

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE****PROFESSIONAL LEGAL EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE****SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION FROM THE LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND**

The Society has an annual plan objective in 2017/18 to review the current professional requirements of the LLB, and the requirements of the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice and the traineeship (PEAT) to ensure that the outcomes are delivering the appropriate skills for the solicitors of the future. Throughout the early part of this year, we spoke to stakeholders about any areas of the Foundation or PEAT outcomes could be tweaked, honed or improved. The general feeling of the profession is that Day 1 trainees are of a high quality. Moreover, we know from our close engagement with training organisations – that is practice units which train trainees – that they generally adapt well to the life of a trainee solicitor and over time meet the PEAT 2 Outcomes.

That said, a number of themes consistently came up in those discussions: the growing importance of legal technology; the nature, timing and extent of tax law being taught; commercial awareness in a legal setting; non-legal skills (e.g. project management) and EU Law. It should be noted that EU law was not seen as an area where new trainees were lacking in knowledge but, rather, given its pervasiveness at present that we will need to consider how we teach EU law in the future. Some thought has been given to EU Law in particular by myself and also by Kirsty Hood QC in this open resource: <https://sulne.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/studying-eu-law-during-and-after-brexite-1st-edition.pdf>.

In June we hosted a number of roundtables bringing together LLB providers, DPLP providers, training organisations and the Faculty of Advocates to discuss these matters. The Education & Training (Standard Setting) Sub-Committee will consider the output of these roundtables next week and we are likely to see some change of some of the outcomes of the various stages in due course. This should be viewed as an example of the professions working together to improve the nature of legal education and training in a collaborative and consensus-based approach. I am happy to share the output of these.

It should also be noted that we are – as I mentioned at one point – looking to move admission to an earlier point in the training contract. This is for a number of reasons but one is as a direct result of feedback from the Shrieval bench on the improving quality of advocacy by trainees and newly qualified lawyers which can be traced back to our reforms in 2011. This again brings the vocational element even closer to the work-based element as those who learn advocacy skills in the DPLP will be able to put them into active practice much sooner. It will, as I noted, also assist criminal defence firms in particular to hire trainees as it is currently difficult for them to do so given the financial pressures on such firms.

This ties in to other progressive work the Society is undertaking in regards creating an Accredited Legal Technologist status as we recognise the burgeoning importance of these roles within the profession.

Rob Marrs  
Head of Education  
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