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Finding law-specific information using Westlaw, Lexis+ and HeinOnline

September 2025: Anna Richards & SarahLouise McDonald, Academic Support Librarians

Using legal databases

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- select the appropriate database for your needs and recognise the differences between them and their benefits and limitations.
- Understand law case citations and how to find cases using Law databases
- maintain a record of searches carried out and information found using each database

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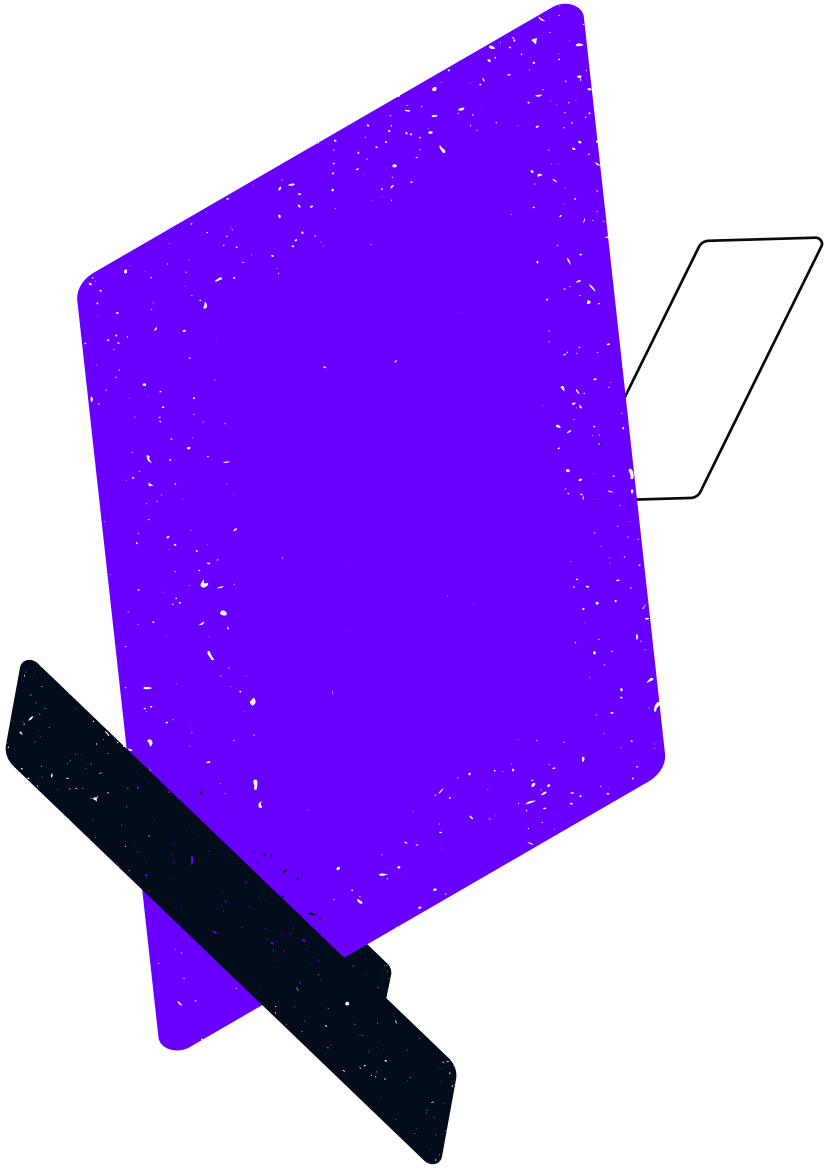
Finding cases

Two types of case citations (i.e. the reference used to refer to court case decisions):

Law report citations
- a report of a case in a particular law report

Neutral citations
- Introduced in 2001, these are unique case identifiers independent of any law report



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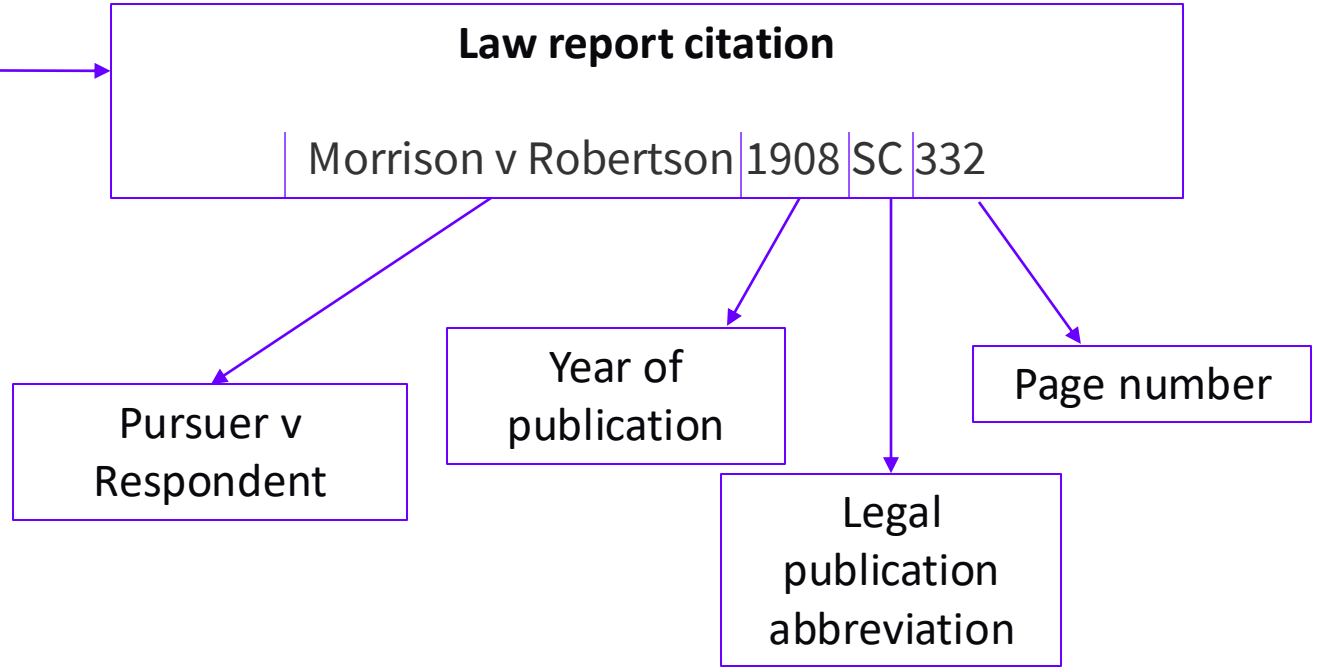
Not sure what the abbreviations stand for? Use the Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations



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Neutral citation

[2018] CSIH 66

Year of publication

The court abbreviation

case number

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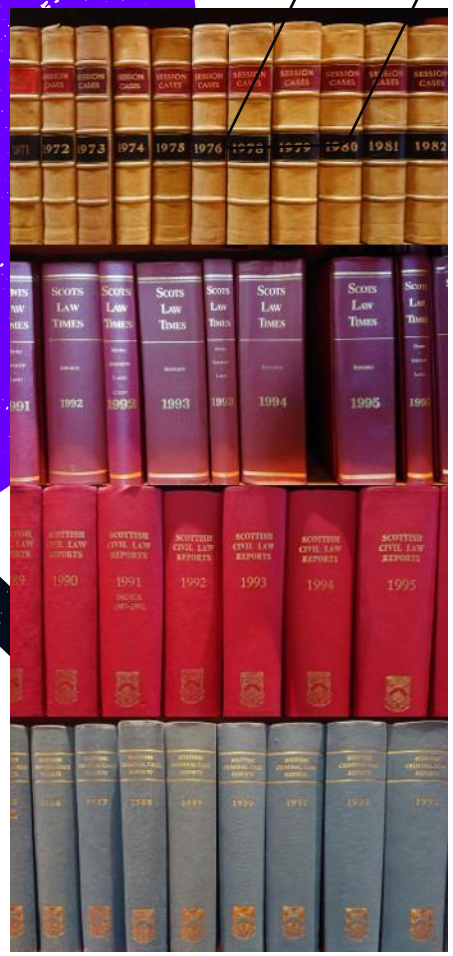
The most authoritative series of law reports in Scotland is **Session Cases.** The single periodical Session Cases contains separately paginated sequences of reports from the Court of Session (‘SC’), the High Court of Justiciary (‘JC’) and the House of Lords/ Supreme Court (‘SC (HL)’ or ‘SC (UKSC)’).

Refer to Session Cases if possible. The next most authoritative series of law reports is the **Scots Law Times (SLT)**, which is also arranged in separately paginated sequences of reports from different courts.

Other law reports series in Scotland include the **Scottish Civil Law Reports (SCLR) and the Scottish Criminal Case Reports (SCCR).**

Full details of the OSCOLA referencing system are available online for free:
https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxlaw/oscola_4th_edn_hart_2012.pdf



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Legal databases

Westlaw UK:
Cases, legislation, journals, books, looseleaf material, Scots Law, Westlaw International

Lexis+:
Cases, legislation, commentary (books), journals, news, STAIR Memorial Encyclopedia

HeinOnline:
Historical government documents, law periodicals, UK court reports.

https://library.ed.ac.uk/finding-resources/library-databases/databases-subject-a-z/database-law

Finding cases on Westlaw UK

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Westlaw UK:
Cases, legislation, journals, books, looseleaf material, Scots Law, Westlaw International

Further down the page you will find 'Scots Law' under 'More resources', although Scots law results will appear from general searching

You will also find a link to Westlaw International for International and EU content in the 'More Resources' box.

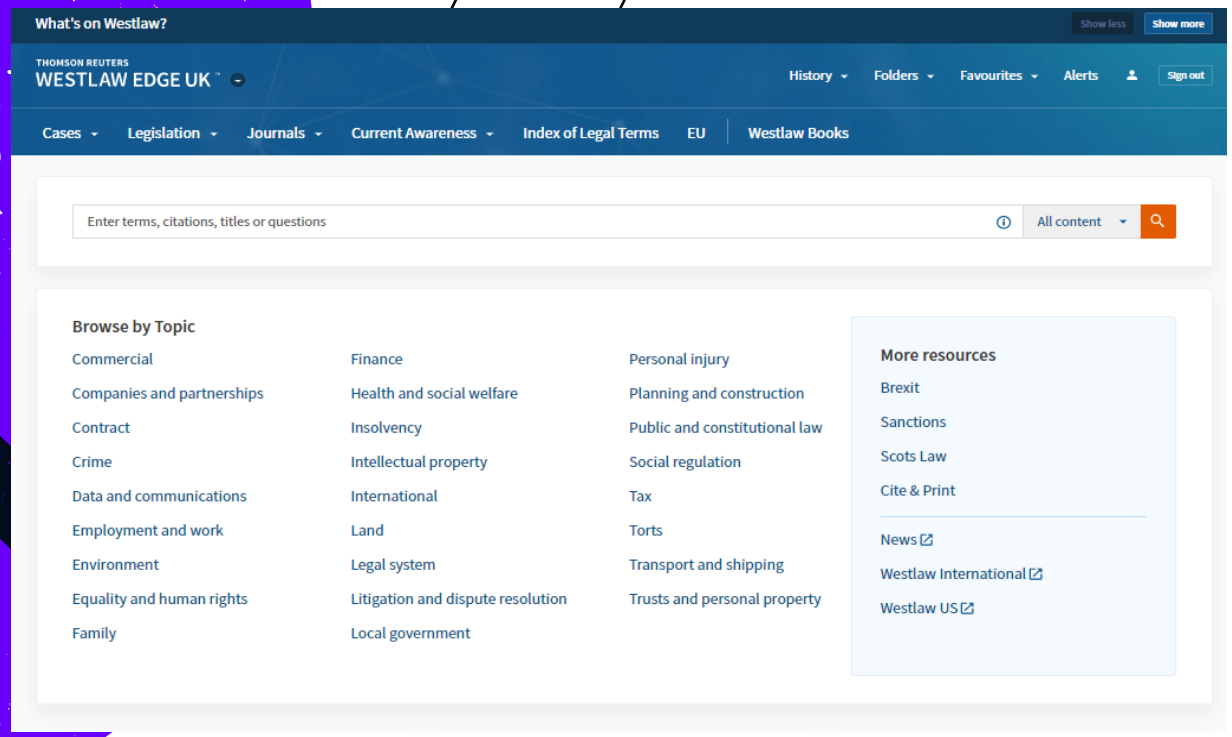

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Table of Contents

- Case Analysis
  - Case Digest
- Law Reports
- Judgment
- Primary References
- Case Analytics
  - Precedent map
  - Treatment

GK (India) v Secretary of State for the Home Department

For educational use only

Guidance | Significant

Case Digest

Summary

An appeal by an Indian national against a a decision of the Lord Ordinary refusing to grant permission to proceed with her petition for judicial review of the refusal by the Secretary of State for the Home Department of her application for a visitors visa was allowed where the petition had a a real prospect of success to justify the grant of permission to proceed and it was too early to conclude that the relief sought would serve no practical purpose. The Lord Ordinary's interlocutor was recalled and permission for the petition to proceed was granted.

Abstract

An Indian national appealed a decision of the Lord Ordinary refusing to grant

Positive/Neutral Judicial Consideration

Court

Court of Session (Inner House, Extra Division)

Judgment Date

24 November 2020

Where Reported

[2020] CSIH 69
2020 S.L.T. 1315
[2020] 11 WLUK 314
2020 G.W.D. 39-501

Navigation on the left will help you find items related to the case such as cited cases and legislation, also cases which name this as a source for precedent and related cases (appeals etc).

Any publications listed with a blue hyperlink should be accessible. These are listed in order of hierarchy - the top is the most reputable source and therefore the reference often used to refer to the case.

Finding cases on Lexis+

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What would you like to research today?

Search All

All

- All
- Halsbury's Laws & Stair
- Legislation
- Books & Journals
- Cases
- Practical Guidance
- Forms & Precedents
- Manuals & Regulations
- News
- Dockets

Explore | My Sources | Content | Practice Area | Internat

Search Sources | View All Sources

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Morrison v Robertson

Hide Highlights

Overview

Law Reports

Search Terms

Morrison v Robertson

Copy Citation

1908 SC 332

Court: Court of Session

Judgment Date: 19/12/1907

Hide

Info

Notes

Supporting Materials

Treatment Information

Source Information

Related Documents

Cases

Halsbury's Laws & Stair

Find related cases and discussion from Halsbury's and the Stair Memorial Encyclopedia under 'Related Documents'.

Legislation, journals and specialist legal resources

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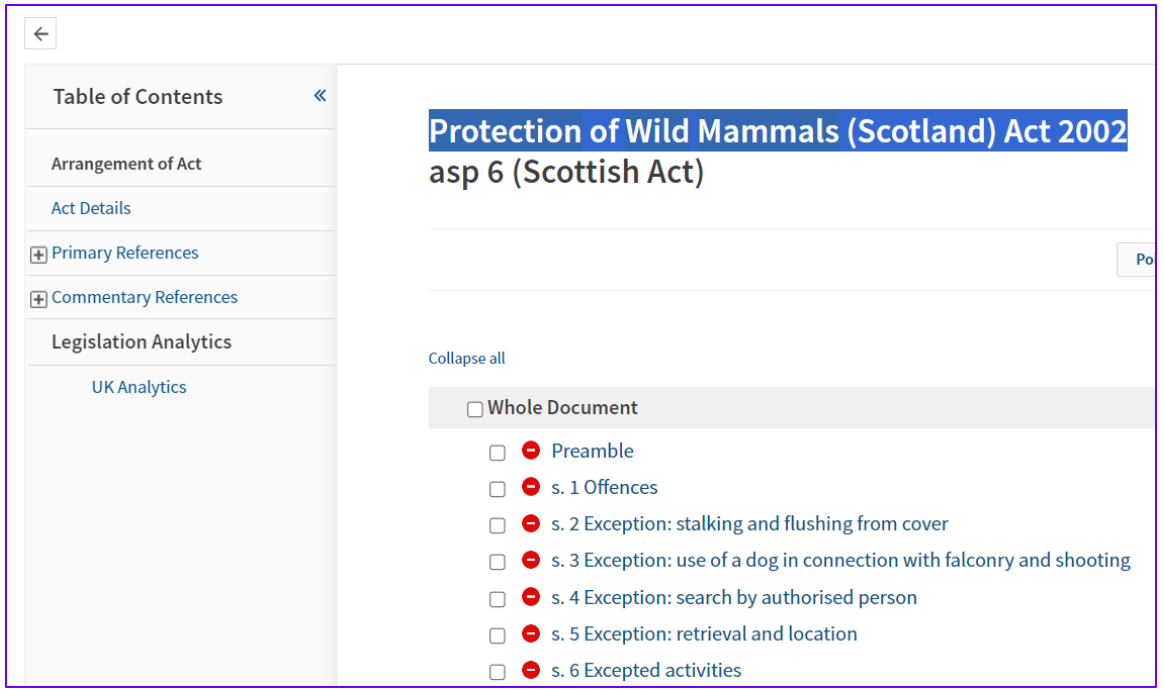
Westlaw UK



Navigation on left will help to track history of legislation and cite important uses/references to other legislation

Status symbols next to tickboxes mean that chapters are in force, have amendments pending, have been repealed etc. Hover over them for definitions

Use dropdowns to navigate and tickboxes to highlight specific areas you want to save or print.

You can also check **previous versions** of legislation where revisions have been applied.

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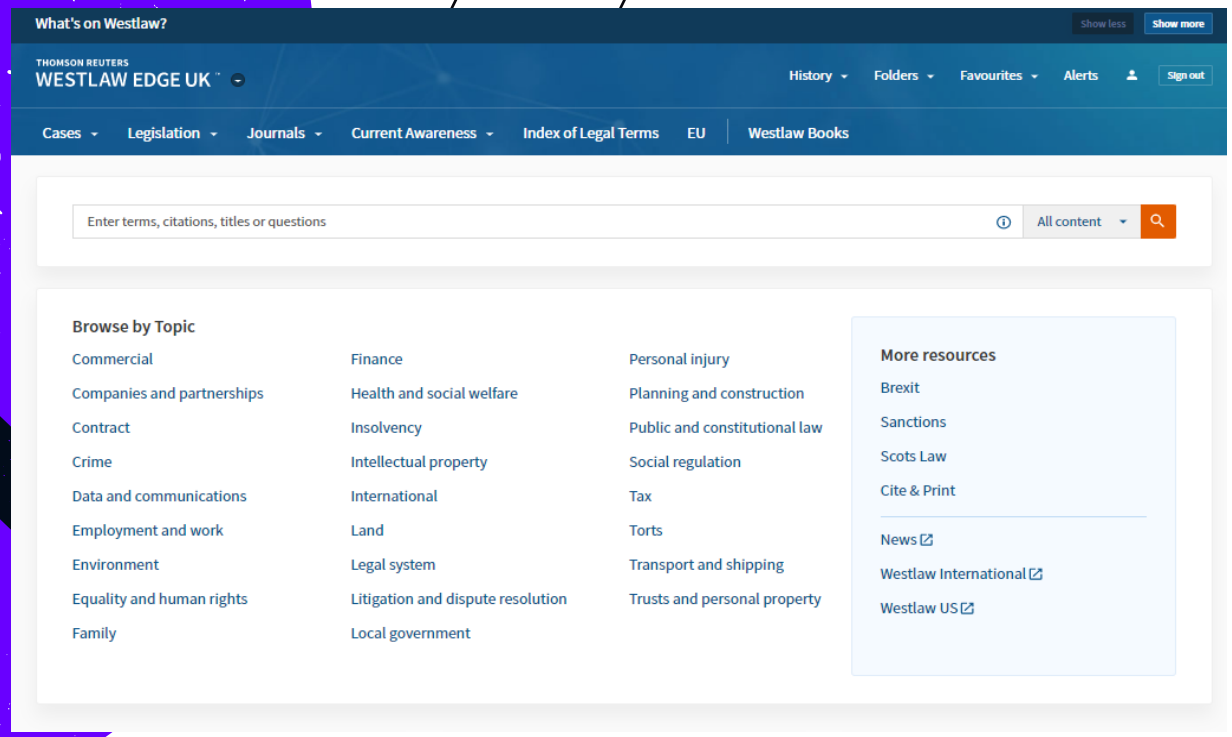
Also includes:

- Journals
- Books
- looseleaf material.

Click in to each of Cases, Legislation, Journals or Books to conduct an advanced search or browse available titles.

Not all ebooks available via Westlaw are listed in DiscoverEd so you may need to check directly



To save an item use the tickbox on the left to select and then the icons which will then become live to the top right of your results. You can:

- **Set up an alert**, emails you when any related cases, articles or legislation are published.
- **Show more or less detail** about the case in your results page
- **Copy the link** to paste elsewhere
- **Save** in your 'Folders', accessible in the top navigation bar on any page in Westlaw. You can organise 'Folders' by adding subfolders for classes or topics
- **Email** the item to yourself, or use the dropdown arrows to **Print** or **Download** as a PDF

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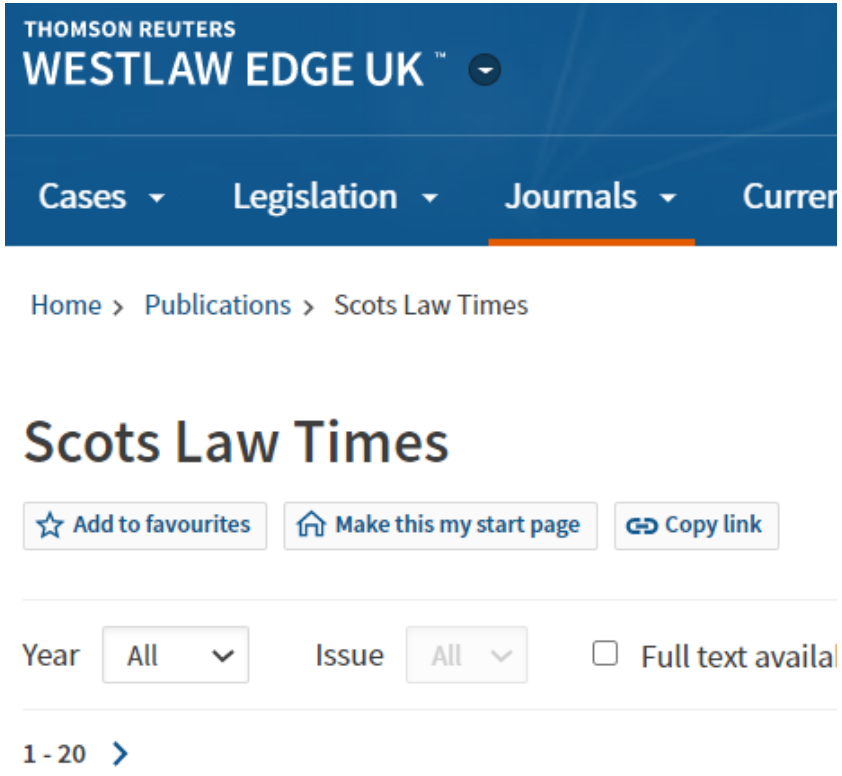
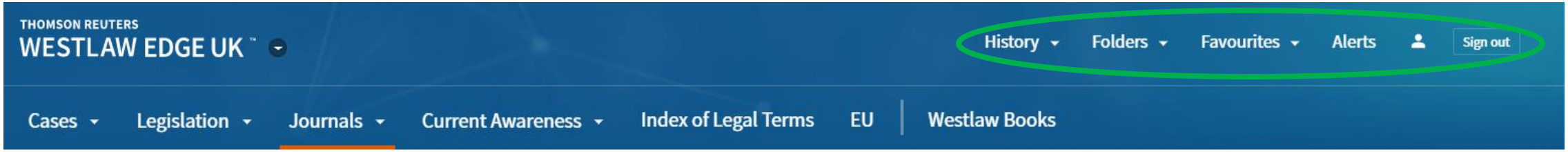
You can also save publications into your favourites by selecting the star 'add to favourites' button next to their title if you will use them often.

The navigation bar at the top of the screen is always visible on Westlaw, and from there you can access your favourites, folders, history and alerts.





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Lexis+

Navigation on right includes links to cases and Stair encyclopedia

Tells you above the title if it has been repealed and links to related legislation

You can also check **previous versions** of legislation where revisions have been applied.

Lexis+ Key resources

- **UK Weekly Law Reports of England and Wales**, listed as ICLR reports
  - Go to ‘Legal Research’ on left, then ‘My sources’ in middle tab and either search or browse using ‘View all sources’

- **The Stair Memorial Encyclopaedia** which is treated as a book
  - Go to ‘Legal Research’ on left, then ‘Content’ in middle tab. Select ‘Halsbury’s Laws and Stair’ option, then Stair Memorial Encyclopaedia.

- **UK and Regional newspapers**, found via News.
  - Go to ‘Legal Research’ on left, then ‘Content’ in middle tab. Select ‘Newspapers’. This will open a new tab.

Law Librarian Blog post: Finding Stair Memorial Encyclopaedia

Morrison v Robertson

Morrison v Robertson

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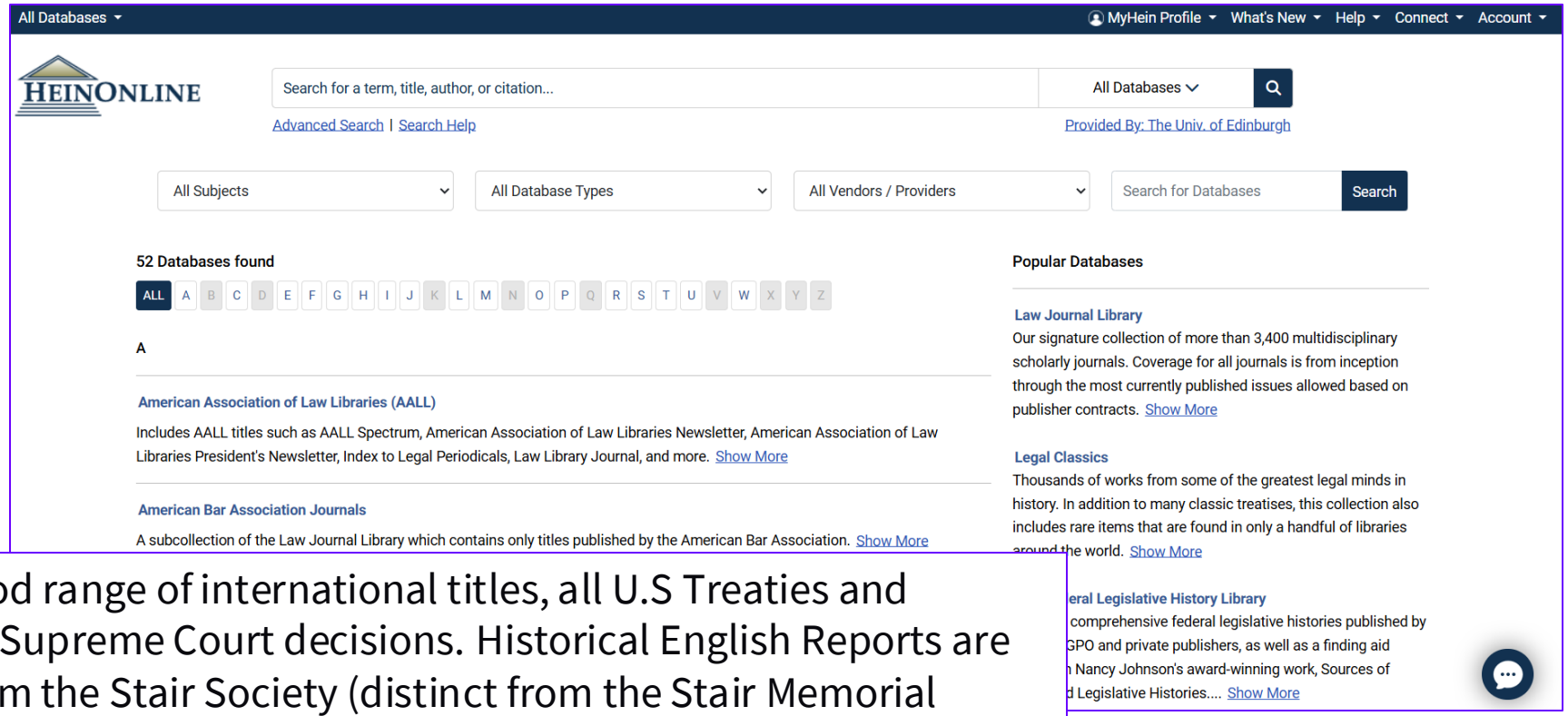

Full text legal journals with a good range of international titles, all U.S Treaties and Agreements, and published U.S. Supreme Court decisions. Historical English Reports are here, and so are publications from the Stair Society (distinct from the Stair Memorial Encyclopaedia!).

NOTE: Some guidance on locating Institutional Writers can be found on the Law Subject Guide: Law Databases Help & Training page.

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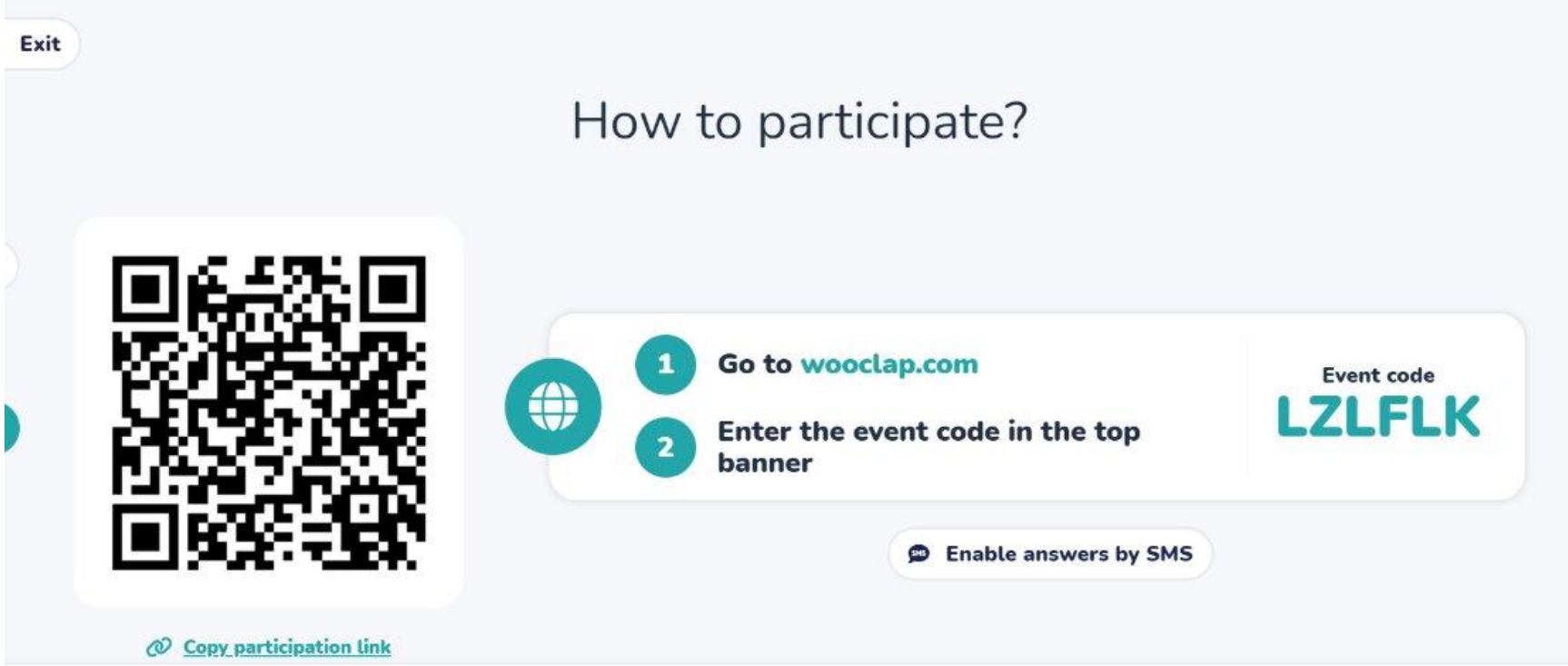
Test your knowledge



Training and Getting Help

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Database training

Law Librarian Resources Media Hopper Channel:
(For demo videos of Westlaw, Lexis and Hein)
https://media.ed.ac.uk/channel/channelid/175663881

Law Subject Guide:
https://edinburgh-uk.libguides.com/Law

One-to-one appointments:
Book through MyEd booking system, or email
law.librarian@ed.ac.uk

Image from pikist.com

LibSmart
Your Library Research Begins Here
MARK

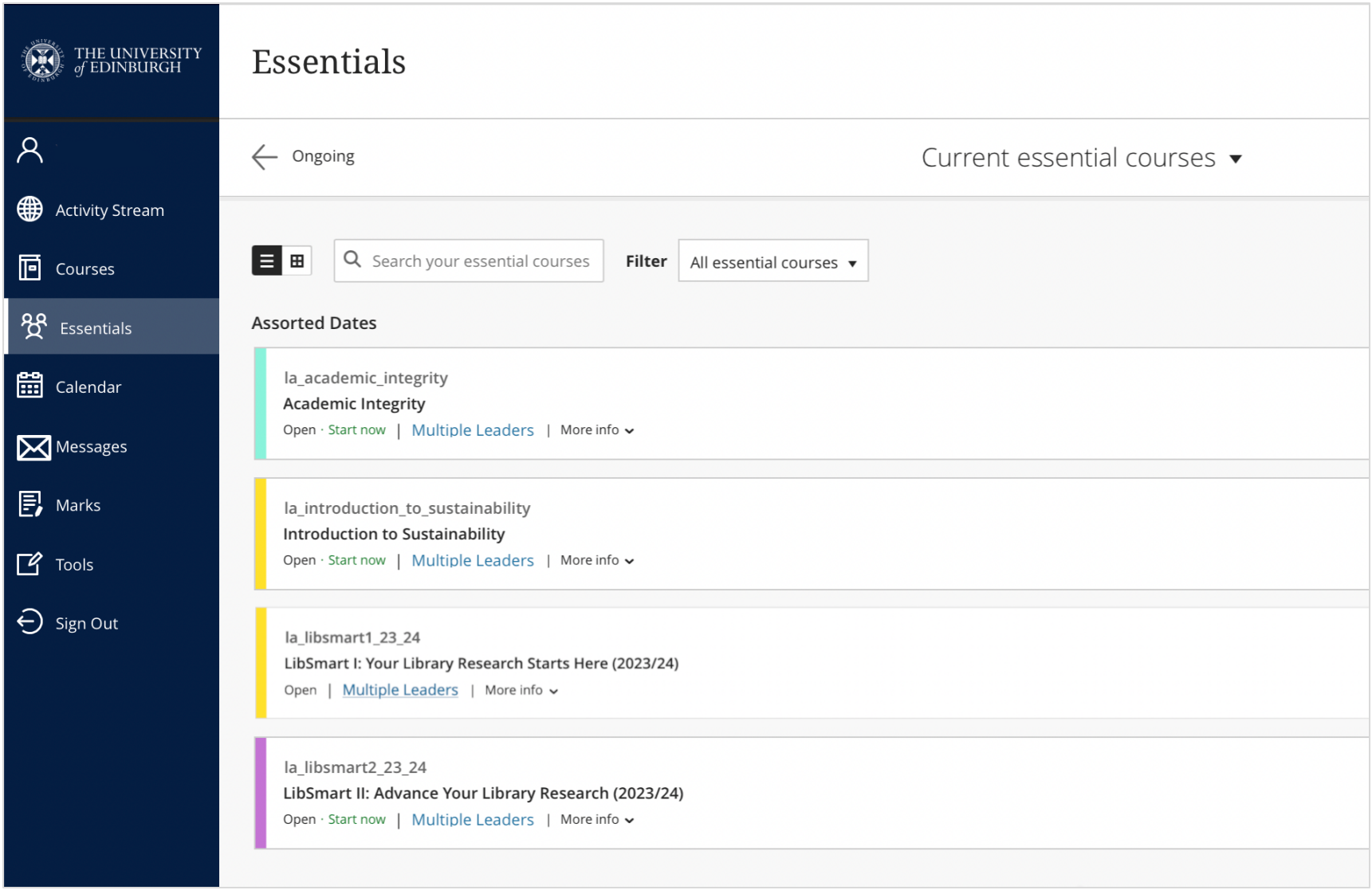
LibSmart is an online, self-enrol Learn course developed with the aim of ensuring that every student is digitally capable in using online library resources for their study and research.

We've created **LibSmart I** to help you get started using library resources. The course provides an introduction to topics such as:

- accessing and using online library resources
- exploring library collections
- finding and managing information
- using tools to help you with citation and referencing.

LibSmart II focuses on the next steps for your research, allowing you to pick the modules you find most relevant for your work. You'll develop advanced searching skills and really get to grips with subject specific information. This course will help you with complex research projects such as dissertations, systematic reviews or final year projects.

Visit www.ed.ac.uk/is/libsmart to find out more!



Access LibSmart via Learn – Essentials section

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RLF
SUPPORTING WRITERS SINCE 1790

Services offered:

- 50-minute one-to-one sessions with a professional writer.
- Advice on structure, clarity, grammar, editing.
- Covers all academic writing types: essays, reports, theses, etc.

Benefits:

- Free and confidential.
- Advice is tailored to your needs and aims.

Exclusions:

- Do not proofread or teach ESL.
- Not a specialist support service for specific learning disabilities.
- No online sessions when abroad.

To find out more and book a session, go to:
Royal Literary Fund Fellow
(https://edin.ac/3T6fpAg)

Scan

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For more help and advice:

Law Library webpages:
https://library.ed.ac.uk/using-library/lib-locate/law-lib

Law Librarian Blog:
https://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/lawlibrarian/

Law Librarian Media Hopper Channel:
https://media.ed.ac.uk/channel/Law%2BLibrarian%2BResources/175663881

Academic Support Librarians:
https://library.ed.ac.uk/academic-support-librarians

EdHelp:
www.ed.ac.uk/edhelp

Any questions?

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Thank you

Your feedback matters!

Please take the time to answer this feedback survey :

https://edin.ac/45uHI0L

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