

ADMINISTRATION

[no material in this edition]

ADMISSION TO PRACTICE

[no material in this edition]

ASSESSMENT METHODS**Viva the viva: oral examinations in contract law**

D Butler & L Wiseman

4 *Legal Educ Rev*, 2, 1993, pp 331-351

The dominance of written assessment tasks at law schools is surprising considering the lawyer's dependence on the spoken word. Queensland University of Technology Law Faculty offered contract law students the option to sit for a viva examination. The viva was of 30 minutes duration. Short answer definitional questions were asked, followed by longer theoretical questions, questions on prescribed cases, questions requiring the authority for a stated principle to be identified and, to conclude, a hypothetical problem question.

Students were motivated towards doing a viva because they felt they were better at oral expression than written expression. The main concern of students was the likelihood that nerves would affect their performance. The main benefits students drew from the viva was the development of the ability to 'think on their feet' and to gain an indepth knowledge of an area of the law. The majority of students said they felt comfortable and confident during the viva, that the prescribed readings were sufficient and that 30 minutes was enough time to answer the

questions. It was largely felt by students that the viva improved their understanding of the material examined to an extent greater than that of a written assignment. The staff who implemented the program felt that the investment of time in the program was justified.

CAREER PATHS**NALP charts geographical dispersion of graduates**

G Peshel

XXV *Syllabus* 1, Winter 1994, 3

Reports on the National Association for Law Placement's annual *Employment Report and Salary Survey* which documents the employment experiences of new law school graduates. A recent monograph focuses on geographical mobility and geographic job opportunities. NALP's current research does not fully explore the many reasons why law graduates accept particular jobs. However it does analyse supply (number of available graduates) and demand (number of employment positions acquired). Looks at extent of in-state hiring.

Solicitors in the employed sector

R Woolfson, J Plotnikoff & D Wilson

The Law Society (England & Wales) - Research Study no.13

The report investigates the structure, work and perceptions of solicitors employed by organisations which are not themselves firms of solicitors. The organisations employing solicitors and the solicitors were surveyed. The types of organisations within the scope of the study were commerce and industrial organisations, local government bodies, government

legal services, justices' clerks, law centres and other organisations such as trade unions and charities. The proportion of solicitors, trainee solicitors, barristers, pupil barristers and paralegal staff was investigated over time. The study showed the percentage of barristers to be decreasing with a concomitant increase in paralegal staff. The number of solicitors remained steady.

The type of work done by solicitors reflects the nature of the employing organisation. Outside legal services were used when volumes of work exceeded in-house capacity and litigation was largely conducted by private practice. Within the employed sector women are well represented, particularly towards the younger end of the spectrum. The level of ethnic minorities within the organisations was unrepresentative, and only three percent were black or Asian. It was generally felt that promotions within the organisations meant a movement away from casework to management.

Training programs for solicitors in the organisations were generally paid for by the organisation. Women and young solicitors were more likely to attend courses, the subject matter of which reflected the nature of the organisation. On average, solicitors spent five days in a year at training courses.

Over 90% of solicitors within the organisations surveyed said they found their jobs worthwhile, challenging and purposeful, and would recommend their present type of employment as a career to a young person with suitable educational qualifications.