

Feedback Form: Review of practical legal training

Respondent details

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Your submission will be shared with the Admissions Committee and the Law Admissions Consultative Committee and may also be shared with the Legal Services Council.

Unless stakeholders advise us otherwise, submissions may be published on the Council's website.

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- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

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? The LEAD Network does not support the proposed reforms outlined in the Review of PLT. Australian PLT programs and law courses have traditionally had distinct purposes. Completing a law course is to attain the academic qualifications prerequisite, while completing PLT is to acquire and demonstrate an appropriate understanding and competence in specified skills and practice areas. Not all law students who complete a law course at an Australian institution intend to practise law and their focus is on the academic areas of knowledge, not PLT. Many law graduates will use their legal skills in careers outside practise as a solicitor or barrister, consistent with the salience of legal qualifications in a knowledge economy. Several skills set out in Appendix F are already taught in many law courses, to varying degrees. However, Appendix F has not been mapped against relevant legal education literature relating to skills or indeed the Threshold Learning Standards (TLOs) for the Bachelor of Laws. For more information on the TLOs, please refer to Sally Kift, Mark Israel and Rachael Field, Bachelor of Laws Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Statement (Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 2010) <https://cald.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Threshold-Learning-Outcomes-LLB.pdf>. It is timely to update the TLOs and identify the skills that need to be embedded in Australian law courses today, but this requires a thoughtful, collaborative and collegial process that invites input from relevant stakeholders including employers, law graduates, all universities and institutions offering law courses, law academics and professional bodies. Frontloading such input and bringing relevant stakeholders along the journey is critical to successful change management. Please consider including Indigenous cultural competency, climate conscious lawyering and other contemporary skills in Appendix F. For Indigenous cultural competency, please refer to the submission from the First Nations Legal Professional Standards Working Party (May 2026). For climate conscious lawyering, we refer you to the work of Associate Professor Julia Dehm, Professor Nicole Graham, Zoe Nay, and Professor Kate Galloway (<https://climateconsciouslawyers.com>). The University of New South Wales hosts a biennial Legal Education Research Conference. The latest conference was held in November 2025 with the theme, ‘The Crowded Curriculum’ (<https://www.events.unsw.edu.au/event/legal-education-research-conference-1>). A selection of those conference presentations were converted into journal articles, which are currently being published in a special edition of the <i>Legal Education Review</i>. As the conference theme and numerous Deans have rightly noted, the curriculum in Australian law

	courses is already crowded. If the Appendix F skills need to be taught and assessed in Australian law courses, please consider what academic areas of knowledge and/or skills can be removed from a law course to keep completions within the equivalent of at least three years' full-time study.
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? Our response to this question depends on the extent to which the expectation is that these skills would be both taught <i>and specifically assessed</i>. The preamble to Appendix F does clearly contemplate that law schools would be required to address the extent to which the skills in Appendix F are assessed as part of the accreditation process. For this reason, law schools could, without further guidance, determine that it is necessary to both teach and assess all skills in Appendix F unless they are specifically identified as a 'PLT only' skill. The pressures of an already crowded curriculum, in the context of increasing student numbers (many from 'nontraditional' backgrounds such as 'first in family') and decreasing resources based on reports from LEAD Members, mean that academics and students are already considerably stretched in terms of managing the current curriculum. We are concerned that the totality of the proposed changes will place an unsustainable pressure on both staff and students, especially when there is already a substantial program of work being undertaken across law schools due to imperatives around the security and authenticity of assessment in light of developments in artificial intelligence. Many of the skills identified in Appendix F have been ear-marked for ethics and professional responsibility. This is consistent with some of these skills having been formerly in PLT programs, but risks unrealistic expectations of what can be appropriately covered in approximately 36 hours of teaching with 18 hours of active learning and direct interaction, and assessment. LEAD Members have also expressed concerns about managing assessment of studies already completed in another law program seeking to transfer to another law school/institution. These are already complex assessments that take significant time and are fraught with risks that may impact students years later, when they apply for admission. Adding the mapping of skills to an already crowded curriculum in addition to the Priestley 11 will make these assessments more complex, time-consuming and risky for both law schools and, especially, for students. This may mean accrediting authorities need to provide a pre-assessment of a transferring student's achievement of knowledge and skills, based on their accreditation records from the institution the student is leaving, to the institution they plan to move to. Where students are moving states (which is common for transferring students), this may also require liaison between accrediting authorities. It should be noted that students are currently required to 'repeat' some subjects because aspects of the Priestley requirements do not correlate, and that there is a risk that additional skills requirements may likewise mean that more transferring students need to repeat subjects (increasing upfront or deferred fees) in order to meet skills requirements where these do not line up with the program of study at the two institutions.

1.3	Would law schools be able to implement these changes by the beginning of the 2028 academic year, as proposed? No. Prior to changes to law courses being implemented, most Australian law schools need time to direct resources to (1) proper planning, for example, in collaboration with relevant internal enabling units and external stakeholders to develop a design brief, business case, course architecture, communications with staff and students, and system integration; (2) curriculum approval processes via institutional committees/academic governance; (3) external accreditation; and (4) development of resources to support new curriculum and skills. LEAD recommends allowing at least two years to complete the four steps outlined above, and so an implementation of not earlier than 1 January 2029, providing the expectations of Australian law schools are finalised by the end of 2026. However, even this timeline would likely prove problematic if the changes require significant upskilling of current academic staff and hiring of new academics, especially with experience as practitioners ('pracademics'). A rollout date earlier than 1 January 2029 is unreasonable, given the uplift and investment required. In some jurisdictions it appears unachievable. If a law school needs to recruit new staff and/or develop bespoke training for existing staff to deliver on the changes to law courses, time must be allowed for this to occur alongside review of curriculum and assessment. As mentioned above, the existing curriculum, particularly in Priestley subject areas, is already crowded. The LEAD Network also recommends that consideration be given to how the re-accreditation process will be scheduled, as it will not be possible for jurisdictional admitting authorities to review all law degrees in their jurisdiction in the same year the amended Accreditation Standards commence. This will require substantive resourcing within those bodies. While the NSW LPAB has indicated that they will allow self-accreditation and continue re-accreditation on the established cycle, this issue needs to be considered in other Australian jurisdictions. Further, when changing the requirements of law courses, the workloads of law academic and professional staff needs to be considered, and this is likely to be more impactful on smaller, regional law schools. Please consider the transitional arrangements for students part-way through their law degree when the new Accreditation Standards come in, as curriculum changes may need to be grandfathered in over several years. Some institutions are likely to require teach out arrangements over the length of the law course. Transitional requirements are an 'invisible' but substantive burden given that many students from lower SES cohorts (and those undertaking double degrees) do not complete their degree within four years.
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? See 2.2 below

2.2	Do you suggest any amendments to the categories or skills set out in the skills schedule at Appendix F? Skills as listed currently reflect an overly narrow focus on commercial practice and litigation. LEAD respectfully notes the diversity of legal practice across Australia, evident in, for example, the work of small/single practitioner legal practices, which for most litigants, are the primary service providers rather than a multinational group focused on commercial law. The expression of some skills is too specific as to the technology involved and disregards the extensive work by LEAD on building practitioner capability for the technologies-enabled 'Lawyer Of The Future'. LEAD recommends amending to technology-neutral language to avoid the need for regular 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: i. Working with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? ii. Preventing and addressing sexual harassment? iii. Awareness of obligations under anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing regulations? iv. Awareness of ADR options, or specific skills relating to ADR? v. Negotiation skills in a wider range of settings, or other specific settings? vi. Drafting any other types of legal documents? If so, what types of documents? i. LEAD recommends being more explicit around Indigenous cultural competency within the reference to clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, given that we are significantly behind jurisdictions like Aotearoa/New Zealand and Canada in integrating Indigenous cultural competency. Please refer to the submission from the First Nations Legal Professional Standards Working Party (May 2026). ii. Preventing and addressing sexual harassment: No, this topic is already covered by the <i>Universities Accord (National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Act 2025 (Cth))</i>. iii. Anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing regulations is more specific to certain areas of legal practice, and more suitable for post-admission legal training or specialisation iv. ADR options and ADR skills: this should be aligned with the Priestley requirements for civil dispute resolution. v. Negotiation skills: LEAD does not support extension of negotiation skills for a wider range of settings due to the risk of significant variation between programs and difficulties in mapping skills. This is an area also best left to specialisation after law school, with the focus on foundational skills during law school. vi. Drafting legal documents: LEAD does not support additional requirements for legal drafting, again due to the risk of significant

	variation between programs and difficulty in mapping skills. This is also an area best left to specialisation after law school, with a focus on foundational skills during law school.
2.4	Should the option for graduates to undertake Supervised Workplace Training as a way of completing PLT be retained? Yes, there is a place for Supervised Workplace Training (SWT). It is likely to best meet the needs of some employers (in particular large legal practices and public sector employers such as the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and Department of Home Affairs).
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? The issue here (consistent with criticisms of the PLT service providers) is quality assurance. LEAD suggests that further consultation on SWT is desirable. That consultation should take place as part of development of the enhanced PLT regime rather than as a subsequent stage.
2.6	Should there be any other amendments to Supervised Workplace Training?
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? No. The LEAD Network is concerned that reducing the requirements of PLT courses will increase the requirements of law courses, which merely shifts the responsibilities and adversely impacts the already crowded curriculum in law courses, law academic workloads, and law student learning and engagement. A reduction appears to be antithetical to criticisms by judicial and other stakeholders regarding both the pricing and effectiveness of current PLT courses.
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? LEAD considers that four weeks is inadequate to deliver, and meaningfully assess learning, given that a key rationale for PLT is as a quality assurance threshold for intended practitioners. LEAD members have commented on criticisms by a range of stakeholders that some PLT is essentially performative.
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? No. A PLT program should be studied after a law degree and thus be at a Graduate Diploma level.

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?
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? Limiting the PLT program delivery to in person, and synchronous online delivery in exceptional circumstances, raises equity concerns. Please consider the needs of a diverse cohort of law graduates. Some law schools offer remote, online, and blended law degrees and have a higher proportion of equity groups including rural and regional, parents and carers, low socio-economic, disability and First Nations.
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? It is axiomatic in any standards regime that those standards are evaluated as being 'fit for purpose' and that their implementation is assessed. LEAD notes that law schools are investing considerable resources in enhancing core assessment items (in particular the Priestley units) to ensure assessment that is both secure (directly addresses concerns regarding integrity) and authentic (engages with professional outcomes). Assessment within PLT can be informed by the deep body of knowledge within law schools and engagement with practitioner bodies and graduates. LEAD notes that in some major legal practices the emphasis is on inhouse skills development. LEAD also notes that many outstanding practitioners are not necessarily fully cognisant of teaching and assessment challenges.
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? No, TEQSA oversees the regulation of academic misconduct in higher education. Note: This question is framed as relating to the PLT Standards as opposed to the Accreditation Standards for law degrees, so LEAD is taking this question as relating to PLT providers only and not to law schools in their provision of a law degree.
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, as a minimum requirement.
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? The provision of more information is supported and is consistent with stakeholder expectations that law schools provide comprehensive information about curriculum, hours, assessment mechanisms and skills alignment regarding Priestley and elective units.
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? Provision of this guidance is axiomatic. It is consistent with earlier feedback by LEAD regarding standards development/evaluation and with stakeholder criticisms about the meaningfulness of workplace supervision as an aspect of PLT.
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, consistent with earlier feedback.
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? See 10.1. A salient issue here is whether upskilling of supervision capability is restricted to PLT supervision or instead dealing with supervision of practitioner and support personnel generally, given multiple studies and judgments about workplace cultures and inadequate supervision of junior solicitors.
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? Work experience undertaken during a law course is incredibly valuable to students due to the first hand experience of the law in action. However, such work experience cannot replace the need for structured workplace experience as part of a PLT course. The focus of legal internship and clinic-based elective subjects, which are the predominant forms of experiential study during a law course, is quite different to experiential learning in a PLT context. Important differences include (but are not limited to): (i) the stage of the experiential learning (some experiential learning may be available to students in a law course after their first year of study, whereas PLT work experience is after completion of a law course); (ii) experiential learning during a law course may be more observational than hands on management of clients, files and management of a matter, depending on the nature of the experiential learning subject; (iii) the

	rationale for students of a law course undertaking an experiential learning subject may differ from that of graduates focusing on developing their professional skills for admission and career development; (iv) the career stage of supervisors may differ considerably for experiential learning subjects within a law course compared to the supervision of graduates, with an expectation that supervision of graduates preparing for admission to practice be supervised by senior lawyers. There is a need for caution, and if this proposal proceeds, there should be consultation about appropriate safeguards to ensure that experiential learning during a law course can appropriately be counted and that there is equity of access to experiential opportunities within law courses. The resource-intensity of experiential subjects makes equity of access a real issue for many, if not most, law schools.
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? This will depend on the nature of those obligations and what is deemed as “assisting” the student. An obligation on PLT providers to generally “assist” is sound and will benefit students, however, it will be difficult for PLT providers to guarantee workplace experience opportunities.
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? The response to this question depends on whether this is in replacement of PLT or in addition to PLT. Thirty hours of PALT over two years as a replacement for PLT is inadequate to cover competencies that are currently addressed in PLT courses. A PALT model that replaced PLT would risk introducing further problems and inequities than the current PLT system, by assuming that early career lawyers have consistent employment in supportive environments; that supervisors have the time, capacity and inclination to provide structured training (which many smaller firms and community legal services do not). This also assumes that deficiencies in skills can be safely remedied post-admission.
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. If this was determined, yes, a condition on practising certificates would be appropriate to ensure compliance, but this would not address the risks noted at 13.1.
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. We are concerned that this would pose issues in smaller jurisdictions. We are unclear of the justification for this proposal.

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. This will lead to fragmentation and inconsistency. PALT should be designed to build coherently upon competencies developed prior to admission. Current PLT electives allow for skill-based competencies with national uniformity including assessment. Fragmented or poorly coordinated training is likely to diminish the competence and reliability of new lawyers.
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? This would be consistent with allowing individuals choice, but resourcing considerations may be relevant to feasibility.
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? No
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? Limiting the PLT or PALT program delivery to in person, and synchronous online delivery in exceptional circumstances, raises equity concerns. Please consider the needs of a diverse cohort of law graduates and flow on effects for PALT. Some law schools offer remote, online, and blended law degrees and have a higher proportion of equity groups including rural and regional, parents and carers, low socio-economic, disability and First Nations.
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. Regulation and accreditation is appropriate, to minimise forum shopping and reflect the mutual recognition regime there should be a common approval mechanism. As for any PLT course and PLT provider, accreditation for PALT courses and PALT providers should be undertaken by each jurisdiction's regulator to ensure quality and uniform standards.
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. There appears to be little justification for a practitioner training regime that lacks rigorous assessment.

Clinical legal education	
20.1	Do you support the Committees considering options for the inclusion of clinical legal education as a component of PLT? Many Australian law schools already offer law students the opportunity to participate in clinical legal education in a law course. This is not sufficient to replace PLT learning. For example, clinical legal education during a law course is highly valuable, but it should not be treated as a substitute for any elements of a structured, post-graduation PLT. Clinical programs are usually undertaken during a law degree, but vary widely in the work and competencies they cover, and are limited by cost, placement availability, and supervisory capacity. While strengthening skills development within a law course curriculum, clinical legal education cannot replace components of PLT programs that incorporate workplace experience and provide structured, assessed practice (with feedback) against essential professional competencies. PLT programs could offer a form of post-graduate level clinical legal education as part of the work placement experience component of PLT. However, for many PLT providers this offering would likely to be cost prohibitive.
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 Many law schools offer clinical legal education, and it would be valuable to students/graduate to be able to credit this to PLT. However, this needs to be balanced with the fact the clinical legal education, while extremely valuable to student learning, is also costly and resource intensive. In the past, there have been issues with paid placements and the capacity of the profession to absorb clinical placements, so this is an area in which caution should be exercised before making any significant changes.
20.3	If clinical legal education is optional, should completion of clinical legal education satisfy the requirements for PALT? Clinical legal education during a law degree is valuable, while resource intensive. If it is optional and completed during a law degree, we do not see the justification for clinical legal education to satisfy the requirements for PALT, post-admission.
20.4	Who should be responsible for delivering and supervising clinical legal education? Many law schools already provide clinical legal education experiences for their undergraduate students, with specialised staff who hold practising certificates and who are often in the ‘pracademic’ category. This is costly and resource-intensive, and this should also be considered for the context of PALT as similar resourcing issues would likely be encountered.

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. Such consultation is essential.
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? See above. Quality supervisors are essential for the development and mentoring of early career lawyers. Any initiatives that would genuinely improve guidance, training and support for supervisors is very much needed. We would welcome a direct consultative process incorporating stakeholders across the legal profession to address this gap in current supervisor training and support.
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. See above.
Implementation timing	
22.1	Do you support the proposed transitional arrangements and implementation timeframe set out at Proposal 22? No, the proposed transitional arrangements and implementation timeframe is unreasonable. For many entities (e.g. law schools and accreditation bodies) it is impractical and will have adverse effects. Please refer to our response at 1.3 above for more details. Please continue to consult and collaborate with the LEAD Network when reviewing and proposing changes to Australian law courses.