

ADMINISTRATION

[no material in this edition]

ADMISSION TO PRACTICE**Qualifying degrees: new proposals for 1995**

P Birks

[see Legal Education Generally]

New restricted practice guidelines - certification of completion of restricted practice

L Socy J, December 1993, p 76

A review of practice restrictions has resulted in the Council of the Law Society of NSW reducing the restricted practice period of employment from three to two years for solicitors entering sole practice, and increasing the period from one to two years for solicitors entering partnership. The definition of restricted practice has also been broadened. Furthermore, the Practice Management Course must be completed.

ASSESSMENT METHODS**Preparation for a diverse profession**

N Duncan

[see Legal Education Generally]

Study finds MBE valid, reliable

S P Klein

XXIV *Syllabus* 4, Fall 1993, pp 1 & 17 - 18

Report presents the results of analyses of the reliability, validity, and other important features of the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE). It looks at the issue of reliability, *ie* the likelihood that a candidate's pass/fail status would be affected by the particular version of the examination (containing 200 items) was taken. It also looks at equating, *ie* the mechanism to adjust for exam-to-exam fluctuations in the average difficulty of the questions asked. It further looks at structural characteristics and time limits, role of the subject matter. He also concludes that the MBE appears to measure both legal reasoning skills and knowledge.

He suggests that the MBE correlates highly with other measures, eg. law school grades and state essay scores, as well as several other practice-oriented measures.

He states that whilst minority candidates earn somewhat lower MBE scores the empirical data show these differences are not due to certain items or subtests being especially difficult for minority candidates. For example, less than one percent of the difference in MBE scores between any two candidates is uniquely attributable to gender.

There was a positive response from an expert panel appointed in 1992 to evaluate the items used in the MBE.

The author concludes the MBE is measuring what it is designed to measure - legal reasoning and knowledge that is material to the practice of law. In addition it appears to be fair to all takers.

If the real purpose of law school is to teach you to be a lawyer, why do you have one-shot finals?

L Weisberg

21 *Student Lawyer*, April 1993, p 36

This essay discusses final examinations and presents the author's opinion that such examinations are of limited value. She considers the various arguments for and against final examinations, but emphasises that they are not reflective of legal practice itself.

Who's "Number One"?: contriving unidimensionality in law school grading

J E Stake

68 *Ind L J*, 1993, p 925

The author contends that current law school grading is inadequate and unrepresentative of the true nature of the student. He feels that it would be more useful if law teachers were to fill out evaluation forms supplying such information as whether the student asks good questions, is prepared for class, manipulates complex doctrine with dexterity, offers insightful policy analysis, makes creative arguments or shows empathy. The author claims that not only would this be advantageous to employers, but it would also develop a better relationship between teachers and students, as the teachers would have to pay more attention to their students. At the very least, he argues that publishing grade point averages and class ranks should be abolished.

CAREER PATHS**NALP report: recession continues in legal job market**

XXIV *Syllabus* 3, Summer 1993, p 7

Reports that the booming job market of the late 1980s has been replaced by one that continues to be much more sobering not only for new graduates but for the legal profession as a whole. Reports on data from the NALP annual Employment Report and Salary Survey. From 1990 to 1992 the employment rate dropped by nearly seven percentage points, from 90.3% to 83.5%. Also the median salary declined from a high of \$40,000 in 1991 to \$36,000 for the class of 1992. Also reports on other information in the NALP report.

Interest in nontraditional jobs grows

G Peshel

XXIV *Syllabus* 4, Fall 1993, p 8

Reports that in the United States law graduates are increasingly interested in nontraditional applications of their degrees. This is a way of "keeping their options open". An ABA Young Lawyers' Division survey shows that 10% of lawyers planning to change jobs intend to leave private practice. Law schools are examining sources of new job opportunities for their graduates. There are 300 professional careers for which, although not required, a law degree can be an asset. Since 1988 the percentage of graduates acquiring nontraditional employment six months after graduation has increased from 5.2% to 8.9% in 1992.

Battle over job decision deadlines; new rules to discourage offer-hoarding lead to revolt by 16 law schools

D J DeBenedictis

ABA Journal, July 1993, p 36

A vote by National Association of Law Placement (NALP) members in June 1992 recommended a shortening of the deadlines in its voluntary recruiting standards. This would shorten the amount of time law students can hold onto job offers before deciding on them and might lessen offer-hoarding by students in top schools. Approximately 82% of NALP's employer members favoured the change, while only 53% of law school members did. Some law schools have revolted by announcing they would continue to abide by the old standards, posing the danger of a double standard.