

Feedback Form: Review of practical legal training

Respondent details

Name: Professor Fleur Johns

Organisation (if applicable): Sydney Law School, The University of Sydney

Contact details: [REDACTED]

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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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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? Sydney Law School is supportive of 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 practical legal skills. However, we are not supportive of requiring this in relation to the skills set out in Appendix F. Our view is that this requirement should attach to fundamental skills, expressed at a far higher level of generality than those set out in Appendix F. This will ensure that skills imparted in Australian Law Courses are adaptable to the great variety of contexts, professional settings and jurisdictions in which those admitted as Australian lawyers currently work and will work in the future.
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? Yes. As indicated above, we would very strongly suggest reducing the number of skills categories and reframing these in terms of more fundamental core competencies, along the lines of the skills competency requirements that must be met by law graduates seeking admission to legal practice in Canada under the National Requirement published by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. In essence, we suggest a complete rewrite of Appendix F, starting from a higher order statement of competencies that are fundamental to effective and responsible legal practice across a wide range of work settings and subject domains. This would presuppose that more sector-specific, role-specific, jurisdiction-specific skills would be imparted and acquired after graduation from law school through PLT, PLAT, CPD and formal and informal work-integrated professional development. To offer a specific example, and a Canadian counterexample, consider Appendix F's stipulation that law courses must instruct students in the very specific skills listed in the category of 'Communication'. Contrast this with the much higher-level statement of fundamental competencies of 'Oral and Written Legal Communication' that appears in the above-mentioned Canadian requirements as follows: <i>1.3. Oral and Written Legal Communication</i>

	<i>The applicant must have demonstrated the ability to:</i> <i>a. communicate clearly, professionally and effectively in the English or French language;</i> <i>b. identify the purpose of the proposed communication;</i> <i>c. use correct grammar, spelling and language suitable to the purpose of the communication and for its intended audience; and</i> <i>d. effectively formulate and present well-reasoned and accurate legal argument, analysis, advice or submissions.</i> The latter, broader framing offers a much more adaptable and comprehensive summation of the oral and written communication skills that law graduates should be able to demonstrate to acquit themselves well and serve their clients and the community responsibly across a wide range of areas of legal professional practice. It would encompass, for instance skills that are core to effectiveness in: court appearances; advocacy; communication with judicial officers, regulators, government agencies, parliamentary bodies, and/or community meetings; communication with clients’ family members, translators and/or support persons, as well as with clients themselves; communication with work colleagues and collaborators who are or are not legal practitioners; communication in response to media queries; and so on. This broader framing would supersede the more detailed – and, we would suggest, underinclusive – array of skills that are currently set out in Appendix F. If ‘Oral and Written Legal Communication’ were, instead, expressed along the lines of the Canadian example they would effectively cover not just the skills listed under ‘Communication’ in Appendix F but also those currently listed in the categories ‘Court processes, etiquette and advocacy’, ‘Drafting legal documents’, and aspects of the skills of ‘Negotiation’ (on which we say more below). Following the Canadian example would also permit the collapsing of all the skills listed under the categories ‘Client relationship’, ‘record-keeping and matter management’ and ‘Ethics, Professional Responsibility and life as a lawyer’ into a single set of competencies pitched at a higher level of generality comparable to that set out under ‘Ethics and Professionalism’ under the National Requirement published by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. Likewise, it would allow for an expansion of the very narrowly expressed version of ‘Legal Research’ in Appendix F into a more encompassing description of fundamental research skills along the lines of the following: <i>1.2. Legal Research</i>
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	<i>The applicant must have demonstrated the ability to:</i> <i>a. identify legal issues;</i> <i>b. select sources and methods and conduct legal research relevant to Canadian law;</i> <i>c. use techniques of legal reasoning and argument, such as case analysis and statutory interpretation, to analyze legal issues;</i> <i>d. identify, interpret and apply results of research; and</i> <i>e. effectively communicate the results of research.</i> Skills relating to the ‘responsible use of technology’ (currently singled out in Appendix F) are now so integral and essential to learning and the meeting of applicable standards at any institution governed by with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 that we would suggest that it is superfluous to specify these as skills specifically required of law students. Note, for instance, that TEQSA guidance already advises that an education provider might be at risk of not meeting the Threshold Standards in the Higher Education Standards Framework if there are “unreasonable barriers to [its students] accessing essential technology or other resources, or students are not adequately informed about access and required resources” or if “teaching staff are not equipped for their role in [technology enhanced learning]”. This would only potentially leave unaccounted for, among the skills currently listed in Appendix F, aspects of those relevant to ‘Collaboration’ and aspects of those relevant to ‘Negotiation’. Again, law graduates, the profession and the community would be best served by these being expressed at a higher level of generality than currently appears in Appendix F. Fundamental competence in negotiation, for instance, requires much more than “[a]bility to participate in a settlement negotiation of a simple commercial dispute” or “a simple contract” on which Appendix F focuses. In addition to skills of oral and written communication (such as active listening), the fundamental skills required for effective and ethical negotiation extend to problem-solving, self-management, cultural competence and more (see here for an indicative summary from Professionals Australia). We would suggest replacing these remaining categories of skill (that is, ‘Collaboration’ and ‘Negotiation’) with more generic problem-solving competencies expressed along the lines of that required by the Canadian Federation of Law Societies (see ‘Problem-Solving’ in their standards) as
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	well as a catch-all competency that can be adapted as the profession evolves. The latter might be along the lines of that which the American Bar Association requires of all US law schools to teach, namely: “Other professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation as a member of the legal profession.”
1.3	Would law schools be able to implement these changes by the beginning of the 2028 academic year, as proposed? In our feedback on the skills schedule provided to the LPAB earlier in 2026, we noted that satisfaction of the skills teaching requirements in some areas would require substantial curriculum redesign and the reorganisation of courses to allocate additional teaching hours to skills work. Because of the significant lead-times required to make changes to assessment regimes and course learning outcomes in accordance with the review, consultation and approval procedures and policies that we are required by TEQSA to satisfy, we would not be able to implement the changes in time for 2028 delivery. As noted in our letter to the LPAB of 30 October 2025, we estimate that a period of 18 months to 2 years would be required for these approvals. Allowing time for curriculum design and preparation beyond that approval phase, the 2029 academic year would be the very earliest that Sydney Law School could deliver such a skills curriculum, assuming the relevant requirements are settled by mid-2026.
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? Sydney Law School is supportive of the proposal to amend and update the PLT Competency Standards. However, in various respects (some of which are highlighted above), the current version of Appendix F does not seem optimal as an expression of the skills that should be acquired prior to admission through PLT and supervised workplace training (see, e.g., the concerns raised above about the approach taken to the ‘Negotiation’). Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, however, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.
2.2	Do you suggest any amendments to the categories or skills set out in the skills schedule at Appendix F? Yes. Please see 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? i. This is important, but rather than specifying it as a discrete skill, we would suggest that it be treated as integral to core competencies of Oral and Written Legal Communication and Ethics and Professionalism. ii. This is both too narrowly expressed a requirement and a superfluous one because The National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence already requires universities to deliver ongoing, evidence-informed, and trauma-aware education to all students regarding GBV. It mandates training on consent, respectful relationships, and understanding GBV, including sexual harassment, assault, and online abuse. iii. Knowledge of anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing regulations is a matter of substantive knowledge, not a necessary element of legal skills. The minimum substantive knowledge that all law graduates must acquire during Australian Law Courses is already addressed by the so-called ‘Priestley 11’. It seems ill-advised to start specifying particular laws or regulations of which law graduates need to be especially aware as an essential “skill”, so we would not be in favour of singling out anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing regulations in this context. iv. Familiarity with ADR is important, but rather than specifying this as a discrete skill, we would suggest that it be treated as integral to core competencies of problem-solving. Note, for example, that the National Requirement published by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada includes within the problem-solving competency “identify[ing] and evaluat[ing] the appropriateness of alternatives for resolution of the issue or dispute”. v. Please refer to the discussion of negotiation in response to question 1.2 above. Competency in negotiation depends on competence in oral and written legal communication; ethics and professionalism; and problem-solving. We would be in favour of highlighting it as a dimension of one or more of these core competencies rather than enumerating it as a discrete skill in its own right. Specification of negotiation as a discrete skill could be taken to imply that specialised negotiation training should be
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	embedded into all Australian Law Courses. This is not practical and such specialised training is readily available elsewhere, including via agencies and peak bodies offering free courses (see, e.g., free webinars offered by the ABLA (Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors) and modules freely available via the Fair Work Commission (FWC) Online Learning Portal). vi. Competency in the drafting of the very wide range of legal documents that legal professionals are routinely, and could conceivably be, called upon to draft depends on fundamental competence in oral and written legal communication; ethics and professionalism; and problem-solving. It seems ill-advised for national standards to go down into the weeds of which kinds of documents Australian Law Courses should teach law students to draft since, beyond these core competencies, the detailed requirements for effective drafting of different kinds of document are highly sector-specific, role-specific, and jurisdiction-specific and in some instances employer-specific. Detailed enumeration of certain kinds of documents in this context might also inadvertently encourage a template-driven, box-ticking approach to the development of legal drafting skills. What is essential is that law graduates acquire, through Australian Law Courses, the foundational competencies that will enable them to ask good questions and make sound judgments concerning how to approach any legal drafting task and then perform that task with a strong understanding of its audience(s) and purposes. It is likewise crucial that graduates be equipped with sufficiently strong writing and editing skills to be able to draft in a way that addresses those audiences and serves those purposes well. We believe that abandonment of Appendix F in favour of a statement of core competencies (analogous to the Canadian model to which we have drawn attention) would place emphasis where it is most appropriately laid in this context.
2.4	Should the option for graduates to undertake Supervised Workplace Training as a way of completing PLT be retained? While we see great value in appropriately supervised work-integrated learning generally, we will leave it to our colleagues working in the PLT sector to comment on how effective a component of PLT Supervised Workplace Training is in practice.
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? See above.
2.6	Should there be any other amendments to Supervised Workplace Training?

	See above.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.

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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.
Workplace experience	
7.1	Do you support the LACC retaining the requirement for a minimum of 15 days of workplace experience prior to admission? Sydney Law School acknowledges the importance of workplace experience in the professional development of those entering the legal profession. For this reason, we endorse some minimum amount of workplace experience being a criterion for admission. Nonetheless, we do not believe the exact amount or nature of the workplace experience can be properly considered until the continuum of legal learning has been settled and there is a clear, common understanding of what skills need to be gained or consolidated.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment. Nonetheless, aligning with the arguments set above with respect to provision of facts and skills, we are of the view that specifications that are too prescriptive or granular of the types of skills that must be acquired through workplace experience should be avoided. Ensuring that new graduates are afforded opportunities to acquire highly transferable and adaptable skills should be the focus of this learning experience.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.

	Nonetheless, consistent with feedback given above, we are of the view that any guidance that is given to those supervising workplace experience placements should be expressed in broad terms, allowing for significant variation among workplaces, rather than setting out a lengthy and detailed 'laundry list' of discrete skills.
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? This issue would be better addressed by our colleagues who provide PLT.
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? Current requirements to be a supervisor for practical experience placements may suffice, assuming that the workplaces in question have appropriate policies and governance surrounding workplace health and safety, sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, and so on. In addition to this, it could be beneficial for training and resources could be made available on an optional basis to those interested in improving the supervisory and mentoring skills. This could be achieved by a short online training module recognised for CPD / MCLE purposes.
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? In order to maximise the value of the mandatory workplace experience prior to admission, and maintain a clear sense of its purpose, we would recommend that the placement should not take place during students' enrolment at law school. Rather, we would suggest that it be undertaken after or concurrently with the PLT phase of training, thereby allowing the full context of what is being taught during PLT to be put into a workplace context. We are strongly in favour of law students gaining experience within the legal profession whilst undertaking their degree studies, whether through a supervised placement for course credit or through casual employment alongside their studies. However, such experiences are typically undertaken for purposes that are distinct from the PLT, namely for financial purposes and/or to enhance learning and enable students' initial exploration of potential work settings. The mandatory work experience

	placement for admission purposes has, we would suggest, a distinct purpose that warrants it being approached and undertaken separately. As to the other questions contained in this section, such questions would be better addressed by our colleagues who provide PLT.
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? Because we do not operate in the PLT sector, and have no plans to enter this sector, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT to comment.
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? In view of the overhaul/rewrite of the skills schedule in Appendix F that we have suggested above, we are generally supportive of early career lawyers undertaking PALT during the first two years of practice in order for law graduates wishing to practice law in Australia to gain the more granular, jurisdiction-specific, vocational skills that are currently enumerated in Appendix F (and we would suggest, are better taken out of pre-admission skills requirement). A two-year period for this post-admission legal training seems about right for this purpose and 15 hours of training per year similarly seems appropriate although final duration should be determined once the skills to be acquired or consolidated during this post-admission phased are settled.
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. The attachment of a special post-admission training requirement as a practising certificate condition for the first two-years of admission to practice in Australia (as an extension of the continuing professional development requirements of the Continuing Professional Development Rules) would seem to be an appropriate mechanism for mandating post-admission legal training, assuming that waiver of this condition could be sought for those seeking admission in Australia after having practised law in another jurisdiction.
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?

	We will leave it to our colleagues at the various Bar Associations and Law Societies to comment.
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? We will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT and are most likely to seek to offer PALT courses, to comment.
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? We will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT and are most likely to seek to offer PALT courses, as well as the various Law Societies, to comment.
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 will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT and are most likely to seek to offer PALT courses, as well as the various Law Societies, to comment.
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? We are supportive of delivery options that would maximise equitable access to PALT, including for those in regional and remote areas. Beyond this, we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT and are most likely to seek to offer PALT courses to comment.
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? This seems reasonable, but we will leave it to our colleagues who provide PLT and are most likely to seek to offer PALT courses to comment.
19.1	Do you support the proposal that PALT should incorporate rigorous assessment? Do you have any views on the parameters for this requirement?

	Everything hinges in this question on what is taken to amount to “rigorous” assessment. In general, we would favour an assessment approach within PALT that is informed by pedagogical research and expertise as to the kinds of assessment that most enhance student learning. Achieving meaningful student learning should be the focus, in our view.
Clinical legal education	
20.1	Do you support the Committees considering options for the inclusion of clinical legal education as a component of PLT? Sydney Law School regards clinical education and experiential learning as important parts of legal education. We would be in favour of recognising this, within the replacement to Appendix F, by setting out an expectation along the lines of that which the American Bar Association requires of all US law schools namely: “<i>A law school shall provide substantial opportunities to students for: (1) law clinics or field placement(s); (2) student participation in pro bono legal services, including law-related public service activities</i>”. The adjective “substantial” might, however, be removed to allow for the different capabilities and resourcing of the various Australian law schools, recognising that quality clinical legal education is very resource-intensive to deliver and can be especially challenging to deliver at scale. As to the question of how, when and where clinical legal education (as distinct from a mandatory supervised work experience placement for admission purposes) should be included in the legal education continuum from law school through to PALT, we suggest that it would be wise to leverage the expertise and infrastructure that already exists within the university sector rather than imposing a further, distinct clinical legal education requirement later along the continuum.
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? As noted above, we believe that clinical legal education is best delivered within the university sector rather than being added as a requirement of PLT (in addition to the mandatory supervised work experience placement requirement). We are not in favour of imposing clinical legal education as a mandatory component of PLT given the resourcing challenges that this may pose and the risk of it inadvertently encouraging low-quality, inadequately supervised clinical legal education options to proliferate.
20.3	If clinical legal education is optional, should completion of clinical legal education satisfy the requirements for PALT?

	Depending on how the learning objectives and requirements of PALT are ultimately framed, it could be possible for students to demonstrate satisfaction of some of these requirements, and meeting of some of these objectives, through prior completion of a clinical legal education unit.
20.4	Who should be responsible for delivering and supervising clinical legal education? Please see the response to question 20.1 above. We believe that specialist educators within the university sector, working with reputable partners (especially accredited community legal centres) are best placed to deliver and supervise clinical legal education.
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.
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? As noted above, we are supportive of training and guidance being made available to those supervising early career lawyers, with explicit recognition for the differing needs of early career lawyers from a diversity of backgrounds. The resources made available by the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner may be instructive in this regard.
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.
Implementation timing	
22.1	Do you support the proposed transitional arrangements and implementation timeframe set out at Proposal 22? No. Please see our response to question 1.3. We do not support the proposal that Australian law courses be required to incorporate practical training and skills in their programs by the start of the 2028 academic year. The 2029 academic year would be the very earliest that Sydney Law School could deliver such a skills curriculum, assuming the relevant requirements are settled by mid-2026.