

Legal Research Guide: Patterns and Practice, 7th

By Bonita K. Roberts & Linda L. Schlueter. (2015), 200 pages, ISBN: 9781632815347. \$56

Subject: Legal research guidebook

Useful for: Intended for use by law students and by legal practitioners

Format: Chapters with index; Research checklists; “Additional Tips” section geared towards practitioners; Appendix containing sample research problems

Reviewer’s Comments:

Legal Research Guide: Patterns and Practice instructs legal researchers on the steps in the legal research process with an emphasis on where and how to find specific types of legal information. The authors dedicate individual chapters to explaining the methods for conducting the following types of legal research: case law research, U.S. Constitutional law research, federal legislative research, federal administrative research, state constitutional law research, state legislative research, state administrative research, secondary source research, and foreign and international law research. Unlike many standard legal research textbooks, the authors provide little background on or explanation of the “whys” of the legal research process, aside from an “Introduction to Legal Research” chapter. However, the authors are thorough in their descriptions and explanations of the methods that can be used to retrieve specific types of legal information.

The text provides broad coverage of legal research on both the federal and state levels. However, while the chapters on state law research do provide general information on the methods for finding state-specific information, the specific examples used in those chapters are usually based on Texas legal resources. As a result, novice researchers outside of Texas may have a difficult time generalizing this information to their specific states.

The authors provide brief information in each chapter on how to access electronic versions of various types of legal information, but there is little relatively little discussion of conducting electronic legal research overall. To be fair, the authors note in the preface to the text that the text is primarily focused on print research. However, instructors of legal research classes that are designed to teach the electronic legal research process may find this text lacking.

The heavy emphasis on legal research methods without additional basic explanatory information makes it difficult to recommend Legal Research Guide: Patterns and Practice as the sole textbook for a first-year basic legal research class. However, as a review text for an advanced legal research class or as one of two or more texts in a basic legal research class, this text would be a solid choice. Attorneys may also find it helpful to use this text as a review of how to access various types of legal information, particularly in print.

Reviewed by: Clanitra Stewart Nejd, Northern Illinois University College of Law Library, in 2018.