharine's College, Cambridge**  
**St Catherine's College, Oxford**  
**St Edmund Hall, Oxford**  
**St Edmund's College, Cambridge**  
**St Hilda's College, Oxford**  
**St Hugh's College, Oxford**  
**St John's College, Cambridge**  
**St John's College, Oxford**

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**St Peter's College, Oxford**

Staffordshire University

Strathclyde University

Swansea University

Thames Valley University

The Robert Gordon University Aberdeen

The University of Hull

**Trinity College, Cambridge**

**Trinity College, Oxford**

**Trinity Hall, Cambridge**

**University College London**

**University College, Oxford**

University of Abertay Dundee

University of Bedfordshire

**University of Birmingham**

University of Bolton

University of Brighton

**University of Bristol**

University of Buckingham

University of Central Lancashire

University of Chester

University of Derby

University of East Anglia

University of East London

**University of Edinburgh**

University of Essex

University of Glamorgan

University of Gloucestershire

University of Greenwich

University of Hertfordshire

University of Kent

**University of Leeds**

University of Leicester

University of Lincoln

University of Liverpool

University of Northampton

**University of Nottingham**

University of Portsmouth

University of Reading

University of Salford

**University of Sheffield**

**University of Southampton**

University of Stirling

University of Sunderland

University of Surrey

University of Sussex

University of Teesside

University of Ulster

**University of Warwick**

University of West England

University of West Scotland

University of Westminster

University of Wolverhampton

**Wadham College, Oxford**

**Wolfson College, Cambridge**

**Worcester College, Oxford**

Please note that the Universities denoted in **bold** are universities in the Russell Group

\* The University of Cambridge advises all potential applicants to check the individual college websites to see to acceptable A-level subject combinations.

\*\* The University of Oxford focus is on the extent to which candidates measure up to their published admissions criteria (further information is available at [www.law.ox.ac.uk](http://www.law.ox.ac.uk)).