

Internationalization of the Curriculum at the University of Auckland

By:

Andrew Stockley¹

University of Auckland Faculty of Law, New Zealand

The Auckland University Law School has, over recent years, sought to internationalize its curriculum. This has been quite deliberate. The Law School's Strategic Plan, adopted in 2008, argues that the future of law and legal education in New Zealand demands a global vision. Law and legal practice increasingly span national borders. The world's best law schools are training lawyers who can practice in different jurisdictions.

Law is increasingly a shared 'global' enterprise. There are rules for international commerce and trade, for reckoning with climate change and ocean governance, with population pressures and scarcity of resources, human rights conflicts, terrorism, state security, trans-national crime, dispute resolution, and much more. New Zealand's domestic law is increasingly dictated or influenced by international treaties on these subjects and others.

Legal practice, for its part, increasingly involves legal transactions that span jurisdictions. And the realm of legal ideas is itself international. It is informed by global conversations amongst regulators, practitioners and legal academics. Litigation in the higher courts now routinely involves research into the experience and judicial decisions of other nations and international tribunals.

The Auckland Law School aims to produce lawyers who can practice in any jurisdiction. This has had implications for the subjects taught, the way they are taught, and the recruitment of staff. It has highlighted the importance of forging strategic international teaching and research relationships with leading law schools in other jurisdictions.

Many of our graduates end up in the major commercial centres of the world, as well as with international agencies such as those at The Hague, Geneva and the sites of the various international criminal tribunals. Many come back to New Zealand with the benefit of high-level international experience.

New internationally-orientated courses

The Bachelor of Laws degree has, for a long time, included a one semester course in Public International Law. There has also been an elective course in Conflict of Laws and an Honours Seminar paper (for the best undergraduate students) on 'Topics in International Law'.

In recent years the Auckland Law School has introduced many new internationally-orientated courses. Examples include:

- Islamic Law (including the history and theory of Islamic Law, the sources of Islamic legal systems, methods of legal reasoning developed by Muslim jurists, the place of Islamic law in the modern nation state and its relationship with gender, economics, public interest and human rights, and similarities and differences between common law and Islamic law);

¹ Dean of Law, University of Auckland, New Zealand. This paper draws on the Law School's Strategic and Annual Plans.

- Immigration and Refugee Law (including a study of international human rights law viewed from the perspective of claims to refugee status and claims to protected status under the Convention against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights);
- International Environmental Law (including the international regime of climate protection and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, the international regime of biodiversity protection, the relationship between indigenous self-determination, human rights and the environment, the tensions between legal regimes on trade and the environment, and the new area of sustainable development law);
- European Commercial Litigation (including European Union regulations such as the Brussels I, Rome I and Rome II regulations);
- International Economic Regulation (including the rules that govern trade in goods, agriculture, services and investment, development issues, and dispute settlement mechanisms);
- South Pacific Legal Studies (including the history and development of Pacific constitutions, relationship between law and custom, issues relating to democracy and governance, human rights, the environment and trade);
- Law of the Sea and Antarctica (including the regulation of fishing, tourism, marine transport of radioactive waste, piracy, deep seabed mining, bioprospecting and biopiracy, and marine mammal conservation);
- International Human Rights (including the core civil and political rights protected, and the case law of the UN's Human Rights Committee and the European Court of Human Rights).

Other elective courses taught from time to time include:

- Maritime Law;
- Counterterrorism Law;
- Law of Armed Conflict;
- International Sales and Finance;
- Multinational Corporations;
- Globalization and Imperialism;
- Indigenous Rights;
- International Criminal Law;
- International Family Law.

In any given year, Auckland undergraduate law students have a wide choice of internationally-orientated courses.

Updating Existing Courses

In addition, a lot of effort has been made to update the content of existing courses to engage with the international dimension of law. Examples of courses which have a significant international component include:

- Advanced Tax (including international tax planning, foreign tax credits, controlled foreign companies, foreign investment funds, and tax treaties);
- Commercial Arbitration (including the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Arbitral Awards, the ICSID Convention, and the practice of the ICC);
- Competition Law (including comparing New Zealand law with the position in Australia, the United States and Europe);
- Contemporary Maori issues (including comparative indigenous rights);
- Intellectual Property (including international copyright provision);
- Law and Information Technology (including internet governance, ICANN and domain name regulatory structures);
- Mining and Natural Resources Law (including international and comparative aspects of mineral and energy use);
- Psychiatry and the Law (including the impact of international human rights law);
- Youth Justice (including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child);
- Legal Research (including research in common law and other jurisdictions).

International and comparative material is also incorporated into many of the other undergraduate law courses, including the compulsory first and second year courses (the Legal System, Crimes, Contract, Torts, Public Law, Land Law, Equity, and Jurisprudence). International practice places a premium on foundational subjects exploring the law of obligations, the control of public power, and the making and interpreting of laws, and these core subjects remain critical to a legal education.

Postgraduate taught courses

The Auckland Law School offers both taught and research postgraduate degrees. The taught Master of Laws programme includes a range of internationally-orientated courses. In addition, the Law School uses visiting international scholars to teach approximately half its Master of Laws courses, which brings an international dimension to a significant part of the degree. Postgraduate courses being taught in this way in 2011 include:

- International Commercial Arbitration (taught by David Williams QC);
- Commercial Equity (taught by Richard Nolan, Cambridge University);

- Commercial Insurance (taught by Professor Rob Merkin, University of Southampton);
- Resulting and Constructive Trusts (taught by Professor Robert Chambers, University College London);
- Aspects of United Kingdom Taxation (taught by Professor John Tiley, Cambridge University);
- Corporate Finance (taught by Professor George Geis, University of Virginia);
- Comparative Energy Law (taught by Professor Ernst Nordtveit, University of Bergen);
- International Environmental Law (taught by Professor Klaus Bosselmann);
- The Multinational Trading System and Protection of the Environment (taught by Professor Thomas Schoenbaum, George Washington University);
- International Human Rights (taught by Professor Manfred Nowak, University of Vienna);
- Mental State Defences and Criminal Law (taught by Professor Ronnie Mackay, De Montford University, Leicester);
- Copyright Law (taught by Alexandra Sims and Rob Batty);
- Corporate Governance (taught by Professor John Farrar);
- Law and Economics (taught by Dr George Barker, Australian National University);
- Natural Resources Law (taught by Associate Professor David Grinlinton);
- International Fisheries Law (taught by Kerry Tetzlaff);
- Law and Governance for Sustainability (taught by Professor Hans Christian Bugge, University of Oslo);
- Public International Law (taught by Dr Caroline Foster);
- South Pacific Constitutions (taught by Dr Alex Frame).

The Auckland Law School has entered into student exchange agreements with other law schools and in this and the ways mentioned above seeks to prepare its students for life-long learning in an increasingly globalized world.