

Feedback Form: Review of practical legal training

Respondent details

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Are you responding as (select one):

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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.

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? WNSWCLC supports the proposal. Embedding practical skills within law degrees can help better prepare graduates for practice. However, this needs to involve meaningful, applied learning. It should not result in increased reliance on workplace training where supervision capacity is limited, including in regional settings.
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? WNSWCLC does not propose specific amendments to the skills schedule. However, we emphasise the importance of practical skills being delivered through applied, real-world learning rather than theoretical coverage, and in a way that supports practice readiness across different settings, including regional environments.
1.3	Would law schools be able to implement these changes by the beginning of the 2028 academic year, as proposed? WNSWCLC is not in a position to comment on implementation for law courses.
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? WNSWCLC supports the proposal in principle. Clear identification of required skills is important, but this must be supported by meaningful, applied training rather than increased reliance on workplace learning.
2.2	Do you suggest any amendments to the categories or skills set out in the skills schedule at Appendix F? WNSWCLC does not propose any specific amendments. The key issue is how these skills are delivered in practice, particularly where supervision capacity is limited.

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? WNSWCLC supports inclusion of these areas in principle, as they reflect important aspects of modern legal practice. However, the key issue is how these skills are developed in practice. They are most effective when delivered through applied, supervised learning rather than standalone or theoretical coverage. This is particularly important in regional and community legal settings, where practitioners often work with clients experiencing multiple and intersecting disadvantages, and where practical skills such as communication, trauma-informed practice and negotiation are critical.
2.4	Should the option for graduates to undertake Supervised Workplace Training as a way of completing PLT be retained? WNSWCLC supports retaining the option for supervised workplace training. Workplace experience is an important part of developing practical skills. However, it should complement, not replace, structured training, particularly where supervision capacity is limited.
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? WNSWCLC considers core foundational skills should be delivered by an approved provider, with workplace training complementing this through applied experience.
2.6	Should there be any other amendments to Supervised Workplace Training? WNSWCLC does not propose any specific amendments.
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? WNSWCLC does not support reducing PLT to four weeks. This is unlikely to support development of core practical skills and may increase reliance on workplace training where supervision capacity is limited, particularly in regional settings. It may also increase financial barriers to entry if the overall cost of training shifts away from supported programs such as Fee-HELP and towards students or employers. This has particular implications for community legal centres and regional practice settings, where resources are already constrained.
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? A four-week period is too short. It is unlikely to provide sufficient time to develop core practical skills, particularly given the proposed shift toward workplace and post admission training.
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? WNSWCLC does not have a strong position on this proposal. The key issue is that PLT remains accessible and provides meaningful, practical training regardless of the qualification 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? WNSWCLC does not have a specific view on additional safeguards. However, it is important that any PLT provider is subject to appropriate quality assurance to ensure consistent and effective delivery of practical training.
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?

	WNSWCLC does not support this proposal. A requirement for in person delivery, or leaving access to online delivery to provider discretion, may create barriers for regional participants, including travel, costs and time away from work. Flexible online delivery should be available where needed to support equitable access to PLT. These proposals also raise broader concerns about access to justice and the future legal workforce in regional, rural and remote areas, where attracting and retaining suitably trained practitioners is already challenging. Regional placements and training pathways are important workforce development opportunities for community legal centres and other legal assistance services, but are often affected by travel, accommodation and financial barriers.
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? WNSWCLC supports a review to ensure assessments are rigorous. Assessment should focus on applied, practice-based skills and reflect real-world tasks, rather than theoretical knowledge alone.
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? WNSWCLC does not have a specific view. However, clear and consistent processes for recording and reporting academic misconduct are important to support transparency and integrity in the admissions process.
Workplace experience	
7.1	Do you support the LACC retaining the requirement for a minimum of 15 days of workplace experience prior to admission? WNSWCLC supports retaining the 15-day requirement. However, 15 days is a minimum standard and relies on broader structured training. If this is reduced, it may not provide sufficient exposure, particularly in regional settings.
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? WNSWCLC supports providing clearer guidance on workplace experience. However, guidance should remain flexible. Prescriptive requirements around tasks or hours may be difficult to implement in smaller or regional settings where supervision capacity is limited.
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? WNSWCLC supports the development of guidance for supervisors. Clear guidance may assist in improving consistency and the quality of workplace experience. However, it should remain practical and flexible, particularly in regional settings where supervision capacity is limited.
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? WNSWCLC supports a review of training for supervisors. Improving supervisory skills is important to support effective workplace training particularly where supervision capacity is limited.
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? WNSWCLC supports the availability of additional training for supervisors. Training should be practical and focused on mentoring, feedback and managing workload alongside supervision. It should be accessible and flexible, including online delivery.
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? WNSWCLC supports this in principle.

	However, appropriate safeguards are important to ensure the workplace experience is meaningful and properly supervised. PLT providers may have a role in confirming that minimum requirements are met, but arrangements should remain practical and flexible.
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? WNSWCLC support this in principle. PLT providers can play a role in assisting students to identify opportunities. However, expectations should remain practical, as placement availability may be limited, particularly in regional settings. This is particularly important in regional, rural and remote areas, where students may face additional barriers accessing placements, including travel, accommodation and reduced local availability.
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? WNSWCLC supports post-admission training in principle and recognises the need for continued development of early career lawyers. However, it should complement, not replace, structured pre-admission training. Additional training requirements should be implemented flexibly, as they may place pressure on early-career lawyers and employers, particularly in regional settings where capacity is limited. WNSWCLC endorses a reasonable proportion of this training be focused on the solicitor conduct rules given the role they play in underpinning the way we conduct ourselves as solicitors. The proposed amount of time appears reasonable if implemented flexibly.
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. WNSWCLC does not have a strong opinion on the mechanism. If implemented, the requirement should be flexible and proportionate and should not create additional barriers for early-career lawyers, particularly in regional settings.

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? WSWCLC does not have a strong position on this proposal. We do not identify specific issues in our jurisdiction.
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? WSWCLC supports this in principle. However, flexibility is important to ensure that training remains relevant and accessible, particularly in regional settings.
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? WSWCLC supports allowing lawyers to undertake PALT across one or multiple practice areas. Flexibility is important to ensure training is relevant to individual roles and practice settings.
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? WSWCLC does not support additional restrictions. Early-career lawyers already practise under supervision, and further restrictions may create unnecessary barriers without improving training outcomes.
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? WSWCLC does not support this proposal. A requirement for in person delivery, or leaving access to online delivery to provider discretion, may create barriers for regional practitioners, including

	travel, cost and time away from work. Flexible online delivery should be available where needed to support equitable access.
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? WNSWCLC supports this in principle. Oversight may support consistency and quality, provided it does not limit access, particularly in regional settings.
19.1	Do you support the proposal that PALT should incorporate rigorous assessment? Do you have any views on the parameters for this requirement? WNSWCLC supports incorporating assessment in PALT. Assessment should focus on applied, practice-based skills and reflect real-world legal work.
Clinical legal education	
20.1	Do you support the Committees considering options for the inclusion of clinical legal education as a component of PLT? WNSWCLC supports this in principle. Clinical legal education can provide valuable practical experience. However, it is important to ensure that opportunities are accessible beyond metropolitan areas and that regional legal services are not overlooked in the development of clinical programs. Stronger partnerships between universities and legal services in regional, rural and remote areas may also support longer term recruitment and retention of lawyers in those communities.
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 WNSWCLC supports clinical legal education as an optional component. If included, students should be able to receive credit for relevant clinical experience undertaken during their law degree. A mandatory requirement may create access issues, particularly for students outside metropolitan areas.
20.3	If clinical legal education is optional, should completion of clinical legal education satisfy the requirements for PALT?

	WSWCLC supports this in principle. Relevant clinical legal education may contribute to the development of practical skills and could satisfy PALT requirements where appropriate.
20.4	Who should be responsible for delivering and supervising clinical legal education? WSWCLC considers clinical legal education should be delivered through partnerships, including universities and legal service providers. Supervision should be provided by suitably qualified practitioners, with arrangements remaining practical and flexible.
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? WSWCLC supports this proposal. A working group may assist in exploring how clinical legal education can be effectively and practically implemented.
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? WSWCLC supports additional guidance for supervisors. Clear, practical guidance may assist in improving the consistency and quality of supervision.
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? WSWCLC supports this proposal. A working group may assist in developing practical guidance and resources to support effective supervision.
Implementation timing	
22.1	Do you support the proposed transitional arrangements and implementation timeframe set out at Proposal 22?

	WNSWCLC does not have a strong position on the proposed timeframe. However, it is important that implementation allows sufficient time to ensure changes are practical and do not adversely impact access to training, particularly in regional settings.
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