

Submission to the Review of Practical Legal Training

Feedback Form — Adelaide University Law School

Respondent Details

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Responding as	Organisation
Jurisdiction	South Australia
May we publish your response?	Yes

1 Law Courses

1.1	<i>Do you support the proposal for the LACC to amend the Accreditation Standards for Australian Law Courses to require law courses to demonstrate how they have included practical teaching and training of the practical skills identified at Appendix F, with appropriate assessment?</i> Adelaide University Law School supports the goal of ensuring that law graduates develop practical capabilities alongside doctrinal knowledge. The question of whether the accreditation standards mechanism proposed in this consultation is the right vehicle for achieving that goal requires careful evaluation. Several matters warrant resolution before support would be appropriate: • The proposed skills schedule warrants reconsideration before it can serve as an accreditation standard. The schedule is substantially derived from the existing PLT Competency Standards rather than from a fresh, empirically grounded assessment of current professional requirements — for reasons addressed in detail in response to Q1.2. • There is a structural concern about embedding a detailed and fixed skills list in undergraduate accreditation standards, given the pace of change in the profession and the five-year minimum interval between accreditation reviews. A mandated undergraduate skills list is liable to become outdated before it is next formally reconsidered. • There is a risk of crowding out the distinctive value of university legal education. A university law degree is the primary site at which lawyers develop critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and the habits of mind that distinguish a profession from a trade — qualities that are increasingly important in a profession being reshaped by artificial intelligence, and most resistant to automation. An already crowded curriculum leaves diminishing
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	space for the subjects and modes of inquiry through which these qualities are developed. • The assessment requirements attached to the proposed skills schedule are insufficiently defined. The proposals require that identified practical skills be both taught and assessed, but do not articulate what adequate assessment must look like and to what standard of competency. A broader concern is that this reform addresses one stage of the legal education pathway in isolation. Urgent and comprehensive review of the entire continuum — the undergraduate degree, PLT, supervised practice, and CPD — is needed before structural requirements at any single stage are finalised. Requirements designed without reference to the full pathway risk creating misalignment, duplication, or gaps across the continuum as a whole. Adelaide University Law School notes that earlier collaborative initiatives — including the <i>Australian Legal Education: 2030 and Beyond</i> project, which brought together CALD, LACC, APLEC, the Legal Services Council, the Law Council of Australia, and others — sought to examine the legal education continuum as a whole. A reform process grounded in that kind of comprehensive, system-wide approach would provide a sounder foundation for the changes now proposed. This concern is compounded by a concurrent Senate inquiry into Australian university graduates, referred to the Education and Employment References Committee in March 2026 and due to report in November 2026. The inquiry's terms of reference directly engage the question that underpin this proposed reform — whether university education is equipping graduates with the skills employers require. Finalising accreditation standards before those findings are available risks embedding reform on an incomplete evidence base. On balance, Adelaide University Law School supports skills-enriched legal education in principle, and would support an accreditation requirement framed around broad and durable capabilities. It would have reservations about an accreditation requirement mandating a detailed and static skills list of the kind currently proposed, and strongly recommends that the reform be considered in the context of the full legal education continuum and the concurrent Senate inquiry.
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1.2	<i>Do you suggest any amendments to the proposed skills schedule (Appendix F) in respect of the knowledge areas and skills to be included in the delivery of law courses, as identified in column three of the table?</i> As noted in response to Q1.1, Adelaide University Law School does not consider that the current evidence base is sufficient to support the adoption of a mandated skills schedule for undergraduate law courses. On that basis, we do not support the proposed schedule in its current form. If, following appropriate evidence-gathering, a skills schedule were to be adopted, Adelaide University Law School's view is that it should be shaped by the following considerations. For skills located at the undergraduate accreditation level, the case for a narrower and more durable list — focused on foundational capabilities that can be authentically embedded across three years of academic legal education — is stronger than the case for a broad and detailed contemporary inventory of skills.
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	Law schools teach within a fixed curriculum architecture, subject to five-yearly accreditation review; a detailed skills list mandated at this level is liable to become outdated before it is formally reconsidered, and creates pressure on the curriculum that risks displacing the substantive legal education it sits alongside. For skills located at the PLT and PALT stages, the position is different, and is addressed in responses to Q2.1 and Q2.2 below. There is also a concern about the internal coherence of the schedule as currently drafted. Several items raise questions about whether they are properly characterised as skills and whether they are assessable in any meaningful sense. 'Knowledge of the mental health and substance abuse issues that disproportionately impact the legal profession' is a knowledge descriptor, rather than a skill, and it is not clear what assessment of it would look like or demonstrate. 'Exposure to techniques to build resilience, flexibility, an ability to deal with uncertainty, to adapt to change and to cope with stress' is framed at a level of generality that makes assessment design impractical, and the competence to deliver it sits outside the recognised expertise of legal academics and practitioners alike. There is also a structural concern about the Priestley 11 remaining unreformed. Appending a skills schedule to an unchanged foundational knowledge framework raises a question about whether the overall curriculum architecture remains fit for purpose, and whether this review presents an opportunity to address that more fundamentally.
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1.3	<i>Would law schools be able to implement these changes by the beginning of the 2028 academic year, as proposed?</i> No. The proposed 2028 implementation date is not achievable for law schools. Implementing changes to an accredited law degree requires: finalised and published requirements; curriculum design and development; internal institutional approval processes (including Academic Board and curriculum committees); TEQSA compliance; and LPEAC accreditation — before any new cohort can be enrolled. For significant curriculum change, this sequence routinely takes two to three years. Requirements would have needed to be available by mid-2026 at the latest to support a 2028 commencement. A realistic implementation date warrants careful consideration, with 2030 a more achievable target, contingent on requirements being settled and published no later than end of 2027. A compressed timeline risks producing superficial compliance rather than genuine improvement in learning outcomes — the very outcome the review seeks to avoid.
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2 Reform of PLT — Practical Knowledge and Skills

2.1

Do you support the proposal to amend the PLT Competency Standards to reflect the categories and skills set out in the skills schedule at Appendix F as the practical knowledge and skills required at the time of admission?

Adelaide University Law School supports the goal of ensuring the PLT Competency Standards reflect current professional requirements. As noted in response to Q1.2, the proposed skills schedule requires independent validation against contemporary evidence before it can reliably serve that function.

A prior, evidence-based determination of the outcomes required at the point of admission — specifically, what lawyers need to know and be able to do in the current environment — should precede the finalisation of any revised Competency Standards. The design of structures should follow from that determination, not precede it.

2.2

Do you suggest any amendments to the categories or skills set out in the skills schedule at Appendix F?

As noted in response to Q2.1, Adelaide University Law School's primary position is that a revised skills schedule for PLT should be preceded by an independent, evidence-based assessment of what lawyers need to know and be able to do at the point of admission. Until that exercise is undertaken, it is not possible to say with confidence what amendments to the current schedule are warranted.

In our view, at the PLT and PALT stages, a more contemporary and forward-looking treatment of AI and technology capability would be appropriate, given that providers at those stages are better placed than law schools to keep pace with change in the profession.

2.3

Do you think that the following areas need to be specifically included in the skills schedule, either as categories or identified knowledge and skills: Working with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? Preventing and addressing sexual harassment? Awareness of obligations under anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing regulations? Awareness of ADR options, or specific skills relating to ADR? Negotiation skills in a wider range of settings, or other specific settings? Drafting any other types of legal documents?

Adelaide University Law School does not consider it appropriate to express detailed views on the content of the PLT skills schedule, which is primarily a matter for PLT providers and members of the legal profession who are best placed to assess what capabilities are required at the point of admission.

Adelaide University Law School's position is that the schedule as a whole should be subject to independent, evidence-based validation — drawing on CPD data, employer consultation, surveys of newly admitted lawyers, and complaints and disciplinary records — before any of the specific areas identified in this question are

	mandated. The current consultation process does not appear to have generated that evidence.
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2.4	<i>Should the option for graduates to undertake Supervised Workplace Training as a way of completing PLT be retained?</i> Adelaide University Law School does not make a submission in relation to this question.
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2.5	<i>If the option of Supervised Workplace Training is to be retained, what aspects of the skills schedule should be delivered by an approved provider or as approved programmed training?</i> Adelaide University Law School does not make a submission in relation to this question.
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2.6	<i>Should there be any other amendments to Supervised Workplace Training?</i> Adelaide University Law School does not make a submission in relation to this question.
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3 Reform of PLT — Delivery of PLT

3.1	<i>Do you support the proposal for the LACC to amend the PLT Standards to reduce PLT courses to be a minimum of four weeks in length, together with up to one week of pre-reading and viewing of preparatory materials?</i> Adelaide University Law School has reservations about a reduction to four weeks. Skills develop through scaffolded, distributed learning with feedback and supervised practice over time — development that is difficult to replicate in compressed, de-contextualised delivery formats. A short intensive course is more effective as a consolidation experience than as the primary site of skills development, and it is not clear that a four-week format achieves the pedagogical goals the reform identifies. Additionally, the relationship between learner-to-teacher ratios and required learning activities warrants consideration. The proposed 20:1 class size ratio provides meaningful quality assurance only where students are engaged in active, skills-based learning. If delivery consists primarily of instruction or lecture, the ratio is not a reliable indicator of quality. The Standards might usefully specify the types of learning activity for which ratio requirements apply.
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3.2	<i>Do you think that a four-week period is too short or too long for a PLT course, taking into account the other proposals in relation to law courses and post admission training?</i> If significant practical skills development is to occur in the undergraduate degree and meaningful practice-based learning in the post-admission phase, the PLT stage needs a clearer articulation of what it is specifically designed to achieve before the right format can be determined. The risk of a compressed format is that it incentivises superficial assessment rather than genuine skills development, particularly where the undergraduate foundation is variable across institutions.
4.1	<i>Do you support the proposal for the LACC to amend the PLT Standards to provide that a PLT course may be, but does not have to be, delivered at a graduate diploma level or equivalent?</i> This proposal requires careful evaluation, particularly in relation to TEQSA accreditation and FEE-HELP eligibility, which are addressed in response to Q4.2.
4.2	<i>If you support this proposal, would any additional safeguards be required for PLT providers (given they would not necessarily be regulated by TEQSA)? For example, should new quality assurance measures be required in the LACC framework documents? What should those additional measures be?</i> Removing TEQSA accreditation from PLT would eliminate FEE-HELP eligibility for students undertaking those programs, requiring costs to be met upfront. Many students do not have the financial capacity to meet PLT costs without income-contingent loan support. The equity and diversity implications for the profession — and for access to justice more broadly — require careful evaluation before any change is made. TEQSA accreditation also provides independent, nationally consistent quality assurance. If that function is removed, the question of how equivalent quality assurance would be provided — and whether state admitting authorities are adequately resourced and equipped to perform it — warrants direct consideration. Adelaide University Law School does not support any proposal that would remove or duplicate TEQSA's regulatory function in relation to university-delivered PLT.
5.1	<i>Do you support the proposal that the LACC amends the PLT Standards to require that PLT coursework is to be delivered in person or, in exceptional cases (as determined by the PLT provider), by synchronous online delivery?</i> Adelaide University Law School has significant reservations about a mandatory in-person delivery requirement for PLT. The case for in-person delivery rests primarily on assertions about professional formation and networking benefits, but the evidence that in-person instruction produces superior learning outcomes is not established. Well-designed online and blended delivery has been shown to produce equivalent outcomes across a wide range of educational contexts, and the preference for in-person delivery expressed in survey responses reflects satisfaction rather than evidence of differential learning. If concerns exist about the quality of

	online PLT delivery, those concerns are properly addressed through improved regulation and quality assurance of online delivery, not by restricting or prohibiting it. For students in regional and remote areas — a material cohort in a geographically large state such as South Australia — travelling to attend a four-week intensive in-person course may require significant expenditure on transport and accommodation, creating a financial barrier that falls disproportionately on students who are already less likely to have access to professional networks and practitioner employers. The same concern applies to students with caring responsibilities, students with disabilities that make in-person attendance difficult, and students in full-time employment. A mandatory in-person requirement that is not accompanied by genuine structural provision for these groups is likely to replicate, rather than reduce, the access and equity problems that motivate the current review. Adelaide University Law School also notes that if international students are to be able to complete PLT, CRICOS requirements must be satisfied regardless of whether the program is an AQF-registered qualification. This regulatory obligation should be addressed explicitly in the revised Standards. The 'exceptional cases' carve-out requires clearer definition to be workable. Without guidance on what constitutes an exceptional case, there is a risk of inconsistent application across providers, undermining national consistency.
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6.1	<i>Do you support a review of the PLT Standards to ensure that assessments are rigorous in measuring whether students have developed the required knowledge and skills? If so, do you have any suggestions on how the Standards should be set to ensure rigorous and effective assessment?</i> Yes. Adelaide University Law School supports robust assessment standards for PLT. The revised PLT Standards might usefully address whether competency standards are defined with sufficient precision to drive assessment design and permit external evaluation. Related to this is the question of whether a mechanism for cross-institutional moderation or external validation would be appropriate, as applies in other regulated professions with competency-based admission requirements. A further matter for consideration is the absence of a capstone verification point. PLT previously provided a point at which a graduate's practical readiness could be verified before admission. Under the proposed model, it is not clear what provides equivalent assurance for regulators, the profession, and the public.
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6.2	<i>Do you think that there is a need for the LACC to amend the PLT Standards to provide guidance on how incidents of academic misconduct should be recorded and reported to the admitting authorities in student conduct reports?</i> Reporting requirements in relation to academic misconduct are properly a matter for each state and territory jurisdiction, given that applicable requirements differ across admitting authorities. Adelaide University Law School does not make a further submission on this question beyond noting that any guidance developed at
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	the national level should accommodate jurisdictional variation rather than seek to override it.
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4 Workplace Experience

7.1

Do you support the LACC retaining the requirement for a minimum of 15 days of workplace experience prior to admission?

Adelaide University Law School supports the retention of a workplace experience requirement, and considers the reduction in the minimum requirement appropriate. A lengthy workplace experience requirement has been widely identified as a significant barrier to entry, particularly where placements are unpaid or poorly supervised.

Any revised workplace experience requirement should directly address two concerns that the current proposals appear not to adequately resolve. First, there are questions about the employment status of students undertaking workplace experience as clerks, interns, or paralegals — and whether that work is, or is encouraged to be, unpaid. Where workplace experience is effectively mandated as an admission requirement, there are real questions about whether it constitutes work that should attract employment entitlements, and whether a framework that relies on unpaid student labour is equitable or legally sustainable. Second, the equity implications of a workplace experience requirement fall unevenly: students without access to professional networks, or in regional areas where legal workplaces are less accessible, face materially greater difficulty in sourcing qualifying placements. The Standards should address how equitable access to workplace experience is to be supported.

8.1

Do you support the LACC updating the Standards on PLT Workplace Experience to provide more information on the types of tasks and hours allocated to the development of specific skills for students completing their workplace experience, with regard to the skills schedule at Appendix F? Do you have any suggestions on what this guidance should include?

Adelaide University Law School supports the development of guidance on workplace experience tasks in principle. Any such guidance should be framed at a level of generality that avoids the same problems as the proposed skills schedule — namely, the risk of static prescription that becomes rapidly outdated. We suggested the guidance should articulate the types of learning activity and supervised engagement that constitute meaningful workplace experience, rather than enumerating specific tasks that may be practice-area-specific or that reflect current professional conditions rather than durable principles of experiential learning.

Given that legal practice is being reshaped rapidly by technology and changing client expectations, guidance developed now should be structured to accommodate revision without requiring full Standards amendment each time the practice landscape changes.

9.1

Do you support the LACC working with stakeholders to prepare guidance for supervisors on the supervision of workplace experience that addresses the purpose and requirements of workplace experience, the type of tasks to be undertaken and time allocated to them and the ethical standards and expectation of supervisors?

Yes, strongly. Adelaide University Law School supports the development of clear, practical guidance for workplace supervisors, and considers it one of the more important practical measures this review can advance.

Research undertaken by members of Adelaide University Law School's academic staff — Covark, Hewitt, Nosworthy and Henderson, 'Facilitating Effective Work Experience Supervision to Enable Diverse Students to Succeed in the Australian Legal Profession' (2024) 34(2) *Legal Education Review* — identifies a consistent gap between what students need from workplace supervision and what supervisors currently provide. The research found that supervisors typically lack formal training in supervision, that students frequently do not know how to raise problems they encounter in placements, and that diverse students face additional vulnerabilities in legal workplaces that well-designed supervision guidance can help to mitigate.

In response to these findings, the Law School developed student and supervisor resources as part of a project funded by the Law Foundation of South Australia. The supervisor resources — covering supervision techniques, effective communication, recognising and responding to mental health issues, managing challenging conversations, and articulating workplace culture — were delivered to South Australian practitioners as accredited CPD training through the Law Society of South Australia. That experience demonstrates both the demand for this kind of guidance and the value of delivering it through the professional body rather than expecting practitioners to develop supervisory capability without support.

Adelaide University Law School encourages the Committees to draw on existing research and practice models rather than beginning from first principles.

The reform proposals assume a level of practitioner willingness to engage in supervision and training that warrants careful scrutiny. Recent data on graduate hiring at major Australian law firms indicates that the profession is undergoing significant structural adjustment, with AI automation of routine entry-level work leading some firms to reduce graduate cohorts and restructure how early-career lawyers are developed. MinterEllison, for example, reduced its graduate cohort for 2025-26 by almost a third, explicitly citing AI automation of routine lower-level work as a contributing factor (Australian Financial Review, 10 May 2026). Firms that are reducing graduate intake and restructuring around AI-assisted workflows are unlikely simultaneously to expand their capacity to supervise workplace experience placements. The reform should not proceed on the assumption that practitioner supervisory capacity is stable or growing.

10.1

Do you think that legal profession regulators should review the training that is offered to lawyers who wish to improve their supervisory skills?

Yes. The research and practice experience discussed in response to Q9.1 indicates that supervisory training is widely unavailable in the profession, that practitioners are interested in accessing it, and that targeted delivery through professional bodies and CPD frameworks is an effective mechanism. Regulatory review of what is

	currently offered — and what gaps exist — would be a useful complement to the development of national guidance.
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10.2	<i>Do you think that there is a need for additional training for lawyers who wish to improve their supervisory skills? What do you think that training should include? How could it be delivered?</i> Yes. The research undertaken by Adelaide University Law School academics (Covark, Hewitt, Nosworthy and Henderson, 2024) found that no respondents in its practitioner survey had received formal training in supervision before being charged with supervising students. Despite this, 86% indicated they would be prepared to undertake supervision training, and their employers were broadly supportive. There is both unmet need and genuine appetite for this training. Based on that research and the training modules developed and delivered in partnership with the Law Society of South Australia, effective supervision training for lawyers should address: the purpose and scope of workplace supervision, including the distinction between allocating and reviewing work and the broader mentoring and support role; techniques for providing constructive feedback, including on performance that is unsatisfactory; how to open and maintain communication about workplace culture, rights, and expectations; recognising and responding to signs of mental health difficulty in those being supervised; understanding the particular vulnerabilities of diverse and equity-group students in legal workplaces; and the obligations and limits of the supervisor role, including when to refer a supervisee to other support. Delivery through accredited CPD, with recognition towards mandatory CPD requirements, is likely to be the most effective mechanism. The South Australian model — in which CPD credit for completing the training provided an incentive for engagement — produced strong participation rates. A national framework that similarly incentivises uptake would be more effective than purely voluntary participation.
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11.1	<i>Do you support the LACC amending the Standards and the Standards for PLT Workplace Experience to allow a PLT provider to approve workplace experience being undertaken while the student is studying a law course? If so, should any additional safeguards or requirements be imposed on such work experience? Should PLT providers play the role of certifying that appropriate work experience has been undertaken?</i> Adelaide University Law School supports in principle the flexibility to complete workplace experience during the law degree. The current requirement that workplace experience occur after or concurrently with PLT coursework creates unnecessary sequencing constraints and can delay admission for students who have already accumulated relevant supervised legal work. However, several safeguards are necessary to ensure this flexibility does not create inequity or undermine the integrity of the requirement. In particular, the Standards should clearly address whether experience undertaken as part of a law degree program — for example, an internship subject that attracts academic credit toward the LLB — can also count toward the PLT workplace experience requirement.
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	Double-counting of the same activity for both academic credit and admission requirements raises questions of fairness to students who have not undertaken clinical or internship subjects, and of the integrity of both requirements. The revised Standards should be explicit about whether, and under what conditions, such experience qualifies.
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12.1	<i>Do you support the LACC amending the PLT Standards to set out the obligations of PLT providers to assist students in sourcing workplace experience opportunities?</i> Yes, in principle. Any obligation should be framed around active support and facilitation rather than a guarantee of placement, given the structural factors — geographic distribution of legal workplaces, employer capacity, and market conditions — that PLT providers cannot fully control. Particular attention should be given to students in regional areas and those from equity groups, who face the greatest difficulty in sourcing placements independently.
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5 Post Admission Legal Training (PALT)

13.1	<i>Do you support a new requirement being imposed for early career lawyers to undertake 15 hours of PALT in each of the first two years of practice? Is the amount of time proposed for PALT too long or too short?</i> Adelaide University Law School supports the introduction of structured post-admission training in principle. The post-admission phase has genuine pedagogical merit as the context in which practice-based learning is most meaningful — lawyers at this stage have substantive knowledge, real matters to work on, and direct experience of the competency gaps the training is designed to address. The question of whether 15 hours per year is the right quantum requires more evidence than the proposals currently provide. There is an opportunity through PALT for the profession to contribute substantively to the design and delivery of training, not only to specify the outcomes it requires of new entrants. Adelaide University Law School encourages the Committees to consider how a genuine co-design process with the profession could be built into the PALT framework. A related concern goes to the capacity of the profession to deliver PALT at scale. The reform assumes that practitioners will be both willing and available to contribute to structured post-admission training at the level the proposals envisage. That assumption is underexamined. At the same time as the reform is being designed, major law firms are reducing graduate cohorts and restructuring workflows around AI tools. A reform that substantially increases the training obligations of the profession should be accompanied by evidence that the profession has the capacity and commitment to meet those obligations.
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13.2	<i>Do you think it is appropriate for this requirement to be implemented as a condition on practising certificates? If not, please outline what you consider to be the preferable mechanism to impose the new requirement.</i> Adelaide University Law School does not express a view on the appropriate implementation mechanism for PALT requirements, which is primarily a matter for legal profession regulators.
14.1	<i>Do you support the proposal for lawyers who practise exclusively as barristers to be exempt from the requirement to undertake PALT? Would this pose any issues in your jurisdiction?</i> Adelaide University Law School does not express a view on this question. The rationale for the proposed exemption, as set out in the consultation paper, warrants consideration by legal profession regulators and the Bar. Adelaide University Law School notes only that if a principled distinction between barristers and solicitors in relation to post-admission training requirements is to be maintained, the basis for that distinction should be clearly articulated.
15.1	<i>Do you support the proposal that PALT should be delivered in areas identified and developed by PALT providers, subject to the approval mechanisms set out separately below?</i> Adelaide University Law School supports the principle of provider-developed content, subject to regulatory approval. The details of how PALT content should be structured, approved, and delivered are matters that require careful development with input from practitioners, regulators, and providers — and that should not be settled hurriedly as part of this consultation. Adelaide University Law School encourages the Committees to allow adequate time for that development process before PALT requirements are finalised.
15.2	<i>Do you support the idea that lawyers can choose to undertake PALT in one practice area, or up to four different practice areas?</i> Adelaide University Law School does not express a detailed view on practice area structure for PALT at this stage. The design of PALT content and structure is a matter that requires evidence-based development drawing on practitioner experience, and should not be resolved in advance of that work. Adelaide University Law School notes only that any framework should be flexible enough to reflect the diversity of legal practice contexts — including in-house, public sector, and community legal service settings — and not be designed exclusively around private practice models.
16.1	<i>Do you support the proposal that lawyers who are undertaking PALT should have further restrictions on their ability to practise? If so, what additional restrictions should apply?</i> Adelaide University Law School does not express a view on practice restrictions during PALT, which is primarily a matter for legal profession regulators. Any

	restrictions should be proportionate to the identified risk, clearly articulated in advance, and applied consistently across jurisdictions.
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6 Delivery of PALT

17.1	<i>Do you support the proposal that PALT should be delivered in person or, in exceptional circumstances (as determined by the PALT provider), by synchronous online delivery?</i> The concerns raised in response to Q5.1 apply equally to PALT. Adelaide University Law School does not accept that in-person delivery is inherently superior for the types of learning PALT is designed to achieve, and a mandatory in-person requirement for early-career lawyers compounds the equity barriers identified in relation to PLT. Regional practitioners, those with caring responsibilities, those with disabilities, and those in demanding employment settings face the same structural obstacles to in-person attendance as PLT students — and for many, those obstacles will have become more acute upon entering practice. Quality concerns about online delivery are properly addressed through rigorous provider approval and assessment standards, not through delivery mode restrictions.
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18.1	<i>Do you support the proposal that the content and providers of PALT should be approved by the regulator that issues practising certificates to solicitors?</i> Adelaide University Law School supports regulatory oversight of PALT content and providers as a quality assurance measure. The approval mechanism should be transparent, based on clearly articulated criteria, and should not create unnecessary barriers to entry for providers — including universities — that have the expertise and capability to deliver high-quality PALT in specialist areas.
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19.1	<i>Do you support the proposal that PALT should incorporate rigorous assessment? Do you have any views on the parameters for this requirement?</i> Yes. Adelaide University Law School supports rigorous assessment for PALT, for the same reasons set out in response to Q6.1. Assessment standards must be defined with sufficient precision to drive meaningful evaluation, and a mechanism for quality assurance across providers is necessary if national consistency is to be achieved.
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7 Clinical Legal Education

20.1	<i>Do you support the Committees considering options for the inclusion of clinical legal education as a component of PLT?</i>
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	Adelaide University Law School notes the following practical considerations in relation to this proposal, which it considers would need to be addressed before a view could be formed. Operating a legal clinic is resource-intensive. It requires dedicated physical space, supervising practitioners, professional indemnity arrangements, and ongoing administrative support. These costs are substantial and would need to be carefully considered in the context of LACC's stated objective of reducing the cost of PLT. In South Australia, both law schools operate established legal clinics as courses within their undergraduate law degrees, supported in part by grants from the Law Foundation of South Australia. That funding model has developed over many years and is integral to the university context in which the clinics operate. It is not clear how clinical legal education delivered as a component of PLT — outside the undergraduate degree and the university environment — would be funded, nor whether PLT providers would have access to equivalent support.
20.2	<i>If introduced, should clinical legal education be a mandatory component of PLT or an optional extra for students to undertake? If clinical legal education is a mandatory component of PLT, should students be entitled to credit for clinical legal education undertaken as part of a law degree?</i> Given the resource costs identified in response to Q20.1, making clinical legal education a mandatory component of PLT would be inconsistent with LACC's stated objective of reducing the cost of PLT. If clinical legal education is to be included at all, it should be optional. On the question of credit for clinical legal education undertaken as part of a law degree, Adelaide University Law School supports in principle the recognition of equivalent prior learning. Students who have completed a supervised clinical placement as part of their undergraduate degree have already demonstrated the capabilities such a placement is designed to develop, and requiring them to repeat that experience would be neither educationally justified nor consistent with the goal of reducing the burden of PLT.
20.3	<i>If clinical legal education is optional, should completion of clinical legal education satisfy the requirements for PALT?</i> Whether completion of clinical legal education should satisfy PALT requirements depends on what PALT is specifically designed to achieve — a question that the current proposals do not resolve with sufficient clarity to allow a confident answer. Until PALT's intended outcomes are more precisely defined, it is not possible to assess whether clinical legal education undertaken pre-admission, in a university context, and with a different supervisory structure, would provide an equivalent experience. Adelaide University Law School recommends that this question be addressed once PALT's design and intended outcomes are settled.
20.4	<i>Who should be responsible for delivering and supervising clinical legal education?</i>

	The delivery and supervision of clinical legal education requires qualified lawyers who are licensed to practise and have the pedagogical preparation to supervise students in live client settings. In the university context, this function is performed by lawyer-academics with clinical expertise. In a PLT context, it is not clear that PLT providers currently have access to sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and prepared lawyer-educators to discharge this function at scale. In some jurisdictions there may be regulatory barriers to law schools operating legal clinics, which would make collaboration between universities and PLT providers of the kind contemplated in the consultation paper impractical or not feasible in those jurisdictions. This is a matter that would need to be examined on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis before any model for clinical legal education in PLT is finalised.
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20.5	<i>Do you support the Committees inviting a working group comprising suitably qualified educators/experts to explore how clinical models of legal education could be employed as part of PLT?</i> If the Committees decide to pursue the inclusion of clinical legal education as a component of PLT, the establishment of a working group would be a sensible next step. The practical, regulatory, and funding complexities identified in responses to Q20.1 to Q20.4 are significant, and a working group comprising suitably qualified educators and experts would provide an opportunity to fully examine what is involved in delivering clinical legal education outside the university context and to consider whether those complexities can be resolved in a way that is consistent with the objectives of the reform.
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8 Supervision of Early Career Lawyers

21.1	<i>Do you think there is a need for additional guidance to supervisors of early career lawyers, to improve supervision?</i> Yes. The quality of supervision of early career lawyers is a significant determinant of whether post-admission practice experience achieves its intended developmental purpose. Additional guidance — addressing what effective supervision looks like, what obligations supervisors carry, and what support is available — would strengthen the overall framework.
21.2	<i>Do you support legal profession regulators establishing a working group to develop additional guidance and resources for supervisors of lawyers as part of their supervised legal practice and consider potential regulatory reforms?</i> Yes. Adelaide University Law School supports this proposal. A working group with appropriate representation from law schools, PLT providers, legal profession regulators, and practitioners would be well placed to develop guidance that reflects the full continuum of legal education and training, not only the post-admission stage.

9 Implementation Timing

22.1

Do you support the proposed transitional arrangements and implementation timeframe set out at Proposal 22?

Adelaide University Law School does not support the proposed implementation timeframe for the reasons set out in response to Q1.3.

The case for a revised and extended timeline is strengthened by the concurrent Senate inquiry into Australian university graduates, due to report in November 2026. The inquiry is actively gathering evidence on questions that the PLT proposals currently rest on — including what employers require of graduates and whether university education is delivering it. Finalising structural requirements for law degrees before those findings are available risks embedding reform on an incomplete evidence base, and creates a real prospect that requirements settled now will need to be revisited in the near future.

Adelaide University Law School also notes that law schools are currently navigating an unusually high volume of simultaneous regulatory change — the PLT review, revised LACC accreditation standards for law courses, the Senate inquiry, and the Australian Tertiary Education Commission legislation. Together, these create a regulatory environment in which meaningful engagement with any single process is difficult, and in which the risk of uncoordinated or contradictory outcomes is significant.

A realistic and properly sequenced implementation timeline would:

- Allow the Senate inquiry to report and its findings to be incorporated into the evidence base.
- Provide for finalised and published requirements with sufficient lead time for genuine curriculum design — not less than two to three years before any revised requirements take effect.

2030 is a more realistic implementation target, contingent on requirements being settled and published no later than end of 2027.

There is a further concern about students currently enrolled in law degrees, who made their enrolment decisions on the basis of curriculum and admission requirements in place at commencement. The extent to which revised accreditation standards would apply to existing cohorts requires clear resolution, with fair transitional arrangements in place before any new requirements take effect. Students who have already commenced their degree cannot benefit from the scaffolded development of practical skills across the full arc of their legal education, which is central to the reform's own rationale.