



On behalf of:  
School of Law and Government  
Dublin City University  
Dublin 9

24<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Legal Services Regulatory Authority: Consultation on the admission policies of the legal professions**

**Submission on behalf of  
School of Law and Government  
Dublin City University (DCU)**

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to you on behalf of the law staff within the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University (DCU) to share our views on admission policies of the legal professions. We welcome the opportunity to make this further submission to support the important work of the Authority. We refer to our previous letters of submission dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

In previous submissions, we have expressed concern about the early career socio- economic barriers to entry into the professions which exist for law students and graduates in Ireland; for example, in undertaking the entrance exams for the Law Society of Ireland and the Honorable Society of King's Inns. The solicitor and barrister professions present barriers to many students, for financial or other reasons. DCU law students, in particular, come from a diverse range of backgrounds with a higher than average proportion of students from disadvantaged socio-economic and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

In this submission, we wish to make a few brief points, particularly regarding the ongoing impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic on the above and related matters.

Brexit has had an impact on our experiential education offerings, including our law INTRA (Integrated- Training) programme. There has been an evident shift in the global legal market in the past number of years. Since Brexit, Dublin has emerged as a location for a number of leading UK and global law firms to establish a base. Examples include Pinsent Masons,

Dentons, DLA Piper, DWF Law, Bird and Bird, Simmons & Simmons, Browne Jacobson and Hogan Lovells. Indeed, more broadly, Dublin has emerged as a leading location for financial services and related industries, with a large number of companies establishing an office here, placing the capital in a unique market position and providing access to an international legal and financial services network. The influx of such international law firms into Ireland has offered further opportunities for our legal internship partnerships and INTRA programme at DCU, with many UK and global firms coming on board in recent years to take students on a year- long placement. This provides significant prospects for our students to gain valuable practical legal experience with these firms and enhances their experiential learning on a wider, international scale. Such placement programmes have opened up opportunities for those entering the profession and offer an effective means of networking and mentoring for those who might not otherwise have the opportunity.

Similar to other third level institutions, the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on our teaching and learning activities at DCU (including the provision of lectures and assessment methods). With the advent of the pandemic in 2020 and the uncertain environment that followed, it was necessary to deliver all teaching and learning online for a period of time. Teaching was delivered primarily via Zoom and other online formats. Assessment methods shifted from primarily a combination in-person exams and continuous assessment to 24-hour take home exams and other forms of continuous assessment such as essays and assignments. The return to in-person exams in 2022 required the provision of additional supports for students, many of whom had never sat traditional law exams before.

One particular challenge that has arisen from the pandemic and from our recent online teaching experience has been an increase in academic integrity concerns, in law and other disciplines. On a related note, there has been an surge in the availability and use of artificial intelligence technologies. For example, ChatGPT, a newly released tool that generates answers to questions using artificial intelligence techniques and can be used by students to generate assignment answers, including written essays and reports, thereby presenting a serious academic integrity threat. This presents a complex challenge for law schools in ascertaining how best to address (and potentially integrate) such emerging technologies.

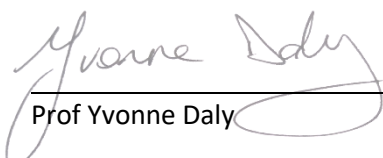
Finally, we at DCU welcome and support the on-going work of the LSRA in the reform of the legal profession and look forward to further contributing to this reform process.

Kind regards,



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Dr Aisling de Paor



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Prof Yvonne Daly

On behalf of the School of Law and Government  
Dublin City University