

practice areas. In both cases the four methods ultimately used were a written test, a simulation, a mock file and review/ refereeing by peers.

The development process led the committees away from a traditional view of assessment and towards a truer appreciation of what was involved in their job and how they managed it. Performance standards provide a focus for continuing education programs and a guide for practitioners. They give young practitioners the big picture of practice, allowing them to make general sense of the myriad of seemingly unrelated activities they are asked to perform. A post-assessment survey of applicants revealed that those assessments which most resembled practice were considered to be the form which best assessed what was required of a practising lawyer.

CAREER PATHS

REVIEW ARTICLE:

Career intentions of Australian law students

C Roper

Department of Employment,
Education and Training
Australian Government Printing
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This book contains the report of the most comprehensive study of the career intentions of law students ever conducted in Australia, carried out in 1994 by the Centre for Legal Education and funded by the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training. This project is significant in terms of its scope and the wealth of information it brings to light about the motives and future intentions of law students. It marks a watershed in our

understanding both of the factors underlying the continuing strong demand for law places in Australian universities and of law students' expectations of the role played by their law degree as a preparation for their future careers, it also provides a measure of the proportion of these students intending to practise law or seeking a career outside the legal profession.

Chapter 2 describes the methodology employed in conceptualising the study, developing and piloting the instrument and distributing the settled questionnaire. An explanation is offered as to why the decision was taken not to make the survey population all law students in Australian universities, but rather to collect data only from first and final year students, all of whom were to be surveyed, so that sampling was not required. Consequently, this research design does not permit conclusions to be drawn with respect to the entire student body, only the separate groups of first and final year law students, to both of which the same questionnaire was administered. However, one benefit of this particular design is that, while not a longitudinal study, it nonetheless throws into relief the perceptions of different students at the beginning and end of their law studies.

The questionnaire was distributed to students for completion in class, so to some extent they represented a "captured audience", although this is unlikely to have had any impact upon validity. Usable responses were obtained from 3,300 (69.2%) of first year students and 1,600 (54.7%) of final year students. No claim is made as to the acceptability of these levels of response. They are certainly very high for what is

essentially sociological research and there is good reason to be confident that the responses are representative of the two populations, especially the first year students.

The volume and range of the data analysed and the results reported are illustrated by the chapter headings: "A profile of the student group that took part in the survey", "Reasons for studying law", "Respondents' plans in regard to admission to practice", "Respondents' intentions in regard to types of work", "Respondents planning to work in the private legal profession", "Respondents who planned to work in community legal service organisations", "Respondents who planned to work in the public sector" and "Final year students who planned to work in private industry, commerce or finance". There is even a chapter devoted to the results with respect to women law students. The many tables display the data clearly as frequencies and percentages, as well as cross-tabulations where needed.

Obviously, it is difficult in this short review to provide a detailed account but the following outline provides a flavour of some of the important results:

- Among the respondents, women formed the majority of first year students in 19 of the 24 law schools and the majority of the final year students in 12 of the 18 law schools with final year students.
- Over 80% of the respondents were studying law full-time.
- Approximately one-third of the respondents commenced their law studies as mature age students (i.e. 21 or above).
- The most popular reason for choosing to study law was an interest in the subject matter of the law. The second ranking reason was

that doing law as part of a double degree increases career options.

- Although not as high ranking as these reasons, the more altruistic reason that law was seen as a way of making a contribution to the community was a not insignificant reason for studying law.
- Reasons which related to prestige or high income were very lowly ranked. Similarly, entering law simply because of one's HSC mark was not a popular reason for choosing law.
- Surprisingly, only 70% of final year respondents planned to seek admission within two years of completing their degree.
- Another unexpected result was the finding that less than two in three final year respondents who had plans to be admitted within two years had, as their first preference, a plan to work in the private legal profession as a barrister or solicitor.
- Respondents on the whole were fairly flexible about their career destinations and were open to more than one career option.
- Women were slightly more likely than men to have contemplated working in community legal service organisations and the public sector. However, they were just as likely as men to have plans to enter the private legal profession.

The author acknowledges that the findings from this study are only a snapshot in time and that there need to be further annual studies in order to establish the reliability of the picture and to ascertain trends. However, there is considerable value in gaining these insights into the motivations and intentions of one particular group, which must have a powerful predictive value when considering cohorts of future law students.

The report also contains a detailed discussion as to how the results of the study can be put to good use by the principal stakeholders in legal education, namely the law schools, practical legal training courses, professional associations of lawyers, law admitting authorities and government. It is to be hoped that these bodies will appreciate the significance of these research findings and their contribution to our understanding of the aspirations of law students and, as a result, give them due weight in future policy development.

Editor

Career intentions of New South Wales law students, 1994

S Vignaendra
Centre for Legal Education, 1995

This is a useful and detailed complementary report, based on the data collected as part of the study digested above, but focussing solely on the career intentions of New South Wales law students. Its methodology and structure parallel the national report.

The results generally are very similar to the nationwide results (see above) with a few exceptions. For example, in New South Wales, the public sector appears to be a more popular career destination amongst final year respondents. This report was produced to provide legal professional bodies and law schools in one jurisdiction with more specific information upon which to base their policy and planning.

Editor

CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION

Reflections on clinical legal education

R Grimes
29 Law Teacher 2, 1995, pp 169-187

In contrast to the United States, in Great Britain the value of Clinical Legal Education (CLE) programs has been slow to filter through to legal educators. However, there is now a discernible call for CLE and for a reconsideration of how law should be learned, including delivery methods and the form and content of the courses. Influenced by such demands, Sheffield Hallam University established a law clinic in early 1993.

The author bases his article on the assumptions that universities will play an ever expanding role in the education of lawyers, that traditional modes of law teaching will come under close scrutiny and that the demand for CLE in Britain will rapidly expand until it is viewed as an essential part of the law school curriculum.

It must be understood that CLE is not just about training or simply educating students for entry into the profession. The fundamental premise upon which CLE is based is that it opens the eyes through experiential methods to the meaning and application of law. It shows the limited value of legal action and the role that lawyers can play in the lives of people.

CLE offers learning through participation, based on three elements: the students are the participants, both as individuals and as members of a firm or team; academic and professional staff