

**TEACHING AND ASSESSING STATUTORY INTERPRETATION:  
CREATING COURSE COHESION**

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ABSTRACT

Focus on the quality of law graduates is not a new phenomenon. The Threshold Learning Outcomes, CALD Standards for Australian Law Schools and the Law Admissions Consultative Committee's requirements for admission as a legal practitioner are designed to assure minimum standards in Australian law schools. Despite this, over the last decade the Law Admission Consultative Committee has frequently questioned the capability of newly qualified lawyers to engage in statutory interpretation. The release of CALD's good practice guide to statutory interpretation (Barnes et al, 2015) has prompted a renewed focus on engaging in purposeful, holistic curriculum design to assure students attain the graduate outcomes relevant to statutory interpretation. In response, the Law School at James Cook University identified statutory interpretation as a curriculum priority and a team of academics embarked on a project to implement a cohesive 'whole-of-course' approach to teaching and assessing statutory interpretation. This paper charts the project team's method for reviewing current teaching and assessment practices and the implementation of its recommendations. It also highlights how the use of a 'running client file' can foster a strategic and coordinated 'team' approach towards teaching and assessment at each year level, cumulating in a comprehensive approach towards the incremental development of students' statutory interpretation knowledge and skills. Further, this paper explores how this project provided a previously unnoticed opportunity to engage in activities that focus on the enhancement of students' literacy levels as well as their legal writing and research skills.

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