

Topics Covered in the Open Access Legislative Drafting Courses

LGST 551 Introduction to Legislative Drafting

Introduction to Legislative Drafting

Module 1 - The Basics: Preview

Module 1: Section 1 – What is Legislative Drafting All About?

1. Drafting and legislative counsel.

- What is legislative drafting?
- Why is legislative drafting important?
- Who should draft legislation?
- What are the advantages of a centralised drafting office?
- What are the drawbacks of a centralised drafting office?
- How is legislative drafting viewed by users of legislation?
- Principles of “traditional” legislative drafting.
- What are the responsibilities of legislative counsel?
- How do we fulfil these responsibilities?

2. Legislative expression.

- To whom should legislation be addressed?
- What should be our aims as legislative counsel?
- Are there any constraints on the legislative counsel?
- How does legislative expression compare with other forms of communication?
- What are the differences between legislative and non-legislative commands?
- What more is needed to create legislative prohibitions?
- How should we choose the right expression?
- What work practices will facilitate drafting?

Review.

Module 1: Section 2 – What is Legislation?

1. Types of legislation

- What is legislation?
- What forms does primary legislation take?

- Which bodies have power to make subsidiary legislation?
 - What forms does subsidiary legislation take?
2. Classification of primary legislation (bill and acts).
 3. Structure and format of bills and acts.
 - What features appear in acts?
 - What features appear only in bills?
 4. Conventional arrangement of bills and acts.

Review.

Module 1: Section 3 - Why do we Draft as we do in Parliamentary Systems?

1. Historical development of legislative drafting.
 - Where did drafting begin?
 - How did drafting develop in the 19th Century?
 - How did drafting develop in the 20th Century?
2. Theoretical foundations of this form of drafting.
 - What were the premises of Coode's approach?
 - What were Coode's components of a legislative sentence?
 - What were Coode's guidelines for forming sentences?
 - How have later legislative counsel built on Coode's approach?
3. What are the principal characteristics of this form of drafting?
4. Drafting objectives.
 - How should drafting be oriented in the 21st Century?
 - What do users expect from legal documents?
 - How can we meet these expectations? (Seven Cs of Legislative Drafting.)
 - Are the Seven Cs equally important?
 - How can we achieve the Seven Cs? (Seven Basic Drafting Practices.)

Review.

Module 2: Writing Legislative Sentences.

Module 2: Section 1 – What do we need to know about grammar?

1. Why is grammar important for the drafting?

2. [What grammatical terms do we need to know?](#)
3. [What common grammatical mistakes should we watch for?](#)
 - [Verb in a predicate is missing or incomplete.](#)
 - [Verb does not agree with its subject in number.](#)
 - [Pronoun is vague or ambiguous or missing.](#)
 - [Modifier is misplaced or ambiguous.](#)
 - [Preposition is incorrect or missing.](#)
 - [Article \(definite or indefinite\) is wrong or missing.](#)
 - [Punctuation is incorrect.](#)

[Review.](#)

- [Appendix I – grammar checklist.](#)
- [Appendix II – list of grammatical terms and usage.](#)
- [A. Some basic terms.](#)
- [B. Terms used for sentences.](#)
- [C. Terms used for nouns.](#)
- [D. Terms used for verbs.](#)
- [E. Terms used for modifiers.](#)
- [F. Miscellaneous terms.](#)

[Module 2: Section 2 – What are the basics of writing legislative sentences?](#)

1. [Starting to write.](#)
 - [How should we begin the process of writing a legislative sentence?](#)
 - [Are there any guidelines to help you get started?](#)
2. [Basic components of legislative sentences.](#)
 - [What are the basic components of a legislative sentence?](#)
 - [How should we decide on the components of a legislative sentence?](#)
3. [Types of legislative sentences.](#)
 - [How do legislative counsel write particular kinds of sentences?](#)
 - [Are there different ways to express the same provision?](#)

[Review.](#)

[Module 2: Section 3 - How do we put together the components of legislative sentences?](#)

1. [Principal subject.](#)

- How do we select the grammatical subject of the sentence?
- How do we decide which legal person is to be the grammatical subject?
- How should the principal subject be described?
- How do we choose the subject of a declaratory sentence?

2. Principal Predicate.

- How do we determine the principal predicate?
- How should we write the principal predicate?
- How should we select the appropriate verb for the principal predicate?
- Is an auxiliary required in every principal predicate?
- How do we choose the appropriate auxiliary?

3. Predicate modifiers.

- How should we particularise predicates?
- How should we write context clauses?

Review.

Module 2: Section 4 – How do we punctuate and capitalise legislation?

1. Punctuation.

- What is the function of punctuation in legislation?
- Do legislative counsel use punctuation differently from other writers?
- How should we approach the punctuation of legislation?

2. Capitalisation.

- When do we use capital letters?
- When should we not use capital letters?

Review.

Module 2: Section 5 - What can go wrong in legislative expression?

1. Subjects.

- Imprecise linking of several subjects.
- Ambiguous modifiers of subjects.
- Imprecise use of pronouns.

2. Verbs.

- Imprecise linking of several verbs.
- Ambiguous verb modifiers.
- Ambiguous participles.

3. Modifiers.

- Defective sentence modification.
- Ambiguous prepositions.
- Uncertain conjunctions.

Review.

LGST 553 Legislative Structure, Style and Limits

Legislative Structure, Style and Limits.

Module 1: Section 1 – How should we structure a legislative text?

1. General considerations.

- Why is structuring important?
- What are the basic characteristics of structuring?
- What guidelines should we follow in structuring legislation?

2. Drafting sections.

- How should we approach individual sections?
- How can we tell which matters should be covered by the same section?
- How long should a section be?
- How should the section note be selected?

3. Drafting Sentences in Sections.

- How long should a sentence in a section be?
- What can be done to shorten sentences

4. Paragraphing.

- How can paragraphing help?
- When might paragraphing be used?
- What factors should be borne in mind when drafting paragraphs?
- What can go wrong with paragraphs?
- How can we find flaws in paragraphing?

5. Numbering.

- How should legislative provisions be numbered?
- How should we number new provisions inserted into existing ones?

6. Arranging and linking sentences in a section.

- How should sentences in a section be arranged?
- When should sentences in a section be linked?
- How should sentences in a section be linked?
- Should we use a proviso as a linking device?
- What alternatives to the proviso should be used?
- Can we dispense with linking words between sentences?

7. Linking sections.

- What is different about linking sections?
- How can sections be linked?
- How should cross-references be drafted?

8. Incorporation by reference.

- When can we incorporate provisions from one part of a text to another?
- When can we incorporate provisions from other legislation?
- Can provisions be incorporated from the legislation of another jurisdiction?

9. Grouping sections.

- When should we have formal groupings of sections?
- What groupings are conventionally used?
- When might groupings be of particular value?
- When should the decision be made about grouping sections?
- What should be borne in mind in grouping sections?
- How should group headings be expressed?

Review.

Module 1: Section 2 - How should we organise a legislative text?

1. General considerations.

- Why prepare an outline before composing the detailed provisions?
- What advantages does an outline provide?
- How final is an outline?

2. Preparing an outline.

- What do we need to start?
- How do we arrive at suitable groupings?
- How do we allocate individual items to their appropriate group?
- How do we order the items in the groups, and the groups themselves?
- What should the outline look like when it is completed?

3. Factors influencing an outline for a bill.

- How are formal and technical provisions arranged?
- How are provisions grouped together?
- How is subsidiary legislation used?
- How are amending acts treated?
- How are distinct subject matters dealt with?

Review.

Module 2: Section 1 - How can we develop good legislative style?

1. General considerations.

- What do we mean by good legislative style?
- How do we decide what is good style?
- How are style standards set for legislative counsel?
- Why is style important?
- What style practices get in the way of communication?
- What is the aim of the plain language style?

2. Developing good legislative style.

- How can we improve communication?
- How can we improve clarity?
- How can we make legislation more readable?
- How can we make legislation more concise?
- How can we make legislation more complete?
- How can we make legislation more consistent?
- How can we make legislation certain?

3. Gender-neutral drafting.

- How can we draft in gender-neutral terms?

4. Some additional matters of style.

- Can we split infinitives?
- Can we end a sentence with a preposition?

- Can we begin a sentence with “And” or “But”?

Review.

Appendix I – Simple words and expressions.

Appendix II – Commonly confused words.

Module 3: Working within limits.

Module 3: Section 1 - How do we work with interpretive approaches and rules?

1. General considerations.

- What do we mean by “interpretive approaches and rules”?
- How should legislative counsel look at interpretive approaches and rules?
- How should legislative counsel take account of interpretive approaches and rules?
- What questions of interpretation arise most commonly?

2. Judicial approaches to interpretation.

- How do judicial approaches affect drafting?
- How can we anticipate judicial approaches?

3. Interpretive assumptions and presumptions.

- What are the principal linguistic assumptions?
- What are the principal presumptions of legislative intent?

4. Aids to interpretation.

- What intrinsic aids may be used?
- What extrinsic aids may be used?

5. Conclusion.

Review.

Module 3: Section 2 - How do we work with Interpretation Acts?

1. Importance of Interpretation Acts.

- Why are Interpretation Acts important to legislative counsel?
- How are the benefits of Interpretation Acts obtained?

- How well do users of legislation know Interpretation Acts?
2. Application of Interpretation Acts.
 - What provisions do Interpretation Acts apply to?
 - How can the application of an Interpretation Act be excluded?
 3. Using Interpretation Acts to facilitate drafting.
 - Form and application provisions.
 - Commencement provisions.
 - Standardised definitions.
 - Standardised rules for a common legislative style.
 - Resolution of interpretive uncertainties.
 - Implied rules of substantive law.

Review.

Appendix – Comparative table of Interpretation Acts.

Module 3: Section 3 – How do we work with the Constitution?

1. The Constitution and legislative counsel.
 - What is legislative counsel's responsibility?
 - How should we deal with instructions that appear inconsistent with the Constitution?
 - What constitutional instruments are you likely to need?
2. Particular constitutional constraints.
 - What are the main constraints on legislative functions and procedures?
 - What are the main constraints on judicial functions and procedures?
 - What are the main constraints on executive functions and procedures?
 - What are the main constraints on public service functions and official appointments?
 - What are the main constraints with respect to financial matters?

Review.

Module 3: Section 4 – How do we work with fundamental rights and freedoms?

1. Drafting under a bill of rights.
 - What rights and freedoms are protected by the Constitution?

- Do the specified rights and freedoms constitute a comprehensive statement of protected rights and freedoms?
- What other matters in the Bill of Rights are of particular interest to legislative counsel?
- How should we deal with qualifications?
- How should we deal with derogations?
- How should we approach Bill of Rights issues?
- How should we draft legislation to fulfil a permitted qualification?

2. International standards.

- Where do we find the international standards on human rights?
- How do international standards affect domestic law?
- What are the implications for law-making?
- What are the implications for legislative counsel?
- How can we keep in touch with international developments?
- What international human rights treaties apply?

Review.

LGST 555 Drafting Preliminary, Amending and Final Provisions

Drafting Preliminary, Amending, and Final Provisions.

Module 1: Preview.

1. Preliminary and Final Provisions

- What matters are usually contained in preliminary or final provisions?
- How are preliminary and final provisions arranged?

2. Explanatory Material

- What is a road-map and what purposes does it serve?
- What other explanatory material may be included?

Review.

Module 1: Section 2 – How do we draft titles, preambles and words of enactment?

1. Long titles of bills.

- What purposes do long titles serve?
- How should a long title be drafted?

2. Preambles.

- What purposes do preambles serve?
- When might a preamble be used?
- How should a preamble be drafted?

3. Words of enactment.

- What purposes do words of enactment serve?
- How are words of enactment dealt with?

4. Short titles.

- What purposes does a short title serve?
- How should a short title be selected?
- How should a short title be drafted?

Review.

Module 1: Section 3 – How do we draft commencement and duration provisions?

1. Commencement provisions.

- What purposes do commencement provisions serve?
- When are commencement provisions needed?
- What are good reasons for including commencement provisions?
- How should commencement provisions be drafted?

2. Expiry provisions.

- What purposes do expiry provisions serve?
- How should expiry provisions be drafted?

Review.

Module 1: Section 4 – How do we draft interpretation provisions?

1. General considerations.

- What are interpretation provisions?
- What is the difference between a definition and an interpretive rule?
- Where should interpretation provisions be placed?
- Do interpretation provisions have any shortcomings?

2. Definitions generally.

- What purposes do definitions serve?
- What is the relationship between statutory definitions and dictionary meanings?
- How should definitions be drafted?

3. Labelling definitions.

- When should labelling definitions be drafted?
- How should a labelling definition be drafted?

4. Stipulating definitions.

- When should stipulating definitions be drafted?
- How should stipulating definitions be drafted?
- What should be considered in writing stipulating definitions?
- What pitfalls are there?

5. Syntax of definitions.

- Definitions to be read into sentences.
- Definitions must not duplicate words in sentences that use them.
- Definitions must be grammatically consistent with defined terms.
- Definitions apply with the necessary modifications to the other grammatical forms of defined terms.
- Definitions should be in the form of verbs or nouns.

6. Interpretive rules.

- When should interpretive rules be used?
- How should interpretive rules be drafted?

7. Hints and checks.

- What practical hints should we bear in mind?
- What final checks should we make?

Review.

Module 1: Section 5 – When and how do we draft purpose clauses?

1. What is a purpose clause?
2. Why use a purpose clause?
3. Why don't legislative counsel use purpose clauses more often?

4. [When is a purpose clause useful?](#)
5. [How should a purpose clause be drafted?](#)

[Review.](#)

[Module 1: Section 6 – When and how do we draft application provisions?](#)

1. [Application provisions generally.](#)
 - [What assumptions underlie the application of legislation?](#)
 - [When should application provisions be used?](#)
 - [When are application provisions most commonly used?](#)
 - [How should application provisions be drafted?](#)
2. [Application to things in the past.](#)
 - [What types of past-application are there?](#)
 - [How has past-application generally been treated in law?](#)
 - [When should retroactive provisions be drafted?](#)
 - [When should retrospective provisions be drafted?](#)
 - [When should provision be made for procedural changes?](#)
3. [Provisions binding the state.](#)
 - [What are the relevant interpretive presumptions?](#)
 - [What are the legal effects of the presumptions?](#)
 - [How do we draft provisions to bind the State?](#)
4. [Extra-territorial extension.](#)
 - [What is the relevant presumption?](#)
 - [What legislative competence is required to make extra-territorial legislation?](#)
 - [Do the presumptions relate to the law of other countries?](#)
 - [What territorial limits are envisaged?](#)
 - [What are the drafting implications of the presumptions?](#)
 - [What does extra-territorial extension involve in criminal cases?](#)
 - [How should extension provisions be drafted?](#)

[Review.](#)

[Module 1: Section 7 – When and how do we draft schedules?](#)

1. [Drafting schedules.](#)

- What are schedules to legislative texts?
- When should schedules be used?
- How should schedules be drafted?

Review.

Module 2: Drafting Amending Provisions.

Module 2: Section 1 - What are amending provisions and how are they arranged?

- What are amending and transitional provisions?
- In what order are amending and transitional provisions arranged?
- What section notes are appropriate?

Review.

Module 2: Section 2 - How should we repeal and amend legislation?

1. General considerations.

- How do repeals and amendments differ?
- Does amendment involve repeal?
- How can legislation be repealed and amended?
- When is legislation impliedly repealed?
- Should repeals and amendments be made by primary or subsidiary legislation?
- When are repeal and amending provisions needed?
- When should we replace rather than amend legislation?

2. Deciding what to repeal or amend.

- How do we decide what needs to be repealed or amended?
- How do we prepare for repeals?
- How do we prepare for amendments?

3. Drafting repeal provisions.

- What should be our objectives when drafting repeal provisions?
- How are repeal provisions drafted?
- Are there any special features for re-enactment and replacement legislation?

4. Drafting amendments.

- What methods of amendment can be used?
- What should be our objectives when drafting amendments?

- How should amendments be arranged?
- How should we draft amendments?
- Use precise amending formulas.
- Inserting new provisions.
- Modifying particular words in a provision.
- Repealing and replacing provisions.
- Be consistent.
- Consequential amendments.
- Section notes.

5. Concluding questions.

- What can go wrong when drafting repeals and amendments?
- How can we explain the effects of amendments?
- How do we draft amendments for the parliamentary process?

Review.

Module 2: Section 3 – When and how do we draft saving and other transitional provisions?

1. General considerations.

- What is the function of transitional provisions?
- How do saving provisions differ from other transitional provisions?
- What purposes do these provisions serve?
- How important are these provisions?
- Are these provisions required in all legislation?
- When should you work on these provisions?

2. Legal effects of repeals.

- What are the legal consequences of a repeal?
- What are the common law rules on the effects of repeals?
- What modifications are made by the Interpretation Act?
- How should the Interpretation Act be used?

3. The content of saving and transitional provisions.

- What matters are likely to require these provisions?
- How are unqualified saving provisions expressed?
- How are transitional provisions affecting past matters expressed?
- How are provisions instituting transition arrangements expressed?

4. Drafting saving and transitional provisions.

- How does the presumption against retrospective legislation relate to these provisions?
- How do we decide which matters should be saved?
- What forms may saving provisions take?
- How should the drafting of transitional provisions be approached?
- What forms may transitional provisions take?
- What practical points should be borne in mind?

Review.

LGST 557 Implementation Provisions and Drafting Processes

Implementation Provisions and Drafting Practices.

Module 1: Section 1 – How do we draft compliance provisions.

1. General considerations.

- When are penal provisions likely to be useful?
- What alternatives are there to penal provisions?
- What factors should we bear in mind when using alternatives?

2. Determining what penal provisions are required.

- What general factors should we bear in mind?
- What steps should we take to determine the content of penal provisions?
- Step 1: Are penal provisions required?
- Step 2: Is the same activity already subject to penal provisions under existing law?
- Step 3: Whose and what precise conduct is to be prohibited?
- Step 4: Should the mental element be addressed expressly?
- Step 5: At what level of court is the offence to be triable?
- Step 6: What is the maximum penalty to be attached to the offence?
- Step 7: Should any special defence be included?
- Step 8: Should any limitations on prosecutions be included?

3. Drafting penal provisions.

- How should we draft penal provisions?
- How may offence provisions be expressed?
- When should we use these different forms?
- Can the style of offence provisions be improved?
- What particular points should we look out for?

- Describing the offender.
- Prescribing the conduct.
- Including the mental element.
- Providing special defences.
- When might penal provisions also give rise to civil liability?

Review.

Module 1: Section 2 – How do we delegate powers to legislate?

1. General considerations.

- When should delegated powers be conferred?
- How should matters be divided between primary and subsidiary legislation?
- When is an instrument subsidiary legislation?
- How do the courts approach powers to make subsidiary legislation?
- What are your objectives when drafting enabling provisions?
- When are delegated powers needed?
- Ancillary matters.
- Substantive matters.
- Incidental matters.
- Supplementary matters.
- Principal provisions.
- How widely should enabling provisions be drafted?

2. General approaches to drafting subsidiary legislative powers.

- What are the basic steps?
- Are there matters that should be expressly authorised?
- What other factors can influence the drafting of subsidiary legislative powers?
- What general legislation may affect the drafting of subsidiary legislative powers?

3. Particular questions.

- What type of instrument?
- Who is to be the delegate?
- Is any body to be linked with the making? If so, how?
- What powers are to be delegated?
- Are the powers adequate to cover all the matters intended?
- What procedures are to be required for making the subsidiary legislation?
- Should external interests be involved in making subsidiary legislation?
- What procedures are required after the making?

Review.

Appendix - Checklist for drafting subsidiary legislative powers.

Module 1: Section 3 – How do we draft subsidiary legislation?

1. General considerations.

- How does drafting subsidiary legislation differ from drafting bills?

2. Drafting approach.

- How should we approach the drafting of subsidiary legislation?
- How do we check to prevent unauthorised subsidiary legislation?

3. Drafting details.

- Two instruments or one?
- What are the characteristic features of subsidiary instruments?
- What type of instrument is required?
- What headings are required?
- What authorising words should be used?
- How should the title be drafted?
- When should provision be made for commencement?
- When should definitions be included?
- What special factors should be borne in mind in drafting substantive provisions?
- Should section notes be provided?
- Are there special features for amending, repealing or re-enacting provisions?
- What authenticating words are needed?
- How should an instrument be dated?
- Should an explanatory note be added?

4. Drafting executive instruments.

- What should we bear in mind when drafting executive instruments?

Review.

Module 2: Law-making processes and working with clients.

Module 2: Section 1 – What are the processes for making laws and our role as legislative counsel?

1. Preparing a bill.

- How is policy made?
- What techniques are there for assessing policy?
- How is a policy option developed into an operational scheme?
- What Executive approval is required?
- How are drafting instructions provided?
- How is the legislative text prepared?
- How should the contents of the bill be arranged?

2. Enacting a bill.

- How is a bill enacted as legislation?
- What is the role of legislative counsel during the enactment process?

3. Subsidiary legislation – how does its preparation differ?

Review.

Module 2: Section 2 - How do we work with drafting instructions?

1. Getting instructions.

- In what form should instructions be given?
- Why should instructions not take the form of a draft legislative text?
- Why might instructions be incomplete?
- What questions should instructions answer?
- What if the instructions are incomplete?

2. Analysing instructions.

- What should we be looking for when analysing instructions?
- What questions might we ask to understand instructions?
- What questions might we ask to ascertain the elements of the proposal?
- How might we approach the task of analysis?
- What other analytical aids can we use?
- Should the analysis be discussed with the client Ministry?

Review.