

Middle
Temple
Library:
Guide &
Introduction
to Legal
Research



Opening Hours

Legal Term

Monday - Friday 9.00 am - 7.00 pm

Every 4th Saturday (on a rota with the other Inns) 10.00 am - 5.00 pm

Legal Vacations

Monday - Friday 9.00 am - 5.30 pm

The Library closes on public holidays and the first week of August. It occasionally closes early for special events. Details can be found on notice boards, at the Library entrance and on our website: www.middletemple.org.uk/library/library-information/library-opening-hours

Enquiry Desk

The desk is staffed by skilled librarians who are there to help you with enquiries in person, by telephone or email. Regular tours are offered to provide an introduction to the Library. Additionally, librarians can assist with specific enquiries and there are a range of specialist resources available that provide advanced guidance regarding research skills in a particular subject or jurisdiction.

Legal Research Training

The Library provides regular legal research training sessions, which can also be booked as one-to-one sessions. We also offer free online tutorials in searching free legal databases, as well as subscription databases such as Lexis and Westlaw. For further information please visit: <https://www.middletemple.org.uk/library/library-services/legal-research-training>

Our nano trainings are short-form videos that provide you with bitesize chunks of information. They will introduce you to particular resources and provide demonstrations on how to use and access specific legal material. These can be accessed here: <https://www.middletemple.org.uk/library/library-services/nano-trainings>

Access

- Wheelchair ramp to the building entrance
- Automated building entrance doors
- Lift to all floors
- Wheelchair accessible toilets on ground floor
- Public computer terminals with touch-screen monitors
- A portable hearing loop, magnifier and headphones available at the Enquiry Desk

Library Services



The catalogue can be searched online at: www.middletemplelibrary.org.uk. All print materials available in the Library are catalogued, along with all electronic titles available online through the databases or general Internet sources. The other three Inn Library collections can be searched through our catalogue. Printed lists of key holdings are available for quick reference in the Library.

Textbooks are available for overnight and weekend loan to members of any Inn. Books may be borrowed one hour before the Library closes and must be returned by 10am on the next day the Library is open.

There are four iPads with ebooks which can be borrowed for up to a week for a small fee. The Library can provide copies of law reports, journal articles, textbook extracts, etc. by email. Requests must be made using the copyright declaration form, which is available at: <https://www.middletemple.org.uk/library/library-services/document-delivery-service/distance-service-copyright-declaration>

Computers & Online Services

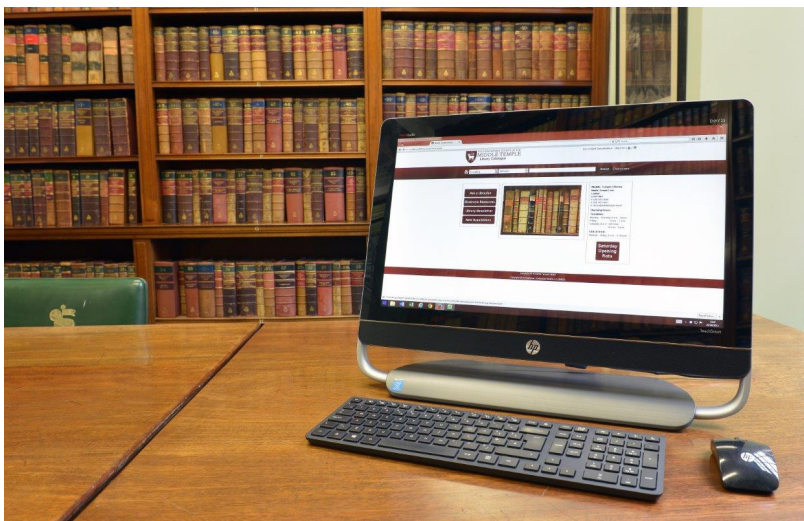
Computer terminals located on each floor are equipped with Internet access, Microsoft Office and touch-screen monitors. No booking or log-in is required. USB memory sticks can be purchased at the enquiry desk. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the Library.

Printing is available from any Library terminal. Printers are located on the main floor and gallery. There are two photocopiers on the main floor and one on the gallery. The charge is 10p per sheet for copying or printing, and 5p per sheet for scanning.

The Library website lists the specialist legal databases to which the Library subscribes along with some useful free resources. These vary in their coverage, but some go as far back as 1865, while others provide access to specialist titles.

The following is a selection of the subscription databases available for free use in the library:

- Bloomsbury Professional Online
- Hein Online
- ICLR Online
- i-law
- Kluwer Arbitration
- Kluwer Competition
- Lexis Library
- Lexis PSL
- LLMC Digital
- Oxford Legal Research Library
- Practical Law
- Public Information Online
- UK Parliamentary Papers
- Westlaw UK
- Westlaw US



iPads & ebooks

The Library has four iPads, which are loaded with ebooks and can be borrowed for £1 per day or £5 for a week.

Titles include:

- The White Book
- Archbold: criminal pleading, evidence and practice
- Chitty on Contracts
- Phipson on Evidence

Document Delivery Service

The Library provides an efficient document delivery service to assist members of the Inns of Court with receiving documents remotely.

The Library can scan a number of documents, such as chapters from textbooks, articles from journals, cases from law reports and more.

This also includes documents from specialist series like those published by Informa - for example, Lloyd's Law Reports and Lloyd's Reinsurance Law Reports. This service is offered to members Monday - Friday, 10am - 4pm for a small fee. Restrictions on copyrighted materials apply. For further details and a list of charges, see here:

<https://www.middletemple.org.uk/library/library-services/document-delivery-service>.

Telephone rooms

There are two rooms in the Library where you can take private telephone calls. You can also book these rooms in advance for meetings or remote hearings by speaking to a member of staff



Library History

The Library is known to have existed prior to 1540 as archive records show, but was re-founded in 1641 when Robert Ashley (1565 - 1641) bequeathed his collection of books to the Inn. At that time the four Inns were commonly regarded as the third university of England and, as well as providing instruction in the law, they provided members with a gentleman's education which encompassed divinity, philosophy, arts and sciences.

Since then, the Library has been housed in various places around the Inn, including what is now the Parliament Chamber. A new library was built and opened in 1861 by the then Prince of Wales; it stood across the garden from the present building. That building was bombed twice in WWII and too heavily damaged to be saved. Fortunately, the Molyneux Globes had already been sent out of London for safe-keeping, and the majority of the books were saved.

Following the war the collections were housed temporarily in two prefabricated structures in Brick Court. The present building, designed by Sir Edward Maufe, was opened in 1958 by the Queen Mother. Today the library houses over 200,000 volumes.



Middle Temple Library, late 19th century

Library Collections

First Floor

Textbooks & Loose-leafs

The Library subscribes to an extensive range of major titles and holds previous editions on the gallery. English and international law textbooks are located on the main floor and are arranged by subject. All textbooks are classed according to the Moys Classification Scheme for law. The catalogue will provide a Moys classmark, for example KM 587 BAN. Guides to using Moys can be found in the Library. The Common Law Series and City Law School manuals are kept in the Enquiry Area.

Although the Library has material on all areas of UK law, each of the Inn libraries have subject concentrations. Some of the topics covered at Middle Temple include employment, insurance and shipping law. A list of all subject specialities is provided on the last two pages of this guide. Each Inn library specialises in different jurisdictions: Middle Temple in EU & US law, Lincoln's Inn & Inner Temple in Commonwealth law, and Gray's Inn in international law.

Law Reports

Most nominate reports are held, dating back to the sixteenth century, as well as all major modern titles and series for England and Wales. The Library subscribes to a range of specialist titles such as Building Law Reports, Criminal Appeal Reports, Lloyd's Law Reports and Local Government Reports. The collection is complemented by major digests and citators, as well as our database services.

Journals, Ecclesiastical & Other Titles

A range of journals is available to supplement the textbooks and law reports. The collection includes general publications such as Counsel, practical works such as The Criminal Law Review, and academic works such as The Cambridge Law Journal. A complete run of The London Gazette from 1665 to date is also available.

The Library has always maintained good collections of divinity and canon law. The Library is a repository for the transcripts of the Consistory Courts, which have been bound into annual volumes. A consolidated index covering 1891 onward provides easy access to cases and is also available online through the website of the Ecclesiastical Law Society: www.ecclawsoc.org.uk.

Gallery Floor

Government Publications

The Library holds a basic collection of both historical and modern government publications. A comprehensive specialist collection is held by Lincoln's Inn Library. Major digests such as Halsbury's Laws and Halsbury's Statutes are found on the gallery floor. The Library also holds Local and Private Acts. There you will also find primary legislation from 1801 onward. Secondary legislation in the form of Statutory Instruments are held from 1890 - 2009. Post-2009 SIs are available online. Please consult the catalogue for details

Previous Editions

The Library retains, wherever possible, all previous editions of textbooks; many are housed on the gallery. About half are in off-site storage, and are available by request within 24 hours.

Third Floor

European Union Law

As one of its specialist collections, the Library holds an extensive range of EU law. As well as primary European Union material, there are textbooks for individual member states, judgments and decisions of the European Court of Justice, law reports, periodicals and textbooks. A small human rights collection is available along with the European materials, and includes several textbooks and reports covering UK, European and international law.

United States Collection

The Inn has always had strong connections with the United States, dating back to the earliest colonial settlers, and now holds one of the largest collections of US law outside the continental United States. This comprehensive collection includes The National Reporter series, Uniform Laws Annotated, West's Digest and a comprehensive collection of textbooks. American law reports and journals are also available through HeinOnline, Lexis.com and Westlaw US.

The third floor also houses a small capital punishment collection which consists of books and other media covering current aspects and the history of the death penalty around the world. Items in this collection are available to loan.

Sir Louis Blom-Cooper Floor: Rare Books

The Library holds a significant collection of antiquarian books dating back to the 13th century which is housed with the Archive in secure and environmentally controlled storage. It reflects the Library's original purpose of informing members on diverse subjects including law, theology, travel, medicine and philosophy.

Robert Ashley's founding collection of 1641 contains many important works including books from John Donne's library, as well as books owned by John Dee and Ben Jonson. The Library runs a sponsorship scheme for the restoration of rare books; further details are set out on our website:

<https://www.middletemple.org.uk/library/library-collections/rare-books/rare-book-sponsorship-programme>

The Inn's Archive contains administrative and financial records dating back to 1501 as well as manuscript material relating to its history and members. It offers secure viewing areas and also houses a conservation studio. Enquiries should be addressed to the Archivist: archive@middletemple.org.uk.

The Molyneux Globes

The Molyneux Globes are one of the Inn's greatest treasures. They are the earliest globes made in England, and the only known pair in existence. The celestial globe was made in 1592 and the terrestrial one (with the latest discoveries added) in 1603. They are dedicated to Elizabeth I.



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Legal Research

Case Law

Case law refers to the law originating from judicial decisions. One of the best places to start case law research is by consulting a case citator. Available in print and online, a citator can help you track the history and treatment of a case. You can find out where it was reported, view a quick summary of the case and see if it is still good law.

The Current Law Case Citator and its accompanying Yearbooks provide all citations available for every case reported since 1947. Each volume is searchable by party names and there's an index of ship names. Entries include a reference to a paragraph for a summarized version of the case. Citations of reported versions of the case are provided in order of authority, as well as annotations detailing whether the case has been applied, distinguished, considered or overruled by subsequent cases.

The Digest covers cases back to the 14th century, referencing cases from England and Wales; Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries. EU and European Court of Human Rights cases are also included. It is arranged by subject, which covers 53 main volumes. The Digest can help you retrieve a citation for a reported version; in addition it provides a digest and indicates the judicial history of the case. The Digest is a resource is best used for older cases or non-UK cases.

Subscription services such as Westlaw UK and LexisNexis also include editorial content useful in case law research. Status symbols are utilised to demonstrate judicial consideration, whether the case received positive/neutral or negative treatment, or mixed consideration (mentioned, not applied or not followed). Users can find references to commentary resources, including practitioner textbooks and journal articles, and links to reported versions in the form of a PDF for most law report series.

Generally judicial decisions are reported if they lay down a new principle, or clarify/change an existing law. There are various law report series, but not all law report series are treated equally, and there's a hierarchy to which ones you should consider for court. The practice direction on the citation of authorities indicates where a judgment is reported in the official Law Reports series from the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for England and Wales that report must be cited. This series commenced in 1865 and is currently published in four divisions: Court of Appeal, King's Bench, Chancery and Family. If there is no report from the Law Reports, reports from the Weekly Law Reports (also published by the ICLR) or the All England Law Reports (LexisNexis) are regarded as the next most authoritative. Following, you can use a report from any specialists' series, which includes a headnote. The most authoritative reports and many of the specialists' reports are available in print in the Library.

Prior to 1865, law reports were published reports named after private reporters, such as James Burrow and Francis Vesey, who covered a particular court. These are referred to as nominate reports and are still cited and referred to in court today. Some of these reports were reproduced in the English Reports, but some information is omitted from those. These nominate reports are available in print in the Library.

Additional Resources

Practice Direction: Citation of Authorities, [2012] 1 WLR 780 provides guidance on the citation of authorities.

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Practice+Directions/lcj-pract-dir-citation-authorities-2012.pdf>

Citations

Citations are a combination of dates, letters and numbers used to specify a given report. Citations follow a similar pattern.

Example:

- Pepper v Hart [1993] AC 593
- Pepper v Hart (1992) 65 TC 421

The year in square brackets [YYYY], indicates the date the case was reported and is essential to locating the report of the case. The year could appear in round brackets (YYYY), referring to when the case was decided (rather than published). Some citations include a volume number. Following a volume number, the series abbreviation is provided and finally the starting page number for the report.

Deciphering abbreviations:

Cardiff's Index to Legal Abbreviations is freely available online and allows you to search for a series abbreviation: <http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/>

Raistrick's Index to Legal Citations and abbreviations is kept at the Library enquiry desk and allows you to search by abbreviation. It's useful for obscure abbreviations or international citations, which might not appear in Cardiff.

Neutral Citations

Neutral citations began in January 2001 to assist in the publication of judgments online. They are assigned by the courts to all cases in the High Court, Court of Appeal, House of Lords, Supreme Court, Privy Council and tribunals. A neutral citation is not a reference to a specific law report; it's pointing to a transcript of a case. If you can only locate a neutral citation it means only a transcript of that case exists.

Official Transcript Resources

BAILII, the British and Irish Legal Information Institute is a free source of official transcripts from recent cases and by recent, 2001 onwards you should anticipate being able to retrieve the transcript; although, BAILII does host some material prior to 2001 from jurisdictions including the United Kingdom and Europe, such as the European Court of Human Rights.

The website for the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary also provides official transcripts from various courts. These are made available by judges, who supply judgments of interest or importance, or which have legal precedents.

The National Archives started maintaining searchable database of court judgments called Find Case Law in April 2022. The initial collection includes a total of around 50,000 decisions dating back to 2003, from the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, and Upper Tribunals. New judgments and decisions ready for publication are sent directly from the courts and tribunals to the National Archives. The National Archives will continue to work with the Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary to include judgments from more courts and tribunals and to add historical judgments to the service.

The Courts and Tribunals Judiciary also provides official transcripts from various courts. These are made available by judges, who supply judgments of interest or importance, or which have legal precedents.

Legislation Research

The Library holds copies of primary legislation from 1235 onward, with Local Acts from 1801 onward, and secondary legislation in the form of Statutory Instruments from 1890-2009. The Library still receives loose copies of Acts soon after they are published from The Stationery Office. Public General Acts and General Synod Measures, being Church of England measures, and accompanying explanatory notes, documents that explain the purpose of a Bill, are available in the Library.

Commercial databases, LexisNexis and Westlaw UK, provide up-to-date versions of UK legislation, with incorporating amendments and repeals. Legislation.gov.uk is a free resource, which includes full text of Acts in force from January 1988 and all published subsequently- just take note on Legislation.gov.uk of the “Changes to Legislation” notice to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the act.

Halsbury’s Statutes is the only print resource that incorporates repeals and amendments. Halsbury’s Statutes provides up-to-date versions of all Public General Acts in force in England and Wales. There are 52 main volumes updated regularly, providing amended versions of statutes and related information including judicial interpretation and subordinate legislation. Consolidated indices allow users to search primary legislation alphabetically, chronologically and by subject. A cumulative supplement and noter-up service are provided to check for any changes.

Current Law Statutes Annotated, includes the text of the legislation soon after it receives Royal Assent. This resource goes back to 1949 and provides commentary in footnotes surrounding each act. It includes references to parliamentary debates and lists cases that may have led to that particular piece of legislation.

Specialist loose-leaf encyclopaedias cover many individual subjects and include up to date statute law. They are edited by specialists in their fields, and usually contain discussion of the legislation and references to cases decided under it. In addition, they often contain the texts of relevant delegated legislation, departmental circulars and other policy documents.

Additional Resources

Guides to specific resources may be shelved with the item, and a selection of research guides produced by library staff are available on the first floor. A range of reference books for further detail is available at the Enquiry Area.

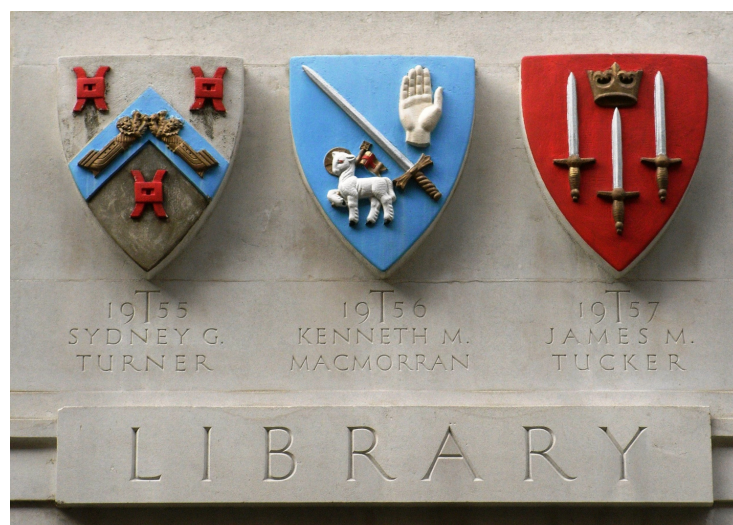
There are many online research resources that provide guidance to techniques applicable to any website. An introduction to some of these techniques for electronic searching is available on the library's website

<https://www.middletemple.org.uk/library/library-resources/library-guides>

More detailed information about legal research techniques can be found in:

Legal Research: A Practitioner's Handbook by Emily Allbon, 3rd ed., 2019

Learning the Law by Glanville Williams, 17th ed. by ATH Smith, 2020.



European and EU Research

Decisions of the European Court of Justice and the General Court (formerly Court of First Instance) are reported in the European Court Reports. Roman numerals indicate volume numbers (I for the ECJ; II for the General Court). Since 2012, the online version of the European Court Reports, accessible on EUR-Lex and CURIA, is the official authenticated version.

Some European cases are reported in the Common Market Law Reports (Bay 214, 222-3) and the All England Law Reports (Bay 26-7), available online and in hardcopy.

The Library holds some law reports that focus on cases from particular EU member states, such as the Irish Reports (Bay 289, 304-5), available online and in hardcopy.

The European Court of Human Rights was created by the European Convention on Human Rights and functions under the auspices of the Council of Europe, rather than the European Union. ECHR cases are sometimes reported in various human rights series, but the official version is available in the Reports of Judgments and Decisions (Bay 255, 270).

Many European law reports are available online, such as the European Human Rights Reports. Westlaw and Lexis include European resources, such as case law, legislation and additional commentary.

Similarly, legislative and judicial materials are available on databases maintained by the EU and the Council of Europe. For guidance on efficiently searching these sources see the additional information available on their websites:

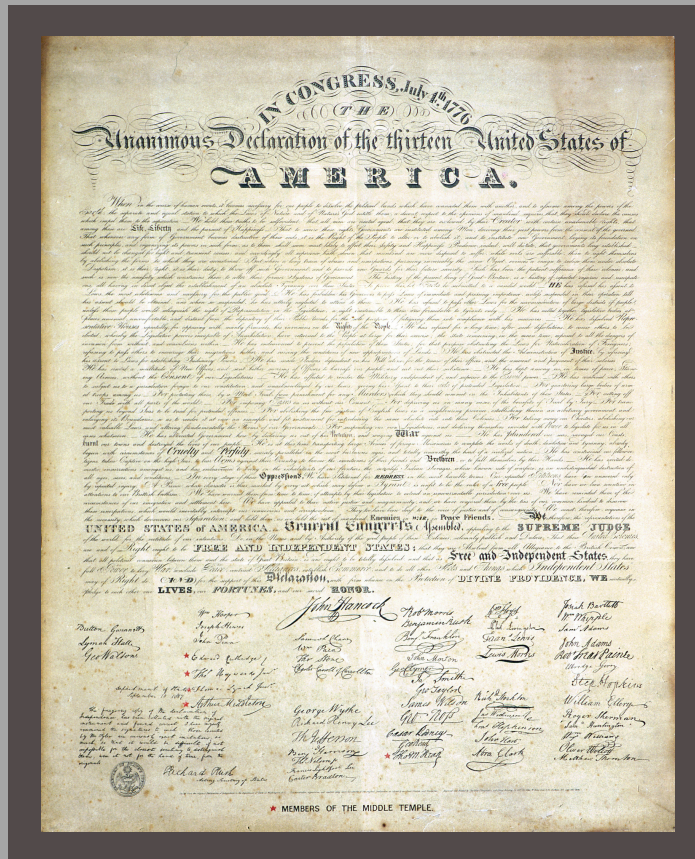
- HUDOC (European Court of Human Rights):

[www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?](http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw/HUDOC&c=#n1362659921775_pointer)

[p=caselaw/HUDOC&c=#n1362659921775_pointer](http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw/HUDOC&c=#n1362659921775_pointer)

- CURIA: <https://curia.europa.eu/common/juris/en/aideGlobale.pdf>

- EUR-Lex: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/content/help.html>



United States Research Federal statutes - open access

United States Code (USC) – open access

The USC is the main codified compilation of general and permanent federal laws, organised by topic. It is available via the Government Publishing Office (1994-present): <https://www.govinfo.gov/>. The House Office of the Law Revision Counsel (1994-present): <https://uscode.house.gov/>. And the Law Library of Congress (1925-1988, with supplements up to 1994): <https://www.loc.gov/collections/united-states-code/about-this-collection/>.

The US Statutes at Large (public laws) - open access

All the laws passed in Congress are bound in their entirety in print in a publication titled The United States Statutes at Large. The Statutes at Large are available on the Government Publishing Office (1951-present): <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/STATUTE>. The Law Library of Congress (1789-1950): <https://www.loc.gov/collections/united-states-statutes-at-large/about-this-collection/>. And from Congress.gov (1973-present): <https://www.congress.gov/public-laws/117th-congress>.

US Bills – open access

A bill is the form used for introducing most new legislation, whether permanent or temporary, general or special, public or private. Bills are available on Congress.gov (1989-present): <https://www.congress.gov/>. As well as the Government Publishing Office (1993-present): <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/BILLS>

State Statutes - open access

The states all have their own constitutions and their own laws. Access to those laws are accessible via Findlaw (which includes both state and federal materials): <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/>. And Cornell Legal Information Institute (includes constitutions for each state, and state laws): <https://www.law.cornell.edu/states/listing>

The Law Library of Congress has produced a useful Guide to Law Online: U.S. States and Territories: <https://guides.loc.gov/us-states-territories>

Federal Case Law

The main law report series for cases heard at the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) is the United States Reports (U.S.), which can be accessed on the court's website: <https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/USReports.aspx>. US Court of Appeal cases (the federal circuit courts), and US district courts and special court cases can be accessed via WestlawNext® at Middle Temple Library. Alternatively, the Caselaw Access Project (CAP) includes all official, book-published state and federal United States case law: <https://case.law/>.

State Case Law

There are a range of free sites that enable researchers to find state-level cases. These include: Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/>. National Centre for State Courts: <https://www.ncsc.org/>. And CourtListener: <https://www.courtlistener.com/>.

Inns' Subject Specialisation

Gray's Inn

Air and Space Law
Conflict of Laws
Constitutional & Administrative
Construction Law
Consumer Law
Data Protection
Education
Energy Law
Entertainment & Media Law
Environmental Law
Foreign Law
Highways
Housing Law
Human Rights
Immigration & Nationality
Information Technology
International Law
Local Government
Northern Ireland
Planning Law
Rates & Council Tax
Social Security & Welfare Law
Sports Law
Telecommunications

Inner Temple

Armed Forces
Commonwealth
Coroners
Criminal Law
Criminology
Customs & Excise
Defamation
Family Law
Food & Drugs
Forensic
Science & Medicine
Intellectual Property
Licensing
Medical Law
Mental Health
Personal Injury
Police
Prison Law
Product Liability
Professional Negligence
Road Traffic
Scotland
Sentencing



Lincoln's Inn

Agriculture
Animal Law
Channel Islands
Charities
Commonwealth
Company Law
Equity and Trusts
Insolvency
Isle of Man
Landlord & Tenant
Parliamentary Materials
Partnership Law
Pensions
Real Property
Taxation
Wills and Probate



Middle Temple Library

Accountancy
Agency
Arbitration
Banking
Carriage of Goods
Commercial Law
Competition Law
Ecclesiastical Law
Employment
Equal Opportunities
EU & Member States
Finance & Financial
Services
Health & Safety
Insurance Law
International Trade
Ireland
Maritime & Shipping Law
Transport
United States





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