

Feedback Form

Proposed revisions to the Accreditation Standards for Australian Law Courses

ABOUT YOU

Name/organisation:

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YOUR FEEDBACK

Consultation Question 1: Do you support the drafting of the proposed revisions set out in the Draft Revised Standards? We are interested in the reasons for your view and suggestions for improved drafting.

Please provide your feedback below:

1.1	Online delivery of law courses Refer to Draft Revised Standards: • New clause 4.1 (The delivery of the law course) • Ancillary adjustments to clause 4.6 (Teaching of the law course and active learning) for synchronous online learning • Clause 2.1 adjusted and new definitions for “online”, “delivery mode”, “in-person” and “synchronous online learning” • Clause 2.1 deletion of the “face-to-face” definition La Trobe Law School (LLS) welcomes the amendments regarding online course delivery which increase flexibility while retaining safeguards to assure high quality learning opportunities are provided for law students. The definitional amendments increase clarity, recognise the importance of active learning, and acknowledge that active learning can occur effectively in both online and in-person formats. Some minor wording suggestions are included in below sections.
1.2	Teaching hours, active learning and student engagement Refer to Draft Revised Standards: • Revisions to clauses 4.5 (Content of the law course) and 4.6 (Teaching the law course) • Clause 2.1 new definitions for “delivery mode” and “teaching method”, as well as for “active learning” and “direct interaction” We support the revisions and suggest some minor edits for clarity: 4.5(b)(ii), currently “describe the teaching methods having regard to the delivery modes for each prescribed area of knowledge”. Suggested change: <i>“describe the teaching methods, and the delivery mode of each method, for each prescribed area of knowledge”</i>

	4.5(b)(iii), currently: “the total teaching hours provided should equate to at least 36 hours for each prescribed area of knowledge.” Suggested change to remove ambiguity associated with ‘equate’, which could be interpreted in diverse ways: <i>“the total teaching hours provided should be at least 36 hours for each prescribed area of knowledge.”</i> 4.6(b)(iii), currently: the design of the law course and its program of instruction provides for at least 18 hours of either or both of – (A) active learning; and (B) instruction and learning involving direct interaction between teacher and student, whether in-person or through synchronous online learning, and enables students to acquire and demonstrate appropriate understanding and competence in each element of each prescribed area of knowledge and statutory interpretation. Suggested change to make clear that the requirement for 18 hours active learning is at a subject not course level: <i>the design of the law course and its program of instruction</i> <i>(i) provides for at least 18 hours of either or both of –</i> <i>(A) active learning; and</i> <i>(B) instruction and learning involving direct interaction between teacher and student, whether in-person or through synchronous online learning,</i> <i>for each prescribed area of knowledge and statutory interpretation, and</i> <i>(ii) enables students to acquire and demonstrate appropriate understanding and competence in each element of each prescribed area of knowledge and statutory interpretation.</i>
1.3	Invigilated assessments Refer to Draft Revised Standards: • Revisions to clause 4.7 (Assessing understanding and competence), • Clause 2.1 new definitions for “assessment method” and “invigilation” LLS supports the broad principle of learning assurance checkpoints via invigilated assessments. This approach is consistent with La Trobe University (LTU) assessment policy. To promote flexibility which reflects variable assessment weightings within subjects we suggest a range is used, for example: <i>“40-60% of assessment in a subject covering a prescribed area of knowledge and statutory interpretation must be invigilated.”</i>
1.4	Intensives and block learning models Refer to Draft Revised Standards: • Revisions to clause 4.3 (The duration of the law course)

	LLS supports the suggested amendments regarding intensive and block learning models. For courses that make use of intensive and block teaching, guidance about what might be a reasonable justification of this delivery mode may be useful.
1.5	Other minor revisions Refer to Draft Revised Standards: • Clause 2.1 new definitions for “law course” and “unit” and accompanying revisions • Updates to the definition of “prescribed areas of knowledge” at clause 2.1 and elsewhere to include statutory interpretation The revised definition of ‘prescribed area of knowledge’ adds “the teaching of which may include statutory interpretation as set out in the LACC Statement on Statutory Interpretation”. If the intention is to make clear that statutory interpretation can be taught either as a distinct, dedicated subject or as part of teaching a prescribed area of knowledge, then we suggest moving this content from the definitions section to the substance of standard 4.5. Standard 4.2(a), currently: “This applies when a law course is a single degree and when a law course is part of a combined or double degree, to the law component of that combined or double degree.” could be more clearly drafted: <i>“This applies to a law course that is a single degree and to the law component of a combined or double degree.”</i>

Consultation Question 2: Do you agree with the proposed transitional period for the final Revised Standards? If not, why not?

Please provide your feedback below:

2	Transitional period The proposed transitional period is reasonable.
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Consultation Question 3: Do you have any other comments in relation to this work that you would like to provide to the Committees?

Please provide your feedback below:

3	Other comments The proposed revisions offer useful clarification in the design and delivery of law courses, which is particularly welcome in the post-Covid 19 learning context. We respectfully offer some editorial suggestions below to increase clarity and precision throughout. • Number the standards (1-7) rather than “4.1” etc • Number the dot points immediately after each standard and before the explanatory note • The content of the sections titled “How can a law school show that it has met this standard?” serves as the substance of the standards. For example, the new requirement of 18 hours of active learning or direct interaction is part of the mandatory standard requirement. Re-designing the document to make clearer
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	exactly what the content of each standard is would be welcome. The standards should make clear exactly what it is that a law school must do. LLS is concerned that some of the provisions on evidence constitute substantive requirements but may be poorly understood as such. All substantive requirements should be clearly delineated.
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