

NALP Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice – Guide for Learners

Document Specification:			
Purpose:	To provide individuals undertaking NALP Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice with an overview of what to expect from the qualification, where to go for help and give general guidance around how the qualification is assessed.		
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1. Introduction

The National Association of Licensed Paralegals (NALP) is an awarding organisation recognised and regulated by Ofqual, offering qualifications specifically designed for the Paralegal Sector. These qualifications have been designed so that Learners have a clear path of progression and so that the content will provide them with the depth of knowledge required for any professional paralegal, whether they are looking for a career within a law firm, in the public or private sector or if they wish to forge their own path as a Paralegal in their own private practice.

The qualifications offered by NALP are well regarded throughout the legal sector and are relied upon by users as a mark of competency for the holder of a NALP qualification.

NALP takes care to update its qualifications regularly, but please be aware that this can take time so there may be some examples of, for instance, case law, that have moved on since the last review. If you have any queries at all regarding the content of the workbook or assignments provided, please do not hesitate to contact NALP, either directly or via your chosen Approved Centre and we will ensure that any feedback is included within the next scheduled review.

2. Qualifications covered by this guide

This Guide covers provides information for Learners studying for the following NALP qualification:

Qualification Title	Qualification Reference Number (as per Ofqual Register of Qualifications)
NALP Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice	501/0614/4

Our Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice is designed to bridge the gap between an academic degree and the practical, procedural knowledge and skills necessary to be able to function effectively as a Career Paralegal.

There are 6 units of study, all of which are assessed by assignment and Learners are required to successfully complete one written assignment per unit which are designed to assess the Learner’s skills, knowledge and understanding of legal issues, to gain the Diploma.

Assignments meeting the minimum criteria for achievement will be assessed as either Pass, Merit or Distinction:

Pass: (Descriptive): A Pass grade will be awarded if a student has basically but fully covered all criteria indicated. This will be reflected in a mark of between 45% and 64%.

Merit: (Explanatory): A Merit grade will be awarded if a student has shown a higher degree of aptitude, has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the questions and has presented his/her findings neatly and professionally. This will be reflected in a mark between 65% and 79%.

Distinction: (Showing implications): A Distinction will be awarded if the student has shown a mastery of the subject matter and has dealt with the questions in a professional manner. Attention will be particularly given to spelling, grammar, layout and style and to the actual presentation of the assignment. This will be reflected in a mark of between 80% and 100%.

Comprehensive course material is provided and there should be no need to purchase legal textbooks in order to successfully attain the Diploma.

Guidance in relation to other NALP qualifications is available separately.

3. Different learning approaches

NALP qualifications are offered via our Approved Centres. These are training organisations which have provided evidence and assurance that they are able to deliver the qualifications effectively to their Learners, whether this is via **distance learning**, **blended learning** or **classroom-based**. Below we explain the differences between these approaches to learning.

3.1. Distance Learning

Distance Learning is where you determine how much or how fast you learn (within the time restrictions of the qualifications themselves – see Section 4.1). You will be provided with the workbooks and/or other learning material, either via a PDF workbook sent via Email, or via an online learning portal, or even a paper-based workbook. It may also include recorded teaching and training videos to provide additional guidance, but usually a Learner will be expected to undertake the majority of their learning without the aid or supervision of a tutor or teacher.

Whilst this form of learning is generally without direct guidance, our Approved Centres are expected to have suitably qualified people on staff who can provide additional guidance and teaching where this is needed. If you have opted to study via Distance Learning, therefore, you should still be able to ask the Approved Centre through which you enrolled to provide you with assistance should you require it. Obviously, they can only assist you with the study aspect and with some guidance on how to answer the assignments, but they cannot provide you with direction as to exactly how to answer a specific assignment question.

3.2. Blended Learning

Blended Learning has become far more popular over recent years, offering a mix between the self-study method of Distance Learning with some additional, planned, teaching sessions that may be either in person or via webinar or other online teaching facilities. Blended Learning will usually include some of the teaching to be 'live' – i.e. a webinar that you join as it is being delivered so that you might ask questions via the video link and receive real-time responses. It may also include set times that you spend inside a classroom setting. This means that the Learner may have to have studied up to a certain point prior to any scheduled webinars or classroom sessions, so there is less freedom for the Learner to set their own pace than in traditional 'Distance Learning'.

3.3. Classroom-based Learning

This is the traditional way of learning when a Learner attends a specific classroom on set days and is directed by the teacher what to study, given guidance as this takes place with a limited amount of self-study (or homework) to be undertaken independently. Whilst this is a well-accepted and effective method of learning, it should be noted that Learners should not undertake their assignments in a classroom setting to avoid any possibility of collusion or plagiarism.

4. Achieving the qualification(s)

This NALP qualification is designed on a model of units, each one covering a specific part of the legal sector and English Law. Learners will be tested on their knowledge and understanding of the unit they have studied by way of undertaking an assignment for that unit. In this section we will look at how these units combine to make each qualification.

4.1. Total Qualification Time

Each Unit has been assigned a specific number of hours that it will take an *average Learner* to study and understand the subject matter, via the study materials provided, plus complete the assignment for that unit. This is known as the **Total Qualification Time (TQT)**. Please note that because the TQT is based on an *average Learner* the time actually taken by a Learner to complete this may be shorter or longer than the hours given in the table below.

The NALP Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice consists of 6 mandatory units. Therefore, a Learner must successfully achieve a passing grade in all of the units detailed in 4.2 below in order to gain the overall qualification. This result must be achieved within 24 months of enrolling on a course of study to attain the NALP Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice.

4.2. Unit details

Each unit covers a different area of the English legal system, at an appropriate level for Learners undertaking these qualifications.

Please note that Learners will also be expected to work through a short introduction to the qualification. The Introduction is not assessed nor does it hold any credits, however it does impact on the total time an average Learner will take to complete the qualification. The introduction has therefore been included in the following table, and the details of the units are as follows:

Unit No.	Unit Title	Guided Learning Hours	Self-study and Assignment	Total Qualification Time
1	Civil Litigation in Practice	18	53	71
2	Criminal Practice	10	41	51
3	Matrimonial and Civil Partner Disputes in Practice	14	45	59
4	Conveyancing in Practice	22	58	80
5	Succession in Practice	12	42	54
6	Corporate and Business Structures in Practice	9	40	49
Total Hours		85	279	364

5. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Reasonable Adjustments to the overall timeframe for completion of the qualification and the time allowed to complete assignments will be considered by NALP on a case-by-case basis. **Any requests for Reasonable Adjustments should be made at the time of enrolment on the qualification** as these are generally granted in respect of known medical or educational special needs, such as dyslexia, visual impairment, mental health conditions, etc. Any medical conditions that may require a stay in hospital during the time that the Learner will be studying should be declared at the time of enrolment. NALP reserves the right to ask for evidence of any condition claimed as the cause for a claim for a Reasonable Adjustment.

Special Considerations are where an unforeseen event happens which affects the Learner and their ability to complete their studies and / or assignments. This could be an accident or injury, a bereavement or other event. **The Learner should inform their Approved Centre immediately such an event occurs (or as soon as they are physically able to)** for them to put in a request for a Special Consideration and **this must be received a minimum of 24 hours before the assignment due date.**

The type of evidence that may be required for a Reasonable Adjustment or a Special Consideration to be considered includes, but may not be limited to:

- Doctor's note to confirm illness or medical condition requiring adjustments to be made
- Copy of a death certificate for a claim of bereavement
- Court attendance letters / Jury Service Letters
- Note from therapist or other specialist consultant setting out the reasons preventing a Learner from completing the study and/or assignment in the specified time
- If under 18, a parental discussion and signed letter by the parent and tutor to confirm exceptional extenuating circumstances may be submitted

Extra work commitments; childcare or elderly care issues of a general nature; other assessments with similar deadlines; no computer facilities at home; etc. are not considered as exceptional extenuating circumstances.

Please note that the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations allowed are usually in respect of the time allowed to complete the qualification and/or assignment, which is limited to a maximum of 25% additional time.

Full details of our approach to Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations can be found within our [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy](#).

6. Assignments

Earlier we have stated that a Learner must pass an assignment for each unit that they study in order to gain their chosen qualification. Each assignment will include specific guidance for that particular assignment which should be read in conjunction with the information provided in this section, as well as the information provided in the [Qualification Specification which is available to download from the NALP website](#).

Each assignment will provide opportunities for Learners to be assessed on a sample range of the content required for the unit. Assignments consist of several tasks.

Each assignment contains:

- Learner instructions
- Learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the unit.

6.1. Requesting assignments

NALP qualifications have been designed to allow Learners the freedom to decide when they feel they are ready to take an assignment, having studied the associated material for that unit. Whilst all assignments must be requested and submitted prior to the deadline for the completion of the qualification (see section 4.1 above), there is no set order or timeframe for the individual units to be completed.

If a Learner is studying via a classroom-based learning approach at their chosen Approved Centre, then the Centre may set some restrictions or timeframes based on their study timetable. Similarly, those studying via the blended learning approach may also have to adhere to some restrictions set by their Centre. As such all Learners should ensure that they have discussed any such restrictions and requirements their Approved Centre may impose.

For those who are studying via the pure distance learning approach, you are more likely to have the freedom to choose when you wish to undertake an assignment for each unit you are studying. Such Learners should contact their Approved Centre to request an assignment.

6.2. Administering assignments

Once a Learner has requested an assignment and their Centre informs NALP of this request, NALP will email the assignment to the Centre and this will be emailed on to the Learner (if a distance Learner) or handed out to Learner if it is a classroom-based learning Centre.

A Learner has 4 weeks from the date of the assignment being emailed or handed to them by their chosen Approved Centre to complete the assignment and return the work to NALP for assessment. To help with this, **the due date will be clearly marked on the front sheet of the assignment paper.**

PLEASE NOTE: It is the responsibility of the Learner and their chosen Approved Centre to ensure that all assignments are returned to NALP for marking by the date specified.

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

6.3. Grading of assignments, units and overall qualification

Assignments can be graded as **Pass**, **Merit**, **Distinction**, or **Fail**. The meaning of these grades can be described as follows:

- **Pass** - A Pass grade will be awarded if a student has basically but fully covered all criteria indicated. This will be reflected in a mark of between 45% and 64%.
- **Merit** - A Merit grade will be awarded if a student has shown a higher degree of aptitude, has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the questions and has presented his/her findings neatly and professionally. This will be reflected in a mark between 65% and 79%.
- **Distinction** - A Distinction will be awarded if the student has shown a mastery of the subject matter and has dealt with the questions in a professional manner. Attention will be particularly given to spelling, grammar, layout and style and to the actual presentation of the assignment. This will be reflected in a mark of between 80% and 100%.
- **Fail** – the Learner has not achieved the required 45% minimum pass mark for the assignment.

For a Learner to achieve their chosen qualification they must have passed one assignment for each Unit of study set out in Section 4.1 above.

More details regarding the assessment methodology and the rules of combination for the units can be found within the [Qualification Specification which is available to download from the NALP website.](#)

6.4. Feedback on completed assignments

All Learners should be aware that NALP **does not provide feedback on assignments**, regardless of the outcome. This is because of the way the assignment questions are structured, meaning that it would be extremely easy for the feedback to give a Learner an advantage on their repeat of a question or even a re-take of a whole assignment.

The assignments are designed to set out a scenario and ask questions that will demonstrate the Learner's understanding of the law as it is applied to the given scenario. Because of this, feedback could easily provide a Learner with too much information that could virtually give them the answer to the assignment question. The decision has therefore been made that NALP will not provide feedback on specific questions. The Learner's chosen Approved Centre should, however, be able to provide some further guidance on how to answer the assignment questions. Additionally, we have provided some indicative content for all of the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria within our Qualification Specification. Learners can also find sample questions on our website for them to practice prior to undertaking a live assignment.

If Learners require any further general guidance on how to complete their assignments, NALP is also happy to offer some direct guidance should this be necessary. We will not, however, provide specific guidance on individual assignment questions, nor give any form of feedback during these sessions on previous results.

6.5. Opportunities to re-take

If a Learner fails to achieve an overall pass mark of 45%, the Learner will have failed that assignment but will be able to request a new assignment, which should be completed within four weeks of it being issued by NALP. The first re-take will be free of charge, but if they fail for a second time, a fee will have to be paid for a new assignment and they will have a new four-week period in which to complete it. If a Learner fails to achieve a pass mark on the third attempt, they will be deemed to have failed the assignment completely and will be unable to gain the relevant qualification.

All Learners must have completed all assignment questions and passed all relevant units within the set timeframes as set out in Sections 4.1 above.

Should a Learner fail to have completed and passed all necessary units for the qualification, they will be required to re-enrol on the qualification, including the payment of a second enrolment fee. Units already achieved may be considered under [NALP's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

6.6. Quality assurance of assessment decisions & appeals

In all cases:

All assignments are marked externally by NALP employed assessors. No assessment decisions are made by any NALP Approved Centre.

NALP has a full Quality Assurance and Moderation Policy in place which is followed to ensure that all assessment decisions are consistent regardless of the assessor. If a Learner or Centre disagrees with the Assessment Decision, they are entitled to submit an Appeal, in line with our [Appeals Policy](#).

Please note: Appeals will only be considered if there is a specific rationale provided for why the Learner or Centre disagrees with the decision made. We will not consider academic appeals based on the opinion of a third party who is not a tutor/teacher for a NALP Approved Centre. If the tutor/teacher of an Approved Centre supports the appeal, they must give their specific reasons for doing so.

6.7. Instructions to Learners

Please read the following instructions carefully before attempting your assignment.

- Always ensure that you are familiar with the content of the units and the Assessment Criteria they cover. You can find all of this information in the [Qualification Specification for the NALP Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Studies](#). If you go to the back of the Qualification Specification you will find the unit details, setting out the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria. The Learning Outcomes is what a Learner is expected to be able to do or have an understanding of once they have completed that part of the unit; The Assessment Criteria gives a clear indication of what the assessors are looking to see being covered in the answers to the assignments the Awarding Organisation has set in order to demonstrate that they have attained that Learning Outcome.
- The sample questions available on the [NALP Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Studies page](#) on our website will give you a lot of information in respect of the sorts of details you would be expected to include in your assignment. But please ensure these details are included in a way that works with the scenarios and context of the assignment questions themselves.
- Always read the question you are answering at least three times before attempting to answer. This is to ensure you slow down and read what it says. It is human nature for us to read the words we expect to see next and it is a mistake we encounter often with Learners submitting their assignments.
- Always ensure you take note of the context of the question as well as the content. With so much in Law being contextualised Learners can sometimes look at the problem from the wrong angle. If in doubt, go back to the assessment criteria mentioned in the first point above and ask yourself if the way in which you are interpreting the question will address what our assessors will be looking at.
- Before you start an assignment, you should read it carefully and ensure that you understand what is required of you before you attempt any task. If you are uncertain, you should ask for guidance from your chosen Approved Centre, or you can contact NALP directly by emailing us at admin@nationalparalegals.co.uk.
- Each task should be word processed on a fresh sheet of paper which is clearly headed with your name and your NALP Membership Number (all Learners are provided with one free year's membership of NALP on enrolment).
- Each task must be clearly labelled with the question number being attempted.

- All questions must be completed before the assignment is submitted for assessment. NALP provides comprehensive workbooks which you should be given by your chosen Approved Centre, in addition to any other training material the Approved Centre May provide.
- When completing your Assignments, you may use any books, notes or other sources to assist you, but **YOU MUST CLEARLY CITE THESE SOURCES** within your answer, including details of author and publication they are taken from, otherwise this could be construed as **PLAGIARISM** (i.e. copying from other works). Such **PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND MAY RESULT IN YOUR DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE QUALIFICATION AS A WHOLE**. Please note that whilst such citations are allowed, these should be kept to a minimum as it is important for Learners to produce original and individual work in order to clearly demonstrate your own knowledge and understanding. Please see our [Plagiarism Policy and Practice Guide](#) for more information.
- When you have completed all questions, please complete the front sheet of the Assignment and ensure that this is included with your assignment before emailing it to the two email addresses detailed on your instruction sheet. All Learners must verify that all the work contained in the assignment is your own. **It is particularly important that this section is completed.**
- When your work has been assessed, you will be informed of your result for that unit. If you do not successfully complete all units for the qualification taken you will be awarded unit certificates for the credits of each unit achieved.
- In the event of a Referral grade, where Learning Outcomes have not been achieved, you will be given the opportunity to re-do the question(s) again. Any questions referred must be completed and re-submitted within two weeks of being notified of the referral decision. A question may be attempted a total of 3 times before a Learner will be required to complete a new full assignment for the relevant unit.
- Assignments will be assessed according to the standard of work provided against the Learning Outcomes and the Assessment Criteria given. A grade of Pass, Merit, Distinction or Fail will be given.
- If an assignment has been failed (by not achieving an overall pass mark of 45%), you will be given the chance to request another assignment. Failure to be successful in the second assignment will mean that a third will have to be requested for which a fee will be charged (details of fees available on request). There will be no further chances to complete the assignment.

7. Word Limits

7.1 Maximum word limit

The maximum word limit for Level 7 is **8,000 words**.

7.2 What is included in the word limit?

ALL words used within the main body of your answer are part of the word limit. This includes but is not limited to:

- Headings or sub-headings
- Case titles (e.g. Donoghue v Stevenson (1932))
- Quotes
- Summaries of the facts of cases and/or statutory provisions

7.3 Penalties for exceeding word limits

Any assignments received in excess of 10% of the word limit will not be read and therefore will not be marked. Word limits are an instruction and complying with instructions is a critical life skill, particularly in law. But, most importantly, word limits allow Examiners to make a true comparison between your work and the work of other Learners. It is your responsibility to count the words you submit (you are advised to use Microsoft Word to assist you). You **MUST** enter the total number of words your assignment contains on the front sheet you submit with your assignment.

It is also important to bear in mind that you should not write too little. The Marking Criteria Examiners use identifies the points they are looking for to give you credit in your answer. If you are too far **below the word limit** you will be unlikely to have covered all the points required. Although there is no minimum word count it is highly unlikely you will have covered all the assessment criteria and learning outcomes if you have written less than say 3,000 words. If in doubt speak to your training provider for more guidance.