

Summadayze or summer civil procedure?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE AWARE OF THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES BEFORE YOU CONSIDER TAKING SUMMER OR WINTER UNITS.



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Despite the surge in popularity of summer and winter units over the past few years, taking a summer or winter unit is a commitment that requires serious consideration. Part-time work during semester and accelerating a degree are common reasons for students enrolling in a summer or winter unit.

With volunteering, university involvement and part-time legal work seemingly mandatory these days, law students are finding themselves with extremely busy and often unmanageable semesters. The obvious solution may be to reduce the number of law units you take during semester. However, it is important to be aware of the benefits and challenges of taking a summer or winter unit when deciding if it is the right move for you.

Benefits

- Undertaking a summer or winter unit will allow you to reduce your workload during semester. The extra time during semester can be used for part-time work, volunteer work, university involvement or extra studying time.
- You will be able to give one subject your full commitment and focus, and familiarise yourself well with the content.
- Some universities may offer two different summer semesters. Taking a

summer unit will still allow you to use your remaining holidays after that unit is over, as it won't take up your entire summer break.

- If you reduce the number of units you take during the semester, you may be able to accelerate your studies and graduate sooner.
- Summer and winter units are often taught in smaller classes which can give you an opportunity to participate more in discussion.
- Consider the opportunity to study abroad during your summer or winter break. Often it can be easy to get approval for these types of placements as you are only undertaking one unit.

Challenges

- Ensuring you are able to get straight back into study mode once semester begins is the key to ensuring that you don't fall behind in your work.
- It is easy to get burnt out at law school. Remember to pace yourself and stay mentally and physically fit.
- Summer and winter units are often taught intensively, which requires you to understand the content and stay on top of your reading at a much faster pace than you would during semester.

- The intensive nature of summer and winter units may mean that attendance is often required at all scheduled classes. These classes are often not recorded.
- It can be difficult to undertake summer and winter units in your penultimate year as they can clash with seasonal clerkships.

Questions to ask yourself

- 1. Why are you taking a summer or winter unit?**
- 2. How manageable will your semester be if you don't take a summer or winter unit?**
- 3. Will you still have time to unwind and have a break before launching back into semester?**

If you are still finding it difficult to decide, speak to your student liaison officer about your circumstances. Contacting the lecturer of the summer or winter unit is also a useful tool in determining the format of assessments, key dates and the time commitment for that particular unit. Remember, summer and winter units are supposed to supplement your normal university semester and should not replace a healthy balanced semester. ■

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