



SCHOOL OF LAW

PBL1204: LEGAL RESEARCH

END OF SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATIONS

APRIL 2026

LECTURER: DR SIPHETHILE PHIRI

DURATION: 3 HRS

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Answer any THREE questions: SECTION A IS COMPULSORY.**
- 2. This exam carries a total of 100 Marks.**
- 3. You are encouraged to provide appropriate references where necessary in your answers.**

Section A (THIS SECTION IS COMPULSORY)

Question 1

Lee is a law student undertaking legal research on the effectiveness of the mining law. Her research involves interviewing miners, officials from the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), and reviewing unpublished policy documents obtained through a government contact. Under pressure to meet submission deadlines and secure funding for further studies, Lee fabricates interview data. She claims to have conducted in-depth interviews with five EMA officials, but in reality, she only interviewed two. To strengthen her arguments, she invents responses and attributes them to non-existent participants.

Second, Lee failed to obtain informed consent from the two officials she interviewed. She records their conversations without their knowledge and later quotes them verbatim in her dissertation, including remarks that are critical of senior government officials.

Third, Lee paid a number of miners so that they provide her with the responses she wants. She also breaches confidentiality by providing the personal details of the participants. This resulted in two officials being dismissed from their work. As a result, her dissertation is rejected, and disciplinary proceedings are initiated against her.

a) Discuss any five ethical considerations in conducting legal research and identify whether Lee complied with them. **[25 marks]**

b) Outline the step by step process which needs to be followed by Lee in conducting her research. **[25 marks]**

Section B: Answer any two questions

Question 2

a. Which tense(s) is/are used when writing a research proposal and why? **[5 marks]**

b. What is literature review and what is its purpose? **[5marks]**

c. Distinguish between doctrinal legal research method and non-doctrinal legal research methods. **[15 marks]**

Question 3

Discuss the efficacy of Artificial Intelligence in conducting legal research. Outline the pros and cons of its use. **[25 marks]**

Question 4

Discuss any five sources of information in conducting legal research. **[25 marks]**

END OF EXAMINATION