This chapter provides an overview of actus reus, which refers to the ‘external elements’ of an offence. An actus reus is not simply about the movements of the accused, that is, her conduct. Rather, it includes any offence requirement that is external from the mind of the accused: anything that is not mens rea. Before discussing the elements that form the actus reus, this chapter considers the distinction between actus reus and mens rea. It then describes the three elements of actus reus: conduct, circumstances, and results. It also explains the categories of actus reus offences, omissions liability, and causation before concluding with sections that outline potential options for legal reform and a structure for analysing the actus reus of an offence when applying the law in a problem-type question. Relevant cases are highlighted throughout the chapter, with a brief summary of the main facts and judgment.
2. Actus reus

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