

Feedback Form: Review of Practical Legal Training

Respondent details

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Bond University welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Consultation Paper: Review of Practical Legal Training (April 2026). Bond is uniquely placed to contribute to this consultation as both a provider of an accredited Australian law degree delivered within an accelerated trimester model, and an approved provider of Practical Legal Training. Bond has extensive experience in integrating skills-based education, professional responsibility and experiential learning across the legal education continuum, while operating within a rigorous quality assurance framework under the Higher Education Standards and TEQSA oversight.

Bond supports thoughtful and evidence-based reform of PLT and related aspects of legal education, but emphasises the importance of reforms that are realistic, pedagogically sound, equitable, and workable for students, universities, providers and the profession.

Responses to consultation questions

Law courses

1.1 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?

Bond generally supports the embedding of practical legal skills within the law degree. Bond's own Legal Skills and Professionalism Program demonstrates that skills-based teaching and assessment can be effectively integrated into core and elective subjects without diminishing academic rigour.

However, Bond does not support the adoption of a highly prescriptive or overly detailed skills schedule at this stage. Any requirements must be carefully calibrated to ensure they do not displace essential doctrinal content, reduce disciplinary breadth through further constraining electives, or undermine existing accreditation obligations, including TEQSA-mandated institutional priorities (such as gender-based violence prevention).

Bond is also concerned about the implications for credit transfer arrangements. Increased prescription and institution-specific skills mapping may undermine student mobility, at a time when TEQSA is seeking to reduce unnecessary barriers to transfer between programs and institutions.

1.2 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?

Bond strongly favours a separate, dedicated sector-wide project to identify appropriate skills outcomes, levels of detail, and the most pedagogically effective points in the continuum at which those skills should be taught and assessed. This work should be undertaken collaboratively with law schools and PLT providers, and be informed by contemporary scholarship on legal education and professional formation.

Attempting to settle these issues through incremental amendments to a draft skills schedule risks producing outcomes that are overly detailed, internally inconsistent, and misaligned with program structures across the sector.

1.3 Would law schools be able to implement these changes by the beginning of the 2028 academic year, as proposed?

Bond does not consider the proposed 2028 implementation date to be feasible.

As a practical matter, law schools cannot begin substantive redesign of accredited programs until the new framework is finalised and adopted by local admission authorities. Only after that point can internal university approval processes commence, and substantial changes to programs will require approval by Faculty and University governance bodies that can take months to secure. Even within Bond's accelerated trimester model, these processes are substantial and cannot be compressed without risking program integrity.

It is also important that students have sufficient notice of changes to PLT timing and duration so they can plan for placements, graduation and admission.

Bond considers that a minimum of two years from final adoption by the relevant admitting authority is required before revised law degree programs could be responsibly implemented.

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?

Bond strongly supports simplification and streamlining of the PLT Competency Standards. However, Bond reiterates the importance of first resolving, through a collaborative process, which skills should be taught at each stage of the continuum and to what depth.

Aligning PLT standards with an unsettled and highly prescriptive skills schedule risks embedding uncertainty and rigidity into PLT programs.

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

Bond refers to its response to Question 1.2. These matters should be addressed through a dedicated project rather than through piecemeal amendment.

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? If so, what types of documents?

Subject to the above, Bond supports the inclusion of skills relating to:

- Working with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Preventing and addressing sexual harassment (noting alignment with TEQSA priorities)
- AML/CTF obligations
- Alternative dispute resolution
- Negotiation skills across multiple practice contexts

Bond supports exposure to a broader range of drafting tasks, but does not support increased prescription as to document types or contexts.

Note also that law schools are subject to existing regulatory obligations relating to several of these areas, including gender-based violence obligations under the *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence*. These obligations are imposed under legislation on TEQSA accredited providers, and the reforms to PLT should not seek to duplicate or undermine them.

2.4 Should the option for graduates to undertake Supervised Workplace Training as a way of completing PLT be retained?

2.5 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?

2.6 Should there be any other amendments to Supervised Workplace Training?

Bond expresses no view on the retention or modification of Supervised Workplace Training pathways.

Reform of PLT – Delivery of PLT

3.1 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?

3.2 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?

Bond does not support reducing PLT coursework to a four-week minimum. In Bond's experience, meaningful skills acquisition, reflection and refinement require sustained engagement over time.

Bond considers that a minimum of eight weeks full-time equivalent skills training is more appropriate, with part-time and online options available to maximise accessibility and educational effectiveness.

4.1 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?

Bond agrees that PLT may be delivered other than at graduate diploma level. However, Bond has serious concerns that market pressures will result in no providers continuing to offer GDLPs, thereby eliminating access to FEE-HELP.

This would have significant equity implications for prospective students and may render PLT financially unviable for some providers, including Bond.

4.2 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?

If PLT is no longer regulated under the AQF and TEQSA framework, Bond considers that a new and comprehensive regulatory structure would be required. Neither LACC nor the admitting authorities appear currently resourced to administer such a framework.

5.1 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?

Bond does not support mandating in-person delivery of PLT.

Such a requirement would significantly undermine equitable access, particularly for students with caring responsibilities, disabilities, financial constraints, geographic limitations, or a combination of two or more of these factors.

Bond's experience demonstrates that well-designed online and blended delivery can meet high pedagogical standards. If concerns exist regarding online delivery, those concerns should be addressed through quality assurance measures, not prohibition.

6.1 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?

Bond strongly supports rigorous assessment and assurance-of-learning requirements. Universities already operate under extensive assessment obligations pursuant to the Higher Education Standards, and Bond considers similar expectations should apply consistently across all PLT providers.

6.2 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?

If PLT is removed from the AQF and TEQSA framework, Bond agrees that explicit standards around academic misconduct will be necessary. However, this will substantially increase regulatory and administrative burdens on admitting authorities.

Workplace experience

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

Yes. Bond University supports retaining a minimum workplace experience requirement prior to admission.

However, Bond has significant concerns about the sector-wide consequences of setting 15 days as both the minimum and, in practice, the de facto standard. If all PLT providers reduce their workplace experience expectations to the minimum, this may have unintended effects on placement availability. Many employers prefer longer placements that justify the time and resourcing required for supervision and training. A widespread shift to very short placements may, paradoxically, make placements more difficult to secure unless accompanied by a clear and coordinated commitment from the profession to support these arrangements.

Bond also strongly considers that the 15-day workplace experience must be undertaken post-completion of the law degree and during (or alongside) PLT, and that students should not be permitted to use earlier workplace experience completed during their law studies to satisfy this requirement. This approach promotes consistency, integrity and comparability in pre-admission professional preparation.

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?

Yes. Bond supports the provision of additional guidance in the Standards regarding the types of tasks and indicative time allocations associated with workplace experience, particularly where this guidance assists supervisors and students to understand the educational purpose of the placement.

Such guidance should remain non-prescriptive and illustrative rather than mandatory. It should articulate examples of appropriate legal and ethical tasks, expected levels of responsibility, and opportunities for observation, reflection and skill development, without creating rigid compliance obligations that may discourage employers from offering placements.

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. Bond strongly supports the development of clear, practical guidance for supervisors.

Supervisor guidance should explain the purpose of workplace experience within the broader admission framework, outline expectations regarding supervision and ethical practice, and provide examples of suitable tasks. This is particularly important for small and regional practices that may not regularly host PLT students.

Bond also encourages LACC/LSC to consider building into the new regulatory structure a process whereby students experiencing poor supervision can report their concerns and receive support and guidance.

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. Bond supports a review of existing supervisory training.

However, Bond cautions that mandatory or highly onerous training requirements may act as a disincentive for lawyers to take on PLT students or early career lawyers. Any reforms should therefore focus on accessible, proportionate and practically useful training offerings.

10.2 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?

Yes, for the reasons set out above, but with similar caution.

Training should focus on effective supervision, ethical leadership, feedback, and managing professional risk in early career development. Delivery should be flexible, including online and modular formats, to minimise barriers to participation.

11.1 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?

No. Bond does not support workplace experience undertaken during the law degree counting towards PLT workplace experience requirements.

Workplace experience should be completed post-degree, when students have acquired foundational legal knowledge and are properly positioned to engage in professional practice. Bond supports a model in which PLT consists of coursework (for example, four weeks or more) and workplace experience is a separate pre-admission requirement administered by the admitting authority, rather than integrated into PLT provider certification processes.

12.1 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?

Bond's position depends on the structural location of workplace experience.

If workplace experience is separated from PLT, Bond does not support imposing obligations on PLT providers to source placements. If workplace experience remains part of PLT, Bond considers it appropriate for providers to assist students — but not to guarantee placements. At Bond, substantial support is already provided, but ultimate responsibility must rest with the student.

Post Admission Legal Training (PALT)

13.1 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?

If PLT coursework is reduced to four weeks, Bond supports the introduction of a PALT requirement. Fifteen hours per year is an appropriate and proportionate amount, provided it is in addition to existing CPD requirements and not merely a relabelling of current obligations.

13.2 Do you think it is appropriate for this requirement 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.

Yes. Bond supports implementation through conditions on practising certificates, administered by the relevant regulator.

14.1 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?

No. Bond does not support exemptions based on practising as a barrister. All early career lawyers should undertake structured post-admission training, regardless of practice pathway.

15.1 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?

No. Bond considers that core PALT content should be consistent across providers to ensure equity, comparability and professional standards.

15.2 Do you support the idea that lawyers can choose to undertake PALT in one practice area, or up to four different practice areas?

Yes. Bond supports flexibility, allowing lawyers to undertake PALT in one or multiple practice areas depending on their preferences and employment context.

16.1 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?

Yes. Bond supports proportionate restrictions designed to protect clients and the public while early career lawyers continue developing competence. Appropriate restrictions may include limitations on complex appearances, signing off on legal advice or settlements, and involvement in trust accounting transactions.

Delivery of PALT

17.1 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?

No. For the same equity and accessibility reasons outlined in relation to PLT, Bond does not support restricting PALT delivery to in-person or exceptional synchronous online modes. Many early career lawyers work full-time and would benefit from high-quality asynchronous or blended delivery options.

18.1 Do you support the proposal that the content and providers of PALT should be approved by the regulator that issues practising certificates to solicitors?

Yes. Bond supports regulator approval to ensure consistency, quality and professional confidence in PALT offerings.

19.1 Do you support the proposal that PALT should incorporate rigorous assessment? Do you have any views on the parameters for this requirement?

Yes. Without meaningful assessment and assurance of learning, PALT risks being treated as a compliance exercise rather than genuine professional development. Assessment should be proportionate but robust, focusing on reflection, application and demonstrated learning outcomes.

Clinical legal education

20.1 Do you support the Committees considering options for the inclusion of clinical legal education as a component of PLT?

Yes. Bond supports consideration of clinical legal education as part of PLT.

20.2 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

Clinical legal education should operate as an alternative to the 15-day workplace experience requirement, not an additional obligation.

Credit for clinical experience undertaken during a law degree should only be available where it exceeds the workplace experience requirement.

20.3 If clinical legal education is optional, should completion of clinical legal education satisfy the requirements for PALT?

No. Clinical legal education and post-admission legal training serve different purposes and should not be treated as interchangeable.

20.4 Who should be responsible for delivering and supervising clinical legal education?

Clinical legal education should be delivered and supervised by the clinic or community legal centre, with administrative oversight and responsibility resting with the PLT provider.

20.5 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?

Yes. Bond University strongly supports the establishment of a dedicated working group comprising legal educators, clinicians, PLT providers, and representatives of community legal centres to explore the role of clinical legal education within PLT. Clinical legal education is a complex and resource-intensive mode of education that varies significantly in its structure, objectives and delivery across institutions. Any move to incorporate clinical models into PLT should therefore be informed by specialist expertise and grounded in evidence of pedagogical effectiveness, student capacity, supervisory requirements and sustainability.

Supervision of early career lawyers

21.1 Do you think there is a need for additional guidance to supervisors of early career lawyers, to improve supervision?

Yes. Bond University considers that additional guidance for supervisors of early career lawyers would be both timely and beneficial. Supervisors play a critical role in the professional formation, ethical development and competence of newly admitted lawyers. However, supervisory expectations and practices vary widely across the profession, and many supervisors receive little guidance or support beyond general professional obligations. Clear, accessible guidance could assist supervisors to better understand their role in mentoring early career lawyers, managing professional risk, providing effective feedback, and supporting ethical decision-making. This is particularly important in smaller firms and in regional or resource-constrained practice settings.

21.2 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?

Yes. Bond University supports the establishment of a working group to develop guidance and resources for supervisors of lawyers undertaking supervised legal practice. Such a working group should focus on producing practical, proportionate and supportive resources rather than imposing additional compliance burdens. Bond stresses the importance of avoiding overly prescriptive regulatory reform that may inadvertently discourage lawyers from taking on supervisory roles, particularly in circumstances where the profession already faces capacity constraints.

Implementation timing

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

No. Bond University does not support the proposed transitional arrangements or implementation timeframe.

Bond has serious concerns that the proposed reforms to law degrees, PLT and post-admission training are scheduled to be implemented in an overly compressed and synchronised manner. As both a law school and a PLT provider, Bond considers that such an approach is likely to create significant practical difficulties for education providers, regulators and students alike.

In particular, insufficient attention appears to have been paid to transitional cohorts — including students who commence or complete their law degree under one framework but are required to undertake PLT or meet post-admission requirements under another. This risks inequity, administrative confusion and uncertainty for students at a critical stage of their professional transition.

Bond strongly supports a staged and carefully sequenced implementation, with clear transitional rules that protect existing students, allow sufficient time for program redesign and regulatory adoption, and ensure alignment across the legal education continuum before new requirements are enforced.

Bond University appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important consultation and would welcome further engagement as the Committees consider the future regulation of Practical Legal Training. Bond supports reform that is evidence-based, carefully sequenced and attentive to equity, educational quality and regulatory coherence.

We thank the Committees for their consideration of these submissions and remain willing to assist with further consultation as the review progresses.