

**Haigh, Rupert. *Oxford Handbook of Legal Correspondence*, 2006. Oxford : OUP.**

This is an advanced, practical and compact guide and reliable source of reference for non-native speakers of English in the legal profession, English language teachers, or law students. It is advanced in the sense that, unlike similar manuals on international communication for professionals, covering socialising at meetings, telephoning, making arrangements, reporting, negotiating and corporate presentation, it has a distinct professional approach. There are no language reviews, grammar notes or accompanying tapes and tape-scripts. With the emphasis on professional correspondence, it provides sound information about the fundamental skills required for effective legal writing to achieve satisfactory results in important areas of daily legal practice. The content requires an adequate command of the English tongue.

It is ideal for self-study, as there are short questions at the end of 12 of the 13 units, with the answers provided at the end of the manual. Three of the units deal with regular correspondence and communication (letters, faxes, e-mails, memoranda, file notes and brief and instructions to counsel) as well as content and style, which is vital to the expected concise writing in legal affairs. In legal correspondence, each and every word has a specific meaning in its interpretation. They must be used correctly and concisely, in proper context, to avoid ambiguity in any legal matter. One unit is devoted to personnel affairs, e.g. recruitment and appointments. The remaining 9 units deal with legal work, based on employment, property, contract and negligence liability. The units end with a brief summary, serving as reminder of the most important aspects.

A plus point is the explicit layout of this book. In units three to eleven there is a clear explanation of the role of the lawyer, followed by copies of examples of correspondence and additional definitions of legal terms, *inter alia* leases and agreements.

Some special features are examples of e-mail communication and the presentation of a CV. As there are many different branches of Law, e.g. maritime / private / contract / criminal, applications will be made to law firms, the Department of Justice, Bar associations and various other institutions, that will have an influence on how the CV is drawn up. It is therefore very convenient to have such a chapter included in a manual which is already compact and user-friendly. In its paperback form, it can be used as a constant reference book in the classroom, in the office and during travels to clients.

This is complemented by a glossary at the end of the book. The glossary covers the content of the book in clear simple English, saving the teacher, jurist or student the trouble of consulting several dictionaries and glossaries.

To conclude, the book is an invaluable asset to English language teachers in Europe and the U.K., who have no knowledge of the law. We are constantly reminded that the book was compiled, bearing law students, legal professionals and English language teachers in mind as the target market. In the opinion of the author, potential users, assessed at B2 to C2 level as far as the recommended European Council of Language standards are concerned, should not have any difficulty getting familiar with the content.

Teachers who are serious about following the European Language Profile, might find it an interesting gauge in order to set up a proper task-based programme for their students. Although there is a constant distinction between American and British English as far as language is concerned, all the examples are British and based on English law. It is therefore useful to non-native speaker law students and jurists who want to become acquainted with the English terminology and intend dealing with European / British clients.

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