



INSTITUTE OF PRISON LAW

FOUNDED IN 2006

CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY IN PRISON LAW: 2025

This Distance Learning Course is ideal for anyone with a personal, professional or academic interest in prisons in England and Wales – including prisoners themselves.

The course does not require a legal background, no prior prison law knowledge is required but a good standard of education (Level 2 English) is advised. The course has been devised, written and updated by expert prison lawyers, full terms and conditions of the course applicable to all students are at prisons.org.uk/terms-conditions and registration on the course by payment of the course fee explicitly confirms acceptance of each and all of those terms and conditions without exception.

Full details of the course and its accreditation history are shown on prisonlaw.org.uk the course is fully updated to 2025.

The course consists of eight self-contained Modules and, once registered on the course, students receive the eight modular full texts and the eight modular examinations. These are all delivered by email once registration is confirmed and as research is an important part of the law students need to keep abreast of the latest prison law and policy changes – we make this easy as registration includes **one year complimentary Enhanced Access** to The Prison Oracle website - prisonoracle.com - which is constantly updated as new updates are issued.

On average, each Module takes 10-15 hours study and ends with a multiple choice examination which must be submitted for marking by email to the address shown at the end of the Module.

Successful completion of the Course leads to the **Certificate of Competency in Prison Law** and allows the Certificate holder to display the Institute's 'Prison Law Qualified' logo on stationary and advertising. **The course must be completed within 12 months of the registrations date.**

The Certificate is gained by successful completion of the eight modular examinations, each with a minimum 80% pass mark; if a student obtains less than 80% in a module they have the choice of resitting it (£29.99 plus VAT) or moving on to the next module – in which case they will be told which questions they answered incorrectly and while they can then continue the course they will **not** be awarded the Certificate or be able to display the logo.

FEES:

The Course Fee for a member of the public is £999 + VAT (£1198.80)

The Course Fee for someone in prison/on probation is £499 + VAT (£598.80) a 50% discount thanks to a bursary from a benefactor.

Course Fees include enrolment/registration, all modular texts and examinations, marking fees (except exam resits), one year complimentary Enhanced Access to prisonoracle.com and, **while stock lasts**, early bird (first come first served) free copies of the latest editions of **The Prisons Handbook** *the definitive annual guide to the penal system of England and Wales* and **The Prison Law Index** - this is only **while stocks last**, these books are wholly complimentary and are **not** part of the course. The course must be purchased as a single entity, in advance of dispatch and we cannot offer a pay-as-you-learn option.

COURSE UPDATE BY: Simon Creighton, Solicitor. Author: **Parole Board Hearings: Law and Practice** (Legal Action Group); **Prisoners: Law & Practice** (Legal Action Group); **Prisoners and the Law** (Tottel); **Indeterminate Sentences** (POUK).

COURSE DIRECTOR: THANUSAK INTHARAT, BA(Hons), MA(Dist), MBA(Dist). FRSA.

INSTITUTE DIRECTOR: Mark Leech FRSA.

THE COURSE

MODULE 1

Unit 1: A short history of imprisonment – from the middle ages to the current day

Unit 2: The Statutory and Regulatory Framework – Acts, Rules, Orders, Instructions....

The Prison Act 1952.

The Prison Rules - The Legal Status.

Prison Service Instructions and Orders and Policy Frameworks

The Ministry of Justice and the Prison and Probation Service

Contracted out prisons

Private escorts

The contract document

Unit 3: The Prison Estate and Population – What prisons we have, public and private, male, female, young offenders and who is detained in them.

The Structure of the Prison System

The adult prison system

Reception/Local prisons

Men's prisons

High security prisons

Special security units and high security units

Close supervision centres

Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder Units

PIPE units

Category B training prisons

Category C prisons

Category D/open prisons

Resettlement prisons

Vulnerable Prisoners' Units

Women's prisons

Mother and Baby Units

Protected Witness Units

Prison Staff

"The role"

Eligibility Requirements:

Prison Management

HMPPS

HMPPS Key Performance targets:

Independent Monitoring Boards

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

The Probation Service

Unit 4: Funding: How to obtain funding for Prison Law work today – an expert view from a practicing prison lawyer on the how to obtain funding for prison law work – and what mistakes to avoid.

Unit 5: Overview of Prisoners' Rights 2024; Access to law; Right to life; Prevention and investigation of prison deaths; Liberty and Release Date calculations; Recall; Prison Offences and Discipline; Regime, Categorization and Allocation; Incentives and Privileges; Contact with the outside world, Letters, Visits and Phone Calls; Contact with Journalists; Health; Religion; Race and Equality.

Unit 6: Requests & Complaints

Requests

Complaints

Non-Confidential Complaints

Allocation of the complaint

Response to the complaint

Reserved Subjects

Complaints about members of staff.

Other Avenues of Complaint.

Independent Monitoring Board

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration.

MODULE 2

Unit 1 – Sentence Planning & OaSys

Sentence Planning

OASys: How does it work?

Risk classification

Targeting needs
Responsivity
Treatment method
Programme integrity
Community-based programmes
An effective risk needs assessment
What is OASys in a Nutshell?
Benefits of OASys
OASys: Scoring.
How does OASys arrive at its scores?
Section 1: Offending information
Section 2: Analysis of offences
Section 3: Accommodation
Section 4: Education, training and employability
Section 5: Financial management and income
Section 6: Relationships
Section 7: Lifestyle and associates
Section 8: Drug misuse
Section 9: Alcohol misuse
Section 10: Emotional wellbeing
Section 11: Thinking and behaviour
Section 12: Attitudes
Section 13: Health and other considerations
Self-assessment
Who has an OASys Assessment – and when?

Unit 2 – Categorisation & Allocation

Allocation
Categorisation
What are the security categories and what do they represent?
Category A
Category B
Category C
Category D
Restricted
Open
Closed
Category A Prisoners
Definition of Category A
Definition of Restricted Status
Criteria Justifying Suitability
Escape Risk Classification
Standard Escape Risk.
High Escape Risk:
Exceptional Escape Risk:
Legal Background
Identification & Reporting in of Potential Category A prisoners.
Reviews of Provisional Category A and Restricted Status Prisoners
Reviews Leading Up to Conviction and Sentence
Escape Risk Classification
First Formal Review
First Formal Review Preparation
Completion of the First Formal Review
Reviews of Confirmed Category A and Restricted Status Prisoners
Oral Hearings
Timings of Annual Reviews
Annual Review Procedures
Preparing the Reports
Disclosure of the Reports
Local Advisory Panel Consideration
Initial Category A Team Consideration
Annual Review Decisions by the Category A Team
Referral of Annual Reviews to the Director of High Security
Decisions from the Director of High Security
Downgrading from Category A or Restricted Status

Unit 3 – Incentives and Privileges

General – policy framework 2024
Basic Theory: Good behaviour v poor behaviour.
Local incentive arrangements
Three levels: basic, standard and enhanced.
Devising local IEP Schemes

Key earnable privileges
Privilege levels
Basic Level
Standard Level
Enhanced Level
Further details of key earnable privileges
Access to private cash
Extra and improved visits
Higher rates of pay
In-cell television
Wearing own clothes
Time out of cell
Additional Privileges
Games Consoles and Games
Management and operation of local IEP Schemes
Criteria for good behaviour and performance
Reviews
Prisoners' in denial of their offence
Double jeopardy
Review Boards
Retention of privilege level on transfer
Special groups of prisoners
Unconvicted prisoners
Immigration detainees
Foreign national prisoners
Prisoners with disabilities/particular needs/older prisoners
Prisoners in Segregation Units
Safer Custody
Prisoners who are at risk of suicide or self-harm
Violent behaviour
Monitoring

Unit 4 – Prison Work & Pay

Prison work
Prison Pay
Rates of Pay
General
Rate of pay for unemployed prisoners
Minimum Employed Rate for All Prisoners
Standard Rates of Pay
Piecework
Higher Rates of Pay
Prisoners who are Released on Temporary Licence and those on 'Working Out' Schemes
Tax and National Insurance Thresholds
Other liabilities
Deductions
Prisoners who are Short-Term Sick
Prisoners who are Long-Term Sick, or of Retirement Age
Pregnant Women and Mothers caring for Babies
Prisoners attending Outside Hospital
Transfers
In-Cell work
Management of the Prisoners' Pay/Earnings Budget
National Minimum Wage
Unemployment pay
Minimum
Employed rate
Minimum employed rate
Short-term sickness
Long-term sickness and retirement
Maternity leave or caring full-time for children
Outside hospital allowance

MODULE 3.

Unit 1: Child Prisoners & Young Offenders

Basic Principles:
Prison Service Steps in its Young Person Policy
Safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and young people
Promoting and maintaining good behaviour

Managing challenging behaviour
 Dealing with complaints and investigations
 Healthcare
 Substance misuse
 Staff selection, process and training
 Training
 Effective management and support of staff
 Reception into custody and initial assessment
 Induction and further assessment
 Sentence management
 The personal officer or caseworker
 Involvement of the family, supervising officer and outside agencies
 Communications
 Provision of a full, purposeful and active day
 Learning and skills
 Offending behaviour programmes
 Physical education
 Resettlement
 Providing for unsentenced young people
 The Howard League: Judicial Review. The Children Act 1989
 The Children Act 2004
 Sentences & Places of Detention

Unit 2: Women Prisoners

Introduction – Women prisoners policy framework
 Some Statistical and Research Information about Women Prisoners
 Development of the Gender Specific Standards
 Role of HMPS Women and Young People's Group
 Women's prisons

- Pre-custody
- Reception and First Night Procedures
 Induction, Resolving Urgent Issues
- Health: Physical Health, Mental Health, Substance Misuse
- Offender Management, Offender Supervision, Personal Officer Schemes, Allocation
- Decisions and Through the Gate Support
- Supporting Women at Risk of Self-harm
- Day-to-Day living:
 - Incentives and Earned Privileges
 - PE
 - Property and Clothing
 - Hygiene
 - Environment
 - Diet
 - Association Activities
 - Religion and Faith
 - Prison Shop
 - Complaints
- Managing Order in Women's Prisons: Promoting Pro-Social Behaviour, Adjudications and Segregation
- The Pathways to Resettlement
 - Accommodation
 - Education, training and employment
 - Health and Detoxification
 - Drugs and alcohol
 - Finance, benefit and debt
 - Children and families
 - Attitudes, thinking and behaviour
 - Supporting women who have been abused, raped or who have experienced domestic violence
 - Supporting women who have been involved in prostitution
 - Young Women Prisoners
- Older Women Prisoners
- Women Foreign Nations and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
- Women Prisoners with Disabilities
- Indeterminate/ Life Sentence Women Prisoners
- Mother and Baby Units
- Management Issues
- Training of Staff and Volunteers
- Security in Women's Prisons
- *Lifers*
- Categorisation.
- Health Care.
- Pregnancy

Unit 3: Mother and Baby Units

Unit 4: Mental Health and the Prison Service

Unit 5: Remand\Civil\FN prisoners\Immigration Detainees

Unit 6: Equality & Discrimination

MODULE 4.

- 1 Maintaining order. Intelligence, segregation, and force. Application to the private sector.
- 2 Adjudications. Discipline manual, Article 6 requirements. Procedural fairness. Independent adjudicators.

MODULE 5.

- 1 Offending behaviour work, and prison education and courses. SOTP, ETS, Think First, CALM, Alcohol awareness, Domestic violence.
- 2 CCRC.
- 3 Communications; Letters, visits, telephone calls, and computers. Access to the media.
- 3 Racism, discrimination and religious rights.

MODULE 6.

- 1 Release regimes, and release date calculation. Tags, HDC, temporary licence. Intermittent imprisonment – Covid-19.
- 2 Licence. Issues re recall and re-offending whilst at risk.
- 3 The parole system and reconsideration mechanism 2019.
- 4 Risk assessment, denial, licence and recall. Recall procedure and hearings.

MODULE 7

- 1 Life imprisonment.
- 2 The lifer panels. Representations, procedure and evidence.
- 3 Case studies/role play; lifer panel

MODULE 8

- 1 Death in custody. Prevention. Procedures; ACCT (suicide and self harm). Article 2 and investigations. Disclosure and openness.
- 2 Inquests.
- 3 Actions for death, assault, false imprisonment, misfeasance, and negligence.

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Course Enrolment Form is on the next page.

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY IN PRISON LAW: 2025
DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE: ENROLMENT FORM

I WISH TO ENROL ON THE ABOVE COURSE: Please PRINT Throughout

NAME: _____

TEL: _____ **Mobile TEL:** _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ **POST CODE:** _____

Email address: _____

Course Modules are downloaded (public) or sent electronically as PDF files (HMPPS) and need to be printed off or accessed online by a pdf reader. HMPPS please print below the email address for the delivery of these modules (if viewing offline you will need to have Adobe Reader on your device – which you can download free from www.adobe.com)

Email address for course materials:

1. Application confirms the named student's specific acceptance of the full terms and conditions - <https://prisons.org.uk/terms-conditions/>
2. The Certificate is gained by min 80% pass in all Examinations within 12 months of enrolment
3. Modular Course materials must not be copied to any third party
4. All fees must be paid in advance and are non-refundable.
5. Students in Custody need permission from an appropriate authority (ie Head of Learning and Skills) confirming course enrolment approval (PSI 32/2012 (Wales) and E&LS PF (England))

Inmate Registration: I confirm the inmate named below is authorized to register.

Inmate Name: _____ **Prison Number** _____

Establishment: _____

Your Name _____ **HMPPS Position and email:**

_____ @ _____

I am (or ordering for) the above Inmate: Price £499+VAT (£598.80)

I am a member of the public: Price £999+VAT (£1198.80)

PAYMENTS CAN ONLY BE MADE ONLINE – we do not accept cheques.

Make payment securely at <https://prisons.org.uk/prison-law>

Upload the email payment receipt and this form at prisons.org.uk/contact

Signed _____ Dated: _____

IPL, PRISONS ORG UK. PO Box 679, Bury. BL8 9RU.

Questions or Queries? Email directors.office@prisons.org.uk