

## LIBRARY TECHNICIANS

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How often have you received a research request and wished you knew more about the subject area?

In my case, not having worked in a law firm library for very long, it keeps on happening.

Without any formal legal education, I've gained all my knowledge on the job. Even after ten years of working in law libraries in universities, some days that knowledge is only a basic starting point for some of the queries that I have received.

How much legal knowledge do you need?  
How much should you be expected to know?

Some subject matter is impossible to master in great detail. Take taxation – a baffling subject at the best of times, but nigh on impossible to understand in the current climate of The New Tax System.

For most employees, study is a remote possibility, unless you work part-time or have

a flexible employer. However, even for those who do not have either of these advantages new options are appearing.

Universities, such as the University of New England, University of Sydney and Deakin University offer the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) part-time through off-campus study. They do however require attendance on campus at least once a semester, a limiting factor for people living at a distance from these institutions.

If you are not interested in practicing law and looking for an alternative to the LLB, some TAFE campuses offer paralegal courses, sometimes with night classes scheduled.

Non-degree courses also exist. I have just completed such a course, 'Law for non-lawyers' through the UWA Extension programme.<sup>1</sup> This course made me realize how much more there is to learn about the law. Instead of upgrading my Associate Diploma as I intended, I am planning to enrol in the Diploma of Business (Legal Studies) at TAFE because I am now eager to learn more about the subject that I am researching.

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<sup>1</sup> For details of this programme see article by Helen Wallace elsewhere in this issue of *ALL*.