

NALP Level 4 Diploma in Paralegal Studies

Distance Learner Guide

Document Specification:			
Purpose:	To provide individuals undertaking NALP Level 4 Diploma in Paralegal Studies 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

NALP Training Company Limited, trading as National Paralegal College (NPC), is a training organisation specialising in qualifications and courses aimed at Paralegals. Some of these qualifications are awarded by a Recognised Awarding Organisation, NALP (National Association of Licenced Paralegals), and are regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). Other courses and certificates are awarded by ourselves, with some also accredited by the CPD Standards Office.

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 NPC, and we will pass any feedback on to NALP for inclusion in their next scheduled review of the qualifications.

2. Qualifications Covered by this Guide

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

Qualification Title	Qualification Reference Number (as per Ofqual Register of Qualifications)
NALP Level 4 Diploma in Paralegal Studies	501/0613/2

There are 10 units of study required to achieve this qualification. 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.

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 Learner 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 Learner 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 Learner 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 text-books in order to successfully attain the Diploma. However, Learners are free to look at other sources during their studies.

Guidance in relation to other NALP qualifications is available separately.

3. NPC – Distance Learning Approach

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 via a PDF workbook sent via Email. NPC is currently working on creating a new Learner Portal where the workbooks and other learning support materials will be available.

Whilst this form of learning is generally without direct guidance, NPC provides all our learners with access to tutorial support on request. This can be via email, telephone or, if available, video conferencing facilities such as Zoom.

Please note, it can take up to 5 working days to arrange such tutorial support, depending on the availability of the tutor and of the Learner. Support via email is usually provided within 1 working day of a request being received.

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 4 Diploma in Paralegal Studies consists of 10 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 4 Diploma in Paralegal Studies.

4.2. Unit Details

Each unit covers a different area of the English legal system, at an appropriate level for Learners undertaking these qualifications. As mentioned in 4.1 above. The details of the units are as follows:

Unit No.	Unit Title	Total Qualification Time
	Introduction	0
1	The English Legal System	62
2	The Law of Contract	60
3	The Law of Tort	39
4	Criminal Law	36
5	Wills, Intestacy and Family Provision	23
6	Civil Litigation	48
7	Criminal Procedure	27
8	Matrimonial and Civil Partnerships	31
9	Residential Conveyancing	60
10	Succession	30
	TOTAL HOURS	416

5. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Reasonable Adjustments refer to the assistance provided to learners with known learning difficulties and can be applied to the overall timeframe for completion of the qualification and the time allowed to complete assignments. Each application for Reasonable Adjustments must be approved by NALP who will consider the merits of such applications 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 NPC 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 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 NALP's approach to Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations can be found within their Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy, available to download from [here](#).

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 [here](#).

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.

For those who are studying via the 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. Learners should contact NPC to request an assignment when they feel ready to do so.

6.2. Administering the Assignments

Once a Learner has requested an assignment, NPC will request this from NALP who will allocate which assignment the Learner is to complete. This will then be passed to the Learner by NPC.

A Learner has 4 weeks from the date of the assignment being emailed to them by NPC to complete the assignment, ensuring that they submit this to NPC in good time for it to be returned to NALP for assessment on or before the due date. 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 to ensure that all assignments are provided to NPC in good time to be returned to NALP for marking by the date specified. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY NALP.

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 learner 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 learner 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 learner 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 that particular 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 [here](#).

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 should they need to re-take the 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. NALP has therefore made the decision not to provide feedback on specific questions. Should the Learner require additional tutorial support on this, they should contact NPC who will arrange for a tutorial session or to answer any queries via email, depending on the Learner's preference. Please note that our Tutors will not be able to provide specifics regarding how questions should be answered, but will provide support on question techniques, etc. so that the Learner has the best possible chance to achieve their desired outcome on their assignments. Additionally, NALP have provided some indicative content for all of the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria within their Qualification Specification, available to download [here](#). Learners can also find sample questions on our website [here](#) for them to practice prior to undertaking a live assignment.

6.5. Opportunities to Repeat Assignments

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 Section 4.1 above.

Should a Learner fail to have completed and passed all necessary units for the qualification within the given timeframe, 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, a copy of which is available to download from their website [here](#).

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 NPC and we have no influence on the outcome of any assignments.

If a Learner or Centre disagrees with NALP's Assessment Decision, they are entitled to submit an Appeal, in line with NALP's Appeals Policy. All Appeals must be made via NPC.

Please note: NALP will only consider appeals if there is a specific rationale provided for why the Learner disagrees with the decision made. They will not consider academic appeals based on the opinion of a third party who is not a tutor/teacher for NPC (or any other NALP Approved Centre). Learners must gain the support of an NPC tutor for any appeals made. In addition, any Appeals brought against a failure on

the basis of NALP uncovering plagiarism will require the learner to explain to NPC why that decision is incorrect before this will be passed to NALP.

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 4 Diploma in Paralegal Studies, available [here](#). If you go to the back of the Qualification Specification you will find the unit details, setting out the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria, plus the Indicative Content. The Learning Outcomes are 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, plus the Indicative Content, give a clear indication of what the assessors are looking to see being covered in the answers to the assignments NALP has set in order to demonstrate that the Learner has attained that Learning Outcome.
- Look at the sample questions on NALP's website [here](#). These 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 ourselves at NPC.
- 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. You are provided with comprehensive workbooks by NPC on your enrolment with us.
- 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. Learners will not receive marks for any answers which includes a substantial amount of cited material.

- 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.
- 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

THE MAXIMUM WORD LIMIT FOR LEVEL 4 IS 7,000 WORDS

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.

Penalties for exceeding word limits. Any assignments received in excess of 10% of the maximum 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.