

UQ law students examine cybercrime in international classroom

Five UQ law students are participating in an international course on cybercrime in Zurich, Switzerland. Led by UQ Law professor Andreas Schloenhardt, the course is part of the flagship Transnational Organised Crime program offered by UQ in conjunction with the Universities of Zurich, Vienna, Cologne, and Ferrara. The course enables students to research the many facets of organised crime and study the laws and practical measures to fight it. With the involvement of international partners and presentations by experts and officials, students gain unique insight into global investigation techniques as well as international criminal law frameworks.

UQ law student Helena Hagan says “this is a great way to learn with students from other countries and my research project on ransomware attacks allows me to combine my law degree with my interest in IT”. University of Vienna student Gamze Altindas adds, “my project on special online investigation techniques has been eye-opening. This is a great experience to present my research to an international audience and get feedback from leading experts from top universities.”

UQ’s joint Transnational Organised Crime program is offered annually since 2018. Previous courses have focussed on wildlife trafficking, organised crime and illegal gambling, decriminalisation of drugs, the illicit firearms trade, and the challenges posed by organised crime to courts and prisons. In 2023–24, the focus is on transnational organised cybercrime.

Andreas Schloenhardt explains that “this includes specific crime types, the means and methods of online and computer-based offending, the involvement of organised criminal groups, international frameworks and national laws, as well law enforcement methods, prosecution, and prevention of cybercrime.”

Susanne Reindl-Krauskopf, Professor of Criminal Law at the University of Vienna, Honorary Professor at UQ, and co-organiser of the programme since day one, adds: “This course offers a great opportunity for our students to do research in an international context and, through special training, equips them with advanced research and presentation skills. Students in this course gain a good understanding of the criminology, policies, and laws relating to cybercrime, liaise with key stakeholders, and present their research findings to an academic audience.”

In 2024–2025, the joint Transnational Organised Crime course will focus on trafficking in cultural artefacts and antiquities and will be hosted by the University of Ferrara in Italy.