Library Guide for
Finding Legal Information

guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/law
Getting Help

If you have a problem or get confused, don’t panic. Talk to your subject librarian or come and see the law librarians on your campus. Ask for them at the Library’s Information Point or contact them by email at: ahss@library.ulster.ac.uk

In addition, each faculty has a Library subject team. See the links below:

- **Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences:**
  guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/ahss
- **Computing, Engineering and Built Environment:**
  guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/eng
- **Life and Health Sciences:**
  guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/LHS
- **Ulster University Business School:**
  guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/business

For help with library services in general, including information about opening hours, borrowing limits, loan types, fines and renewals, ask for a copy of the Getting Started Guide at the Information Point in your campus library or go to the Library website library.ulster.ac.uk.

Getting Started

Your student ID card doubles as your library card – you’ll need it if you want to borrow any library material, book a study room or use IT labs late at night.

Start by logging into the Portal: portal.ulster.ac.uk (Library and ICT tab) or the library homepage: library.ulster.ac.uk. From here, you can access the full range of library services, including the library catalogue, online reading lists, past exam papers, electronic journals, databases and specialist subject help.

Much of the Library’s legal information is available online both on and off-campus, with access controlled by password authentication.

If you have any login or access problems, including OpenAthens (or other passwords), please contact the Library or see the Troubleshooting Guide:

guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/ahss/troubleshooting
Law Books

An up to date legal textbook is always the best place to start your research. It will provide an introduction to the law, and discuss key cases and legislation. It is also important to check unfamiliar legal terminology in an authoritative legal dictionary.

The University libraries have a number of legal dictionaries including the Oxford Dictionary of Law, Stroud's Judicial Dictionary and Words and Phrases Legally Defined all available in print and online (via Index of Legal Terms in Westlaw UK). The major legal encyclopaedia, Halsbury's Laws of England available in print and online (via LexisLibrary), will provide a more detailed overview of the law by topic.

Use the Library Catalogue to find out what books (including ebooks) are available in the library and their location. You can search by author, title or keyword. There are differing loan periods for books and many of your core or recommended texts will be on Two Week Loan or Two Day Loan status. There are limits on how many of these you can borrow at the same time, so be flexible and plan your work because you may not always be able to borrow a legal textbook for long periods.

You may make an online request or reservation via the Library catalogue for books that are currently out on loan or held on another campus. You will be notified when they are available to collect.

The library enforces a fines policy for overdue books so check your University email frequently – we send out warnings 48 hours in advance of the due back date. You can also renew books online or by phone.

Legal Abbreviations

Abbreviations are commonly used in law references. Look them up in the Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations (see p10). The Cardiff Index will also tell you the preferred abbreviation for UK and international law reports and journal titles, where there are several alternatives.

 Handy tip: Your lecturer will usually refer to UK publications so if the same abbreviation matches items from several countries, choose the one from the UK.

Legislation

The changing constitutional arrangements for Northern Ireland mean that legislation applying here can come from several sources. Key sources to remember are:

- UK Statutes and UK Statutory Instruments (p3)
- Northern Ireland Statutes and Northern Ireland Statutory Rules (p8)
- European Union legislation (p9)

Always be very careful that you are citing correct (and up to date) sources in your work.

UK Statutes (or Acts) and Statutory Instruments (SIs)

Many Acts of the UK Parliament (Westminster) may apply either in whole or in part to Northern Ireland. Statutory Instruments (SIs) are UK secondary legislation (also called subordinate or delegated legislation). SIs contain details too unwieldy to include in Acts. Acts are referred to by Short title and year. Each Act in a year is given a running Chapter (c.) number. The main part of an Act is divided into sections (s.), then subsections and paragraphs. e.g., Human Rights Act 1998, c. 42, s 12(1)(a) refers to section 12, subsection 1 paragraph a, of the Human Rights Act 1998, chapter 42.

Schedules and tables are also often found at the end of an Act and provide further detail, such as repeals and amendments to previous legislation.

You can find out if an Act applies to Northern Ireland by checking the Short title, commencement and extent section, which can be found near the end of the Act, just before any Schedules. In addition, Acts may not come into force on the date given at the start (the date of Royal Assent). Again, check the Short title, commencement and extent section for more detail. Often Acts, or parts of an Act, will come into force by way of Commencement Orders (a type of Statutory Instrument).

Finding UK legislation

Library databases are the best place to find UK Statutes and Statutory Instruments:

- LexisLibrary for UK legislation currently in force.
- Westlaw UK for UK and recent NI legislation currently in force.
- Westlaw IE for Irish legislation currently in force.
- Justis for UK legislation as enacted, including sections no longer in force.

Find out more about library databases on pages 6 - 7.

Print sources are also available in the University libraries.

- Public General Acts for Acts as originally enacted.
- Current Law Statutes for Acts as originally enacted.
- Halsbury's Statutes of England and Wales for legislation currently in force.

Check the library catalogue for location and shelf number.
Case Law

Law report citations

Law reports are sometimes called law cases or judgments. You can usually recognise them by their reference (or citation). A law report citation is written like this:

Airedale NHS Trust v Bland  [1993] 1 All ER 821

Names of Parties  Year Reported  Volume  Law Report Abbrev.  Page

This means the case of Airedale NHS Trust v Bland was reported (published) in the All England Law Reports, 1993, volume 1, starting at page 821. Not all cases are published. Only cases which raise an important point of law will be reported.

Neutral citations

From 2001 onwards, neutral citations have been assigned by the Courts to help identify the huge number of cases which are made available online. A neutral citation might look like this:

Convery v The Irish News Ltd  [2008] NICA  14

Names of Parties  Year heard  Court Abbrev.  Case no. (for that year)

This means that Convery v Irish News Ltd was the 14th case heard in 2008 by the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal. Neutral citations may also include an abbreviation for the court division, e.g. Douglas v Hello! Ltd [2003] EWCA Civ 139.

Finding law reports

Library databases are the best place to find cases. Use:

- LexisLibrary for cases from England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.
- Westlaw UK for cases from England, Wales and Scotland.

Most of the major law reporting series are also available in print in the Library Journals collection. Search the library catalogue to find the location and shelf number.

If an individual case is on your reading list and not available elsewhere, your law subject librarian may have arranged for the case to be scanned and added to your reading list in Blackboard Learn. Ask the law subject librarians for more help with scanned material.

Don’t forget that textbooks and casebooks often provide useful summaries of the most relevant cases on a topic and are an excellent place to start.
Law Journals

Why do I need to use articles or other non-textbook sources?
Legal information changes constantly. Using journal articles, which are published more frequently than textbooks, will help you produce an up to date and well researched assignment.

How do I know I am looking for a journal reference and not a book?
Journal references generally follow a standard format. Here is an example:

A Ashworth, ‘Ignorance of the Criminal Law, and Duties to Avoid it’ (2011) 74 MLR 1

This article was written by A Ashworth (the author) and is about ignorance of the law as a criminal defence (the article title). You can find it in the 2011 volume of a journal called Modern Law Review (MLR). The volume number is 74 and the article begins at page 1.

It is important to cite journal references correctly in your own work (see p11).

How can I find a journal reference I have been given by my lecturer?
- Confirm the full journal title using the Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations (see p10).
- See if the journal title is available online using the Electronic Journals listing.
- If not online, check the library catalogue for the print journal.
- If a journal article is not available in print or online AND is part of your weekly reading, a copy may have been scanned to your online reading list.

How can I find relevant articles on a legal topic?
USearch is a good place to begin if you want to find a few journal articles to get your research started.

Note: it does not contain case law, legislation or many of the journals contained in Westlaw UK and LexisLibrary.

For detailed legal research, we recommend the following databases:
- Westlaw UK is the best database to use for journal searches. It provides access to around 100 full-text journals but also indexes over 800 UK, Irish and European journals. If you cannot get the journal full-text directly from Westlaw or any legal database, note the reference and check the Electronic Journals listing to see if the journal is available online from another source.
- LexisLibrary provides access to around 120+ full-text journals.
- HeinOnline is a valuable journals archive with over 700+ full-text titles and is especially useful for international law and human rights law.

What if I can't get an article or case from Ulster print or electronic resources?
Use the Document Delivery service to request material not available from Library sources. For more details go to library.ulster.ac.uk/documentdelivery
Law Databases

Before you start using databases

- Read a recommended legal textbook first so that you are familiar with the correct legal terminology, key cases and legislation.
- Less is more. Don't put too much in the search boxes to start with.
- Legal references may be inaccurate. Think laterally and check the citation!

Key Legal Databases

LexisLibrary
- Best for
  Cases (Eng & Wales, Scotland and Ni), Irish cases, legislation (UK Westminster) and commentary sources.
- When starting
  Choose the relevant section on the menu bar (e.g. Cases, Legislation, Journals etc.) for better search options.
- Too many hits?
  When case searching use the Summary search box to restrict your search to keywords appearing in the catchwords or headnote. Use the Results column on the left to narrow your search by publication type, topic and more. You can also use ‘Search within results’ to add more search terms.
- Looking for Northern Ireland cases?
  Always use LexisLibrary for reported and unreported Northern Ireland judgments.
- International sources
  Use International Cases, Legislation or Journals’ links/options on main search pages or use the Sources tab and browse by country to access international materials.
- Commentary sources
  LexisLibrary has an extensive range of major practitioner works, such as Wylie’s Irish Land Law, Valentine: All Laws of Northern Ireland, Halsbury’s Laws of England and Harvey on Industrial Relations and Employment Law.

Westlaw UK
- Best for
  Journal articles, cases (Eng & Wales, Scotland), legislation (UK Westminster) and NI legislation, 1991 onwards
- When starting
  Choose the relevant section on the menu bar (e.g. Cases, Legislation, Journals etc.) for better search options.
- Too many hits?
  Use the filters for topic, jurisdiction, document type, or ‘Search within the results’.
- Be sure to use the Analysis section
  It will tell you the judicial history of a case, including if it has been overruled by a higher court, any journals relevant to a case and much more. For legislation, you must open individual sections to find the Analysis option.
- International materials
  Use the Services menu at the top to access International Materials.

Justis
- Best for
  Irish Reports, UK legislation as enacted, including full text of legislation no longer in force.
- Enter title details correctly
  Check the full title of the legislation in a reliable textbook – don’t use colloquial titles. For example to find Deasy’s Act you would search for the Landlord and Tenant Law Amendment (Ireland) Act 1860.

HeinOnline
- Best for
  International law journals
- Archive content
  Begins with the earliest volume of the journal but may not have the most recent content.
### Case Law e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>LexisLibrary</th>
<th>Westlaw UK</th>
<th>HeinOnline</th>
<th>Justis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law Reports (AC,QB, Ch, Fam)</td>
<td>1865 -</td>
<td>1865 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Law Reports (NI)</td>
<td>1945 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Law Reports (WLR)</td>
<td>1953 -</td>
<td>1953 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All England Reports (All ER)</td>
<td>1558 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Court Reports (ECR)</td>
<td>1960 -</td>
<td>1951 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>European Human Rights Reports (EHRR)</td>
<td>1979 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish Reports (IR)</td>
<td>1919 -</td>
<td></td>
<td>1806 - 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Reports (ER)</td>
<td>1220 - 1865</td>
<td>1220 - 1865</td>
<td>1290 - 1865</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Legislation e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>LexisLibrary</th>
<th>Westlaw UK</th>
<th>HeinOnline</th>
<th>Justis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK Statutes and Statutory Instruments</td>
<td>1266 - in force</td>
<td>1267 - in force</td>
<td>1235 - as enacted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Legislation</td>
<td>1991 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Full-text Journals e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>LexisLibrary</th>
<th>Westlaw UK</th>
<th>HeinOnline</th>
<th>Justis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conveyancer &amp; Property Lawyer (Conv)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1986 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminal Law Review (Crim LR)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1986 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>European Law Review (EL Rev)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1986 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International Journal of Transitional Justice (IJTJ)</td>
<td>2007 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Law Quarterly Review (LQR)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1986 -</td>
<td>1885 - 1947</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Modern Law Review (MLR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1937 - 2013</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New Law Journal (NLJ)</td>
<td>1987 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly (NILQ)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1936 - 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Law (PL)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1986 -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International journals</td>
<td>700+</td>
<td>700+</td>
<td>700+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Many other journals and law reports are available from these and other sources. Please ask your Subject Librarian for more information.
Northern Ireland Legal Sources

Northern Ireland’s complex constitutional background means that it has developed its own body of legislation and case law from a variety of sources. The following sections detail the major sources of Northern Ireland law with which you need to be familiar.

Books

Most legal textbooks reflect the law in England and Wales but there are specific subject areas where Northern Ireland law is different. Some introductory Northern Ireland texts include: Dickson - Law in Northern Ireland; White - Northern Ireland Social Work Law; Sturgeon - An Introduction to Business Law in Northern Ireland and Turner, Quinn & Murphy - Law of Property in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Legislation

In addition to legislation passed by the UK Parliament at Westminster (see p4), Northern Ireland has its own primary and secondary legislation, the Northern Ireland Statutes and Northern Ireland Statutory Rules (called Statutory Rules and Orders until 1972).

Northern Ireland Statutes may come from the following legislative bodies:

- Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont 1921-1972
e.g. Electoral Law Act (NI) 1962 c. 14
- Measures passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly 1974
e.g. National Insurance Measure (Northern Ireland) 1974 c. 4
- Acts from the various Northern Ireland Assemblies 2000 -
e.g. Budget Act (Northern Ireland) 2002 c. 3
e.g. Dogs (NI) Order 1983 S.I. No. 764 (N.I. 8)

Handy tip: If the words “Northern Ireland” or “NI” appear BEFORE the word “Act” in the title, the legislation originated at Westminster. If they occur AFTER, it was passed by Stormont.
Warning! Northern Ireland legislation is not fully covered in Library databases.

Electronic resources

- **Westlaw UK** covers Northern Ireland legislation from 1991 onwards.
  See legislation.gov.uk for pre-1991 coverage.
- **Legislation.gov.uk**, the official government website, is an excellent, free, online source for both updated and originally enacted Northern Ireland legislation.
- **Valentine: All Laws of Northern Ireland** is available from Commentary sources in Lexis Library and contains annotated legislation (both primary and secondary) from 1921 onwards that wholly or mainly relates to Northern Ireland.

Print resources

- **Statutes Revised Northern Ireland 2nd ed.** comprises the legislation in force on March 1981, with amendments listed separately in Cumulative Supplements.
  Also available on BAILII website without the updating supplements.
- **Northern Ireland Statutes** (as enacted) are available from 1921 onwards.
  A Chronological Table of the Statutes (by year) and Index to the Statutes Northern Ireland (by subject) help you find relevant Acts.
- **Halsbury’s Statutes of England and Wales.** Volume 31 contains revised legislation wholly or primarily relating to Northern Ireland.
- **Northern Ireland Statutory Rules** from 1974 onwards.
  A Chronological Table of Statutory Rules (by year) and Index to the Statutory Rules and Orders of Northern Ireland (by subject) help you find relevant Rules.

Northern Ireland Case Law

The two main law reporting series for Northern Ireland are the **Northern Ireland Law Reports** and the **Northern Ireland Judgments Bulletin**.

Finding Northern Ireland cases

- **LexisLibrary** is the best database for NI cases and covers Northern Ireland Law Reports since 1945 and unreported judgments since 1980.
- **BAILII**, a free website, contains selected NI cases ranging from the Crown Court to the Supreme Court from 1998 onwards, as well as selected tribunal decisions.
- The **Judiciary NI** website has selected recent Crown Court, High Court and Appeal Cases.
- The **Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal Northern Ireland** website provides access to many tribunal decisions.
- The print versions of the **Northern Ireland Law Reports** and the **Northern Ireland Judgments Bulletin** are available in the Journals section in the library and they are accompanied by an **Index to Northern Ireland Cases 1921-1997** which provides a party names and subject index.

Northern Ireland Journals

Northern Ireland produces few specific journals. The most useful include **Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly, Folio: Northern Ireland Conveyancing and Land Law Journal** and **The Writ**. Journal articles about Northern Ireland legal issues can also be found in many of the other print and online journals available from the Library. You can search for them using Westlaw UK’s Journals search option.

European Legal Sources

European Union (EU) legislation such as treaties and directives may affect the UK. You may also need to find case law from the European Court of Justice (European Union) and the European Court of Human Rights (Council of Europe).

The following library databases are best for EU and ECHR material:

- **LexisLibrary** for EU legislation and cases, ECHR cases.
- **Westlaw UK** for EU legislation and cases, ECHR cases.
Recommended Web Links

Library Law Guide
guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/law

- These web pages provide even more information about legal resources, including other useful databases, help with citing legal references, as well as extensive web inks covering a broad range of legal topics.

Law Blog
library.ulster.ac.uk/info/blogs.php

- Up to date information from your librarians on new resources, help with assignments and reading, search tips and advice. Comments are very welcome.

Citing and Referencing Help

- Oxford Style (OSCOLA): law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/publications/oscola
- OSCOLA FAQs: law.ox.ac.uk/oscola-faqs
- Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations: legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk
- Cardiff University OSCOLA tutorial: ilrb.cf.ac.uk/citingreferences/oscola/tutorial

Best for Case Law

- BAILII: bailii.org (contains links to UK and other case law sources)
- Judiciary N: judiciary-ni.gov.uk
- European Court of Justice: curia.europa.eu
- European Court of Human Rights: echr.coe.int
- Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal (NI): employmenttribunalsni.co.uk

Best for Legislation

- Legislation.gov.uk: legislation.gov.uk/ (especially for NI legislation)
- Eur-Lex (Portal to EU Law): eur-lex.europa.eu

Best for Journals

- SSRN Social Science Research Network: ssrn.com
- Google Scholar: scholar.google.co.uk (limited legal sources covered)

For more high quality legal websites try

- Lawlinks: kent.ac.uk/lawlinks
- LawBore: lawbore.net

These and many more recommended sites can be found in the Library Law Guide: guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/law (see Legal Subjects)
Plagiarism and Referencing for Law Students

Correct use of a standard referencing system is essential in producing an essay, report or thesis. Whenever you use any words, ideas or information from any source in your work, you MUST reference those sources. If you use the exact words of an author, if you paraphrase their words or if you summarise their ideas, you must provide a complete reference. Accurate and consistent referencing is the main way to avoid being accused of cheating through improperly copying other people’s work.

Learn to reference fully and properly otherwise you may breach the University’s stringent PLAGIARISM policy. See: ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/Policies.html

The Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA) system of referencing is the preferred style used by the University’s Law School. It should be used for referencing legal materials such as law reports (cases), legislation (Acts of Parliament), as well as the books, journal articles and websites, which you have used in your research.

What does this mean for you?

Legal referencing is very detailed and precise. Every bracket – round and square - means something; every comma, full stop or capital letter matters. You may lose valuable marks through incomplete or inaccurate referencing.

For extensive examples of how to create an accurate legal reference, go to the FULL and DETAILED OXFORD (OSCOLA) guide at: law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/publications/oscola

Print copies of the guide are available in the Library - check the Library catalogue for details - and a basic introduction to OSCOLA is printed overleaf.

The Library offers workshops on OSCOLA referencing during the year and help with citation and referencing (including other styles) is available from the Library subject team. See: guides.library.ulster.ac.uk/home

Finally...

It is important that you develop effective legal research skills during the course of your studies. This guide will help you get started. Make sure you also attend the Library’s legal information skills sessions arranged for you by your lecturer. This will enable you to make the most of the Library’s legal resources.

We know that legal information can sometimes be hard to track down, so ALWAYS ask for help from the librarians when you need it.
Introduction to OSCOLA Referencing

Primary Sources

General note: Do not use full stops in abbreviations. End footnotes with a full stop.

Cases

Note: Give party names in italics. For cases pre-2001, cite the most authoritative report series, followed by the court abbreviation in brackets. From 2001, give the neutral citation first, then cite the most authoritative report series. Separate the two citations with a comma. See pp17-18 of the full OSCOLA Guide for more information on authority of law reports.

•  Donoghue v Stevenson [1932] AC 562 (HL)
•  Robinson v Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Others [2002] UKHL 32, [2002] NI 390
•  R v Matthews [2003] EWCA Crim 192, [2003] 2 Cr App R 30

Pinpoints: give paragraph number(s) in square brackets at the end of the citation. If the judgment has no paragraph numbers, give the page number(s) pinpoint after the court.

•  Thoburn v Sunderland City Council [2002] EWHC 195 (Admin), [2003] QB 151 [57]-[59]
•  Airedale NHS Trust v Bland [1993] AC 789 (HL) 790-791

European Court of Human Rights

•  Dudgeon v United Kingdom (1982) 4 EHRR 149
•  Jordan v UK App no 24746/94 (ECHR, 4 May 2001)

Statutes and Orders in Councils

•  Human Rights Act 1998, s 15(1)(b)
•  Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, art 12(3)

Secondary Sources

General note: Authors’ names in footnotes appear as shown below. In bibliographies, give the surname followed by the initial(s). Pinpoints appear after the date (books) or after the start page of journal articles (separated with a comma).

Books and eBooks

•  Mohamed Ramjohn, Beginning Equity and Trusts (Routledge 2013)
•  B Dickson, The Law in Northern Ireland (3rd edn, Hart 2018) 112

Contributions to edited books


Encyclopedia

•  Halsbury’s Laws (5th edn, 2010) vol 57, para 53

Journal Articles (including articles from library databases)

•  J Steyn, ‘Pepper v Hart; A Re-examination’ (2001) 21 OJLS 59, 61

Websites and blogs

•  Lindsay Fergus, ‘Inside Northern Ireland’s Family Courts’ (thedetail, 14 April 2016) <www.thedetail.tv/articles/inside-northern-ireland-s-family-courts> accessed 12 June 2017

These are only a few basic examples. For more information, including citing EU legislation and cases, see the full OSCOLA guide. It is available for download from: www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/publications/oscola