The innovative and flexible provision of higher education is all-important for busy professionals who are unable to study by attending university each week.

Recognising the importance of a postgraduate qualification, many high-flying employees are seeking ways to improve their career prospects and broaden their horizons while still working.

Birkbeck’s School of Law responded to this desire for flexible learning opportunities by launching two intensively taught Master’s degrees in 2012–2013. They were taught over four weeks (two weeks in April and two weeks in June/July) in Bloomsbury, thereby providing face-to-face teaching with minimal disruption to work and family life.

Reading and learning materials were provided months in advance, to enable students to prepare for the classes. A compulsory supervised dissertation also enabled students to develop their own interests, once the teaching was finished.

Fourteen students in the first cohort have now successfully completed their degrees and nearly all of them will graduate with at least a merit – outstanding results for this mode of study. They were enrolled on either the LLM/MA in Human Rights or the LLM in International Economic Law, Justice and Development.

There is a growing appetite for provision of learning and teaching that blends private study with face-to-face teaching. Around 25 students have already applied for the Master’s courses for the coming year (2013–2014), and numbers are expected to grow. An additional new intensive Master’s degree is also being offered – an LLM in Economic Law with a specialisation in International Finance. These Master’s degrees build on the School of Law’s unique interdisciplinary and critical approach to legal studies.

A novel way of teaching postgraduate Law courses during concentrated periods of face-to-face teaching is proving popular at Birkbeck

Laura Barre (far left), a student from France, opted for the intensive LLM in Human Rights to help her pursue her ambition to become a human rights lecturer or to work for a non-governmental organisation.

She said: “The lecturers have been very supportive and have provided help throughout the course and even afterwards. The online services are of a very good quality and make a huge difference when working on an essay, when you are living in another country.”

Dr Stewart Motha (left), Director of the Intensive Master’s Programmes in Birkbeck’s School of Law, was pleased with the enthusiasm and diversity of the first cohort of intensive students.

He said: “In addition to busy Londoners, we were delighted to welcome a diverse range of students who live, work or have close links in South Korea, the US, Latin America, and several European countries. They brought a combination of professional expertise and experience in law, banking, social welfare and business to share with fellow students.

“We are pleased to be pioneering this dynamic mode of intensive learning and teaching in the UK. Birkbeck is not only the best place for busy Londoners to study in the evenings; it is a university for busy professionals from anywhere in the world to combine careers and other responsibilities with further study.”

Dr Motha, who has taught at Birkbeck for two years, established the intensive Master’s degrees following the success of similar programmes at Melbourne University, where he has also taught.

For more information, visit: www.bbk.ac.uk/law/intensives