Preface

**For updates to the instructions or exercises since publication check
https://aspenpublishing.com/products/sloan-researchworkbook6.**

The sixth edition of *Basic Legal Research Workbook* contains updated instructions for exercises that reflect changes in Westlaw, Lexis, Bloomberg Law, and other digital resources. Legislative and other changes necessitated updates throughout the book. Revisions to the introductory chapter recognize the need that students have to understand digital resources early on. Although all exercises can be completed online, many exercises can also be competed in print. Prior editions have included a separate chapter on Online Search Techniques, but in this edition that chapter is being offered as a digital supplement so that it can be kept up-to-date as those platforms change. Otherwise, the sixth edition contains all the exercises, features, and coverage of the revised fifth edition. Although the text is now oriented around online research, some portions can still be completed in print. Accordingly, the text retains its flexibility for a research curriculum that incorporates print research. A couple of changes in the sixth edition to note:

- Digital Supplement — This will contain many of the exercises previously covered in Chapter 9 on Online Search Techniques. The digital format will enable it to be timely updated as platforms change, and allow the addition of new materials in developing areas, such as AI, GenAI, or NextGen bar.
- Digital answer sheets — The Workbook website includes answer sheets that can be downloaded for use as templates for completing the assignments digitally.

The philosophy of the sixth edition remains the same as that of the prior editions. *Basic Legal Research Workbook* contains research exercises that allow students to learn about the scope and organization of research sources, guide them through the research process, and reinforce their skills through assignments requiring independent work.

The Workbook is designed to help students learn both the mechanics and the process of legal research through a combination of guided and unguided research assignments. In the guided assignments, the questions gradually increase in complexity. Review questions test students' understanding of the nature and organization of the sources they are using. Research questions early in an assignment direct students through the research process. Later questions ask for information, but require students to research more independently. The unguided research assignments require open research. Students generate their own search terms and follow their own research paths to locate legal authority.

Each assignment, whether guided or unguided, incorporates hypothetical fact patterns and legal questions that students must answer based on the results of their research. Thus, students must not only go through the steps of using each resource in an assignment, they must also read and apply what they find.

The Workbook's coverage is comprehensive. It contains exercises covering a wide range of legal research resources. Chapter 1 contains introductory assignments designed to acquaint students with

the basic features of cases, statutes, and constitutions. Chapter 2 contains information on generating search terms, as well as a series of charts that students can use to generate search terms for later assignments in this Workbook or any open research project. Those charts are available digitally from the Workbook website.

Chapters 3 through 8 each contain three exercises. Chapter 3, Secondary Source Research, covers research with legal encyclopedias, A.L.R. Annotations, Restatements, legal periodicals, and treatises. Chapter 4, Case Research, addresses word searching as well as West Key Number or subject searching. In Chapter 5, Research with Citators, students learn about citators for cases and other forms of authority. Chapter 6, Statutory Research, covers state and federal research. Chapter 7, Federal Legislative History Research, and Chapter 8, Federal Administrative Law Research, provide instruction in the most commonly used sources of federal law on these topics.

Chapter 9 covers Research Planning. It contains hypothetical fact patterns that require students to develop and execute a research strategy using multiple sources of authority.

Each assignment follows a consistent organization that students should find easy to follow. In addition to containing research questions, each assignment also contains some textual material on the resource it covers. This is to provide context for the material and explain what students are likely to see in the books or online. The research questions in each assignment are fairly generic. Students use additional information in charts containing problem sets to answer the questions. Professors can assign problem sets or allow students to choose their own.

Additionally, the organization of each chapter gives professors the flexibility to assign exercises that fit with the structure and pace of their courses. Every exercise in every chapter is a free-standing assignment. Therefore, professors can assign the exercises in any order. The number of problem sets for each assignment adds to the Workbook's flexibility. Many exercises have multiple problem sets. For professors who coordinate instruction in research and writing, the problem sets cover a wide range of topics that can lend themselves to a number of potential writing projects.

Although *Basic Legal Research Workbook* contains some textual material interspersed with the research questions, it is not a self-instructional workbook. Students will need to read a research text, receive classroom instruction, or both to complete the assignments successfully and become adept at legal research. The Workbook is tailored to complement *Basic Legal Research: Tools and Strategies*. It can, however, be used with other research texts as well. In addition, the Workbook does not provide citation instruction. It covers research process, not citation format, although professors have the flexibility to require that citations conform to a designated citation format.

Both teaching and learning legal research are challenging undertakings. We hope that students using this Workbook will find it to be an engaging resource for learning the fundamentals of legal research. We hope professors will find it similarly engaging, as well as adaptable to a variety of course structures and teaching techniques.

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