

UFY Sim Contract Law

ABSTRACT

UFY Sim Contract Law is an online role play through which students examine the basic operation of contract law from the perspective of various stakeholders. Designed for Foundation Studies, the role play focuses on the development of entry level academic skills of reading, research as well as responding to legal argument.

KEYWORDS

Legal education; contract law; simulation; role-based learning, foundation studies; international education.

CONTACT

*Elizabeth Rosser, UNSW Foundation Year,
e.rosser@unsw.edu.au*



DESCRIPTION

UFY Sim Contract Law is based on a fictionalised version of a real-life legal scenario exploring principles of contract law. The scenario involves the buyer of a house commencing legal action against the vendor who refuses to hand over the property as stated in the agreement. The vendor claims that the contract of sale was invalid due to a withdrawal of permission for the real estate agent to conduct the sale. The vendor claims that this withdrawal was made prior to the buyer signing the contract.

Participants were allocated a role and belonged to one of the four parties involved in the scenario:

- the plaintiff's party
- the defendant's party
- the chambers
- press club

Each of these teams had their own private discussion forum however they decided whether and how to utilise these forums. Through the group forums, each team was provided with more detailed documents and resources tailored to their role in order to prepare the activities they were responsible for. Each stakeholder team was responsible for posting tasks particular to their role. The activity culminated in a judgement by the court in which the legal arguments and stakeholder views were critiqued.

AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE

- University preparation level Australian Legal Studies
- Scalable for large or small groups with minor modifications to role play design

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Participants are provided with an opportunity to further develop their:

- Knowledge of laws and legal processes pertaining to contract law
- Understanding and appreciation of roles played by various actors in legal disputes
- Skills of academic questioning, research and argument
- Collaborative and reflective learning

ASSESSMENT

This was a voluntary, non-assessable exercise. Absence of formal assessment was judged to be a limiting factor negatively impacting on student participation in the role play.

RESOURCES

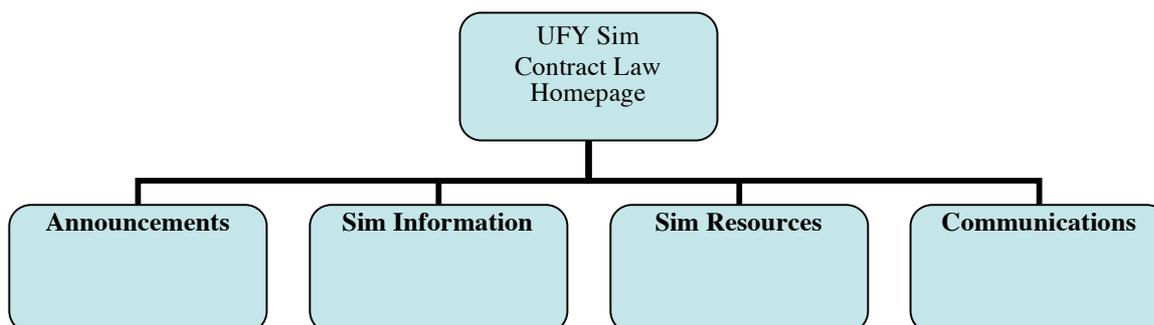
UFY eSim: Contract Law was delivered in a wholly online context.

- Student Handbook
- Online activities were conducted via WebCT VISTA primarily using discussion boards and content files and private team areas

TIME AND SETTING

- The role play involves a contemporary legal scenario
- *UFY eSim: Contract Law* was played over 2 weeks in the first semester of the Foundation Studies subject, *Australian Legal Studies*, including background research, interaction and debriefing.
- This activity was conducted as a pre-curriculum exercise in preparation for formal learning about contract law.

ROLE PLAY ONLINE STRUCTURE



Tasks to post into the 'Court Room' forum included:

- "Statement of Claim" Plaintiff
- "Notice of Defence" Defendant
- "Announcing the case" Judge Associate
- "Opening statements" Plaintiff's and Defendant's Lawyers
- "Witness Examination" Witnesses & Lawyers
- "Closing Address" Plaintiff's and Defendant's Lawyers
- "Judgement" Judge, Associate Judge and Jury

FACILITATOR ISSUES

- This activity was conceptually difficult for foundation level education. A more issues based discussion activity may be more appropriate for this context.
- It is necessary to adequately prepare students for group and online activities as, at the time of this activity many students had no prior experience of a role play or online discussion activity.

REUSABILITY

UFY eSim: Contract Law may be suitable for use in undergraduate law courses and continuing education courses in politics and legal education.

LINKS

This role play design was designed by Helke Hoffman and Elizabeth Rosser as part of Hoffman's Master of Arts Major Project. For more information about this role play please contact Elizabeth Rosser e.rosser@unsw.edu.au.