

A PAPERLESS APPROACH TO COURSE MATERIALS AND ASSIGNMENTS¹ IN THE FACULTY OF LAW

It is proposed that, as of 2017, all course materials, including materials used in class, must be made available online to students through Vula and that no material will be printed. In addition, assignments must be posted, downloaded and marked on Vula.

The imperative for this is threefold:

- The ability to use online databases to search for and identify legal sources has become a critical skill in research and in practice, and reliance on printed course readers will eventually affect the market readiness of our students.
- In an era where environmental resources are under severe threat, we have the duty to adopt more sustainable methods of doing business. Printing of materials carries a large environmental footprint:
 - A ton (1000 kg) of paper consists of about 400 reams, - It takes 12-24 trees to manufacture one ton of paper.
 - Unsustainable forestry practices – especially as they relate to water use.
 - Use of water in the production of paper.
 - The high use of chemicals in both the production of paper and the production of ink – often released into water resources.
 - Energy use in the production and transport of paper.
 - Energy use of photocopiers.
 - Unsafe disposal of both paper and toner

It is proposed:

1. That course materials be phased out and that by 2017 no course materials are printed.
 2. That study guides should allow students to search for and source course materials available on university databases. That course material not readily available, must be sourced and provided on Vula.
 3. That a maximum of 200 printed pages per course be allowed and that lecturers who would like to print materials beyond such a cap motivate for such increased use to the Dean.
 4. That lecturers who need to print assignments in order to mark and provide feedback, submit a request to the Dean to do so.
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Paperless Policy as per DC05/2016 with amendments from Acting Dean following DAC meeting on 27 June 2018

5. That the move to electronic platforms should be done in a way that does not threaten job security of staff involved in the printing. E.g. the serving staff member could assist lecturers to download and upload materials for Vula.
6. There remains a need to cater for students without readily available access to laptops and/or the internet or whose disabilities prevent a paperless option. In this respect the following is proposed:
 - a. ICTS has a laptop project that provides laptops to students who demonstrate financial need.²
 - b. Students who are not eligible for financial aid and therefore ineligible for ICTS funded laptops, may approach the dean with a request for a laptop. Such a request must be fully motivated on the basis of financial need.
 - c. Students may place a request to the Dean for printing credits. Such a request must be fully motivated on the basis of medical conditions, disability or other exceptional circumstances of a similar nature. Students with a disability must support their request with a letter from the disability unit. Medical conditions and other exceptional circumstances must be supported by a letter from a physician or other forms of appropriate documentation.
 - d. In addition, that financially vulnerable students (students on NSFAS, GAP, students who may be eligible for either) ought to be granted access to a specific amount of printing credits depending on the requirements of the law courses that they are taking. Students who might not be captured by the above criteria should also be allowed to access these credits on a permanent or temporary basis if they can motivate as to why they are financially vulnerable.

² In 2016 a total number of 40 laptops were made available to the law faculty. Of these 29 were taken up by students (in RDL1008H and RDL1009H). 11 laptops were returned to ICTS.