

Feedback Form: Review of practical legal training

Respondent details

Name: Bianca Jones / Brodie Donohoe

Organisation (if applicable): Tasmania University Law Society (TULS)

Contact details: education@tuls.com.au / president@tuls.com.au

Are you responding as (select one):

- ☐ Individual
- ☒ Organisation
- ☐ Peak body / Representative group
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Jurisdiction (select one)

- ☐ National
- ☐ Australian Capital Territory
- ☐ New South Wales
- ☐ Northern Territory
- ☐ Queensland
- ☐ South Australia
- ☒ Tasmania
- ☐ Victoria
- ☐ Western Australia
- ☐ Multiple
- ☐ Other. Please specify:

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.

May we publish your response on the Legal Services Council's website (select one)?

- ☒ 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? We broadly support the proposal to require law courses to incorporate practical teaching and assessment of relevant skills. We recognise that embedding practical competencies within undergraduate legal education would enhance graduate readiness, and that some of the skills identified in Appendix F would add value to law degree delivery. However, we have concerns about the feasibility of implementing certain identified skills within a university setting. In particular, some competencies - such as the ability to take client instructions in person or to interview a witness and prepare a statement or affidavit - are inherently practice-based and would typically require supervision by a qualified legal practitioner rather than an academic. The delivery and assessment of these skills would place significant additional demands on faculties, including the need to engage external practitioners and provide appropriate supervision. This raises practical and resource constraints, particularly in core units with large student numbers.
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? We suggest that certain items in the proposed Skills Schedule (Appendix F) should be removed where they reflect personal qualities or incidental skills, rather than discrete, teachable legal competencies. Attributes such as continuous learning, curiosity, flexibility, humility, responsiveness to feedback, and willingness to seek assistance are personal qualities that are inherently developed in higher education. They are not readily suited to formal instruction or assessment and should not be prescribed as course content. Similarly, skills relating to record-keeping, file management, maintaining client records, communication of developments, and time management are general organisational competencies. While important in practice, they are not unique to legal education and are typically developed through broader academic and experiential learning. We therefore recommend refining Appendix F to focus on discipline-specific knowledge and skills that can be meaningfully taught and assessed within a law degree.
1.3	Would law schools be able to implement these changes by the beginning of the 2028 academic year, as proposed?

	No. We do not consider it feasible for law schools to implement the proposed changes by the beginning of the 2028 academic year. With the academic year commencing in February 2028, the timeframe is less than two years. The proposed reforms would require substantial redesign of core units, including Priestly 11 subjects such as Legal Ethics, Civil Procedure, and Criminal Law. This level of curriculum overhaul necessitates careful planning, consultation, and staged implementation. Additionally, the introduction of in-person oral assessments in core units would require additional resources, including external practitioners to assess students. This would increase the financial and administrative burden on faculties and is likely to result in increased costs for students. Given the range of proposed changes, we consider that implementation by February 2028 would be difficult to achieve in a considered and effective manner.
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? We broadly support the proposal to shift from the current 146 performance criteria to a more streamlined set of skills, as this would improve clarity for PLT students. However, we consider there is value in structuring the standards to reflect broad practice areas (for example, corporate law, private practice, administrative/public, and criminal law). This structure would highlight the diversity of legal practice and provide more contextualised guidance. Additionally, there is a concern that the skills outlined in Appendix F appear to be more closely aligned with private practice and may not adequately reflect the range of roles available to admitted lawyers. The standards should be framed to ensure they are sufficiently inclusive of different career pathways across the profession.
2.2	Do you suggest any amendments to the categories or skills set out in the skills schedule at Appendix F? See 1.2 above.
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? With the exception of awareness of obligations under anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulations, we consider that the identified areas are already sufficiently captured, either expressly or implicitly, within the proposed skills schedule at Appendix F.
2.4	Should the option for graduates to undertake Supervised Workplace Training as a way of completing PLT be retained? No, we do not support retaining Supervised Workplace Training as an alternative pathway for completing PLT. We consider that a more uniform approach to PLT would promote consistency in training outcomes and ensure all graduates meet the same standards at the point of admission. Supervised Workplace Training can result in significant variability in the quality and scope of experience, particularly where placements are not within larger or well-resourced firms. In our view, the difficulty of effectively monitoring and assuring the quality of workplace-based training undermines its reliability as a pathway. A standardised PLT framework would better support fairness, transparency, and consistency across the profession.
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? If Supervised Workplace Training is retained, we consider that more practice-based skills are appropriately delivered in a workplace setting under the supervision of an approved practitioner. This includes skills such as conducting client interviews, undertaking negotiations, examining witnesses, preparing affidavits and statements of claim, and drafting contracts. These competencies are closely tied to real-world practice and are well suited to supervised, experiential learning environments.
2.6	Should there be any other amendments to Supervised Workplace Training? We have no further comment on 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, we do not support the proposal to reduce PLT courses to a minimum of four weeks.

	A reduction to such a short duration risks undermining the depth and integrity of PLT as a meaningful program of professional preparation. In particular, it raises concerns that PLT may no longer meet the expectations of a graduate-level qualification, with potential implications for its formal recognition and status. We are also concerned that this change may negatively impact accessibility. If PLT were no longer recognised or structured as a graduate-level program, there is a risk that students could lose access to existing funding mechanisms, increasing the upfront financial burden. This may disproportionately affect students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and create additional barriers to entry into the profession.
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? We consider that a four-week period is too short for a PLT course. The proposed timeframe is insufficient to properly develop, deliver and assess the range of practical competencies expected at the point of admission. Compressing PLT into four weeks would likely prioritise superficial coverage over meaningful skill development. Additionally, we are concerned about how a more rigorous qualitative assessment standard (in line with proposal 6.1) would be applied to a four week course. There is a very limited amount of qualitative assessment which can be done in four weeks. This may result in PLT courses where a very small amount of assessment, marked qualitatively with discretion, determines your suitability for admission.
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, we do not support the proposal to make a graduate diploma optional. Allowing PLT to be delivered outside a graduate diploma framework risks creating a two-tiered system. On one hand, shorter non-diploma courses may require significant upfront payment; on the other, longer graduate diploma programs - while more expensive overall - are typically accessible through deferred funding arrangements (i.e., HECS). This disparity is likely to financially disadvantage students who are unable to pay upfront fees, limiting their choice of pathway and creating inequitable access to admission. Retaining a graduate diploma requirement supports more equitable access by enabling students to rely on established funding mechanisms. We also note that existing graduate diploma programs are achieving strong outcomes. For example, data indicates high satisfaction rates with the Centre for Legal Studies PLT program, which also exceeds the minimum requirements set out in the PLT Competency Standards. This suggests that longer-form,

	graduate-level programs continue to deliver high-quality outcomes and should not be displaced. Accordingly, maintaining PLT as a graduate-level qualification is important to ensure consistency in standards, quality of training, and fairness of access to the profession.
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? Yes, if this proposal were adopted, additional safeguards would be required. In particular, where PLT providers are not subject to TEQSA oversight, the LACC framework would need to incorporate enhanced quality assurance measures to ensure consistency and maintain standards. This could include adopting or emulating core elements of TEQSA’s regulatory approach, such as minimum requirements for curriculum design, assessment integrity, student support, and provider governance.
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? We support the intent of promoting primarily in-person delivery of PLT, particularly given the value of face-to-face interaction for developing core practical skills. However, we consider it important that sufficient flexibility is retained to allow for high-quality online delivery where appropriate. Strict limitations confining online delivery to “exceptional cases” may inadvertently reduce access and create inequities - particularly for students in rural or regional areas, those with disability, or financial constraints. For instance, in Tasmania, where there is only one in-person PLT provider, a predominantly in-person requirement may also limit student choice and create practical and cost barriers if an “exceptional cases” discretionary threshold was narrowly applied.
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? We support the view that PLT is, and should be, more than a “box-ticking” exercise. However, we have concerns about the potential consequences of introducing more subjective or qualitative assessment, particularly in circumstances where

	PLT may no longer be governed by university-level oversight. Increased assessor discretion, without transparent review mechanisms, creates a risk of inconsistent or unfair outcomes. In particular, we would not support reforms that substantially increase the difficulty of achieving a pass in PLT. PLT should remain a consistent and reliable pathway to admission, and students should not be faced with an increased risk of failing due to variable or overly stringent marking practices. A preferable approach may be to allow providers to recognise higher quality student work through distinction-type rankings - as opposed to merely a pass/fail criteria. This would encourage stronger performance without creating additional barriers to entry and undermining confidence in the fairness of assessment outcomes.
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? Yes, we support the LACC amending the PLT Standards to provide clearer guidance on how incidents of academic misconduct should be recorded and reported to admitting authorities. In particular, more clarity around the level of detail required would assist in reducing unnecessary burden on applicants. Without such guidance, applicants may feel compelled to over-disclose and provide extensive explanations for minor incidents that are unlikely to be relevant to admission outcomes.
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, we agree that a minimum of 15 days of workplace experience should be retained.
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, we support updating the PLT Workplace Experience standards to provide clearer guidance on the types of tasks and allocation of time required to develop the skills set out in Appendix F. Greater specificity would assist in promoting consistency across providers and ensuring that students are exposed to meaningful, skills-based training. However, the framework should retain flexibility to recognise prior relevant experience. In Tasmania, it is common for students to undertake ongoing legal employment throughout their degree and continue this work during PLT. In many cases, students may have already demonstrated particular competencies to their supervisors before commencing formal workplace experience.

	Accordingly, the standards should allow providers to take such prior experience into account, where it can be appropriately evidenced and verified, to avoid unnecessary duplication while still ensuring that all required skills are met.
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, we support the LACC working with stakeholders to develop guidance for supervisors on workplace experience. Providing comprehensive guidance would promote consistency in the quality and structure of workplace experience across students and providers.
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, we support legal profession regulators reviewing and strengthening training available to lawyers who wish to develop their supervisory skills.
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, we support the availability of additional training to assist lawyers in developing supervisory skills. Training should ideally focus on practical aspects of supervision, including how to delegate work appropriately, and how to provide constructive guidance without overmanaging junior lawyers or students. In terms of delivery, this training could be offered flexibly through seminars and online materials, allowing practitioners to access resources in a way that accommodated their professional commitments.
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? Yes, we support this amendment. However, such arrangements should be subject to the same safeguards and guidance that apply to workplace experience undertaken during PLT. PLT providers should play a role in certifying that appropriate workplace experience has been completed. Practically, there are limited alternative

	mechanisms for ensuring consistency and verifying that the required competencies have been properly developed.
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? It is our position that PLT providers should be required to assist students in sourcing workplace experience opportunities. Providing active support in securing placements would promote greater equity and help reduce barriers to entry, particularly for students who lack established professional networks or access to 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? No, we do not support the proposed PALT requirement. We do not see the benefit in recently admitted lawyers being required to undertake mandatory training on the essential skills for the practice areas which they are already working in. It appears that the purpose of practice area work in PLT is to give students a “taste” of different practice areas, and to provide a generalist understanding of how the law works. Removing that, in place of two days per year of PALT, only in the area of law that the early lawyer has already chosen to practice in, seems counter-intuitive. However, we do see the merit in further mandatory training for early career lawyers on a general basis, rather than practice area-specific. We would support a PALT initiative which provides mandatory training on key, relevant issues facing all legal professionals. Although, this would be relatively similar to current CPD obligations.
13.2	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. If PALT requirements were to be implemented, it would be a logical step for such requirements to be a condition on practising certificates. However, without a thorough understanding of what PALT would encompass and how the changes would be implemented, we cannot support this proposal.
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? Due to Tasmania’s fused profession, the PALT proposal would face significant barriers in Tasmania. Early career lawyers commonly practice as both solicitors and barristers, meaning it would be difficult to determine whether lawyers

	practise exclusively as barristers. Therefore, we do not believe that this exemption could be practically implemented in Tasmania.
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? Yes, PALT providers should be able to adjust their content regularly to keep up with changes in the law and standards within the profession.
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? If the practice area requirement is for the purpose of providing students / early career lawyers a generalist, multi-faceted understanding of the law, then they should study key practice areas. If only one practice area is studied, it is likely that this requirement would be redundant as the content of the training would likely not differ from typical workplace experience.
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? We do not support further limitations on the early career lawyers' ability to practise. There is already a requirement for early career lawyers to engage in supervised legal practice for two years post-admission. The implementation of this proposal would likely inhibit the professional experience of lawyers which may affect their future career opportunities. It is likely that there would be a significant limitation on their ability to practice and therefore provide value for employers. This would be a greater issue in small to medium law firms / other organisations which do not have the resources to essentially provide permanent supervision for younger lawyers. Additionally, this would essentially stop early career lawyers from being able to engage in pro bono / duty services, or provide full legal representation under NFPs and charities.
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? If the PALT proposal is implemented, we support PALT being delivered primarily in person.
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? If the PALT proposal is implemented, it would be prudent for providers of PALT to be approved by the regulator that issues practising certificates to solicitors.

19.1	Do you support the proposal that PALT should incorporate rigorous assessment? Do you have any views on the parameters for this requirement? Same as 6.1 above.
Clinical legal education	
20.1	Do you support the Committees considering options for the inclusion of clinical legal education as a component of PLT? If the proposed PLT changes are implemented, we support the inclusion of clinical legal education as an optional component 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 It is our view that clinical legal education should be optional. The main concern with mandatory clinical legal education is an economic concern for students. It would likely require students to complete four continuous weeks of <u>unpaid</u> volunteer work as part of their PLT. This would be difficult for those students who are working while undertaking PLT.
20.3	If clinical legal education is optional, should completion of clinical legal education satisfy the requirements for PALT? Overall, we agree that clinical legal education should be an alternative option for any implemented PALT. However, we struggle to see how this aligns with the earlier explanation of practice area-specific PALT. For example, a practitioner working in a community legal service may work on property / family law matters, but ultimately work in a corporate law firm. In that case, the student has received very different training to the training specific to corporate law.
20.4	Who should be responsible for delivering and supervising clinical legal education? PLT providers would have to be placing experienced lawyers / educators in legal clinics to supervise students. This would be great for both students and community legal services, but would be a major expense and place a significant burden on PLT providers.
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, if such changes are going to be explored, a broad range of experts should be consulted.
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, we support a proposal for additional guidance to supervisors of early career lawyers. Further guidance for safe and effective supervision would be beneficial to lawyers and firms. It is important to ensure consistency across the levels and approaches to early career guidance for young lawyers. This promotes both the welfare and effective development of early lawyers.
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. As in 20.5 above, a range of experts should be consulted.
Implementation timing	
22.1	Do you support the proposed transitional arrangements and implementation timeframe set out at Proposal 22? No, full implementation by 2028 is far too ambitious a target. Universities would be required to completely overhaul their law degrees to include a range of practical skill requirements. While the other reforms may be possible by then, effective and considered university change, particularly on a national scale, will take much longer than that. Specifically, the University of Tasmania School of Law is currently commencing its septennial course review. This will likely lead to a range of changes in course delivery commencing in 2027 and being adjusted throughout 2028. If the Faculty is also required to implement the new skills requirements, this will almost certainly lead to poorly implemented changes, a worsened student experience, and increased costs passed on to students, or taken from other areas such as mootings and extracurriculars.