

profession are that they could contribute to setting uniform standards across the states and territories, thus dealing with the current fragmentation. They could also contribute to the accreditation and licensing process, to education and training and continuing professional development and also enhance public confidence in the profession in that it would deliver uniformity of those entering the profession. In the wake of the mutual recognition legislation, such uniformity may be needed to avoid the lowest common denominator situation where graduates are able to shop for a forum that will admit them with their current qualifications.

LIBRARIES & INFORMATION

A library for the modern law school: a statement of standards for university law library provision in England and Wales

T Daintith (convenor)

Leg Stud, December, 1995

This 162-page special issue of *Legal Studies* contains the new statement of library standards prepared on behalf of the Society of Public Teachers of Law by a consultative group to its Libraries Committee. The standards themselves take up only 11 pages and are divided into five areas: policy, management and staffing; services; space and physical facilities; collections; and franchising and distance learning. Appendix 1 is an indicative list of law library holdings. Appendix 2 is the report of the results of a research project, conducted by Dr Peter Clinch, in which data were collected from institutions teaching law at university level in

the United Kingdom (70% of which responded to a questionnaire) on law libraries and their place in legal education within the institution.

PRACTICAL TRAINING

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Legal Practice Course: benefits in practice

J S Slorach

Nottingham Law School Limited, 1996

Practical legal training courses have been a feature of the legal education landscape in many countries now for up to a quarter of a century. It is therefore strange to realise that, although these courses exist for the specific purpose of preparing law students for the transition to practice, so little effort has been devoted to finding out whether they have succeeded in this objective. In other words, there has been very little attempt to discover how useful PLT instruction has been. This evaluation could be conducted either by asking both the PLT graduates in practice themselves and the lawyers who supervise them or by collecting data about the actual work that new lawyers perform in order to ascertain whether it meshes with the PLT curriculum.

The pioneering evaluation research of this kind was first carried out in the mid-1980s by Nelson¹, who argued for the development of a more flexible and responsive PLT curriculum based upon research². He contended that the curriculum should be grounded on the collection at regular intervals of

data about the types of legal work being handled by new lawyers and the skills they needed to perform that work, as well as their opinions about the relevance of the instruction they had received to what they were in fact doing.

Slorach's research project falls into that mould. Its purpose is to evaluate the benefits in practice which the Legal Practice Course³ ('LPC') has provided for trainee lawyers and their supervisors in Great Britain, in the hope that the results will assist in the continuing development of the LPC to meet the needs of the profession. The aims of the LPC are expressed to be the preparation of students for 'general practice' and the provision of 'a general foundation for subsequent practice'.

The research objectives are stated as the evaluation of the following 'practical issues':

- the extent to which trainees utilise knowledge and skills attained in their LPC
- how often trainees refer to LPC materials in practice
- whether trainees are better equipped for practice as a result of the LPC
- any discernible benefits to practices from trainees having completed the LPC
- whether there are any gaps in trainees' knowledge and skills which should be filled by the LPC.

Slorach recognises the importance of obtaining the perspectives of both the trainee lawyers and their supervisors. He uses questionnaires to collect the data from the two populations and indeed many of the questions asked in the one are mirrored in the other, although when reporting