



UCD Sutherland School of Law

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Section 33 Consultation
Legal Services Regulatory Authority
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By e-mail to: publicconsultations@lsra.ie

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Submission to Consultation under the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015, s.33

We are writing to contribute to the consultation under s.33 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. UCD Sutherland School of Law has provided legal education since before the foundation of the State, including training for legal professionals, and we look forward to continuing this tradition.

The standard of education and training for persons admitted to practise.

The King's Inns requirement that students hold an approved law degree with passes in 6 designated subjects means that students do not have the option of taking other degrees and (in the case of the School of Law) must take 11 specific modules as part of their studies – amounting to nearly a full year of their studies, or approximately 23% of their overall degree. This makes it considerably more difficult for students wishing to become barristers to take joint degrees such as law and business or degrees involving study abroad, ultimately reducing the skill sets which they can take with them into practice and limiting market choice. It also makes it more difficult for us to offer more cutting -edge subject choice to engage with global legal issues.

Moreover, the Kings Inn requirement that 5/6 of these designated subjects (Company Law, European Law, Equity & Trust, Land Law, Administrative Law) to be assessed by in person exam (either open book or closed book) worth at least 70% of the overall mark for the subject. This limits our ability to offer flexible, inclusive and dynamic assessment options to students.

The School of Law has previously submitted that the current system of the Final Examination – First Part (FE-1) for qualification as a solicitor and the Entrance Examination in qualification as a barrister, results in unnecessary duplication, delay, and significant cost for those who have already obtained a law degree, including loss of earnings while they are

preparing for the examinations. We would propose abolition of these entrance examinations for students with law degrees from Irish universities, which are already assessed against an independent statutory quality assurance process. This would have the effect of increasing the pool of students in a position to enter legal training and reducing the costs incurred by them.

Any ongoing impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic on the above matters.

During the pandemic, the Kings Inns relaxed its requirements for in-person exams as a primary means of assessment for designated subjects. Its justification for re-instating this requirement is the unacceptability of e-proctored exams. However, we suggest that assessment by coursework, reflective diary etc would allow for more authentic assessment and do not present the same challenges to academic integrity as e-proctored exams. More flexibility in this matter would help us create assessment for all that is inclusive of student needs.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Very best wishes

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