

North Carolina Legal Research

Second Edition

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Suzanne E. Rowe, Series Editor



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Series Note

The Legal Research Series published by Carolina Academic Press includes titles from states around the country as well as a separate text on federal legal research. The goal of each book is to provide law students, practitioners, paralegals, college students, laypeople, and librarians with the essential elements of legal research in each jurisdiction. Unlike more bibliographic texts, the Legal Research Series books seek to explain concisely both the sources of legal research and the process for conducting legal research effectively.

Preface and Acknowledgments

Many fine, nationally focused, legal research texts already exist. This book fills a unique niche by providing a North Carolina-focused, process-based, legal research textbook for law students and lawyers. As part of the state-specific Legal Research Series by Carolina Academic Press, this book is designed for use by new law students just learning how to engage in practical legal research in North Carolina. It could also be used as the basis for an advanced legal research course in North Carolina with additional supplementation from an instructor. Attorneys and laypeople alike might also find the book useful to reinforce their understanding of research with North Carolina legal information sources. The book's goal is to help students, attorneys, and laypeople all become savvy researchers.

North Carolina Legal Research uniquely focuses on a defined legal research process while incorporating specific North Carolina materials. Because few legal sources are published only online or only in print, the approach of the text is to assume format neutrality and complete integration of source formats. Due to circumstances beyond your control or due to personal preferences, you may not have access to all books or every premium online service. Throughout this book, an effort has been made to assume the use of either or both formats and descriptions of using either are included.

The book begins by laying a foundation for legal research and analysis, developing the idea of a research process and discussing some general strategies (Chapters 1 and 2). Next, the book follows a basic legal research process beginning with secondary sources in Chapter 3 and continuing with constitutional law, statutory law, case law, and administrative law (Chapters 4 through 8). The book finishes with chapters on updating the law, finding court rules and rules of ethics, and a last look at the process of legal research (Chapters 9 and 10 and the Epilogue). There are several supporting appendixes, most notably the final appendix addressing legal citation.

The primary change from the first edition is the emphasis on newer online platforms. While the first edition covered Westlaw Classic and Lexis.com, this edition addresses WestlawNext, Lexis Advance, and Bloomberg Law.

North Carolina Legal Research would not have been possible without the expertise of many people. The approaches taken in the other legal research books in this series were invaluable, and we appreciate the impact those authors' works had in shaping our ideas for this book. Most significantly, the series editor, Suzanne Rowe, invested her time and expertise in reviewing the manuscript and suggesting improvements. In addition to her valuable insights and important suggestions for each chapter, her legal citations appendix from *Oregon Legal Research* was the foundation for this book's legal citations appendix, which we adapted for use in North Carolina.

We remain in debt to those who helped with the first edition of this book, authored by Scott Childs. Patrick McCrary, UNC law student and research assistant, provided an important student perspective. UNC Law Library staff members Donna Nixon, Margaret Hall, Steve Melamut, Sandy Jones, and Denise Thompson provided priceless advice and assistance. Thanks are also due to the entire UNC Law Library staff for their understanding and patience throughout the length of this time-consuming project. Anne Klinefelter, UNC Law Library Director, provided amazing encouragement and support for the project as did the UNC School of Law administration. Finally, Hannah Choe, UNC law student and research assistant, and Jonathan Rountree, UNC reference librarian, provided invaluable support for the second edition.