

Innovative Law Schools

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reaching the top

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New legal minds raise teaching bar

Universities Students are challenging traditional law schools to meet expectations, says *Jonathan Moules*

Justice might be blind, but for those teaching the law it has never been more important to keep a watchful eye on students' expectations.

Since the financial crisis of 2007-08, demand for law school places has been erratic.

Following the crisis, numbers taking the benchmark Law School Admission Test (LSAT) tumbled from 151,398 in 2009-10 to 101,689 in 2014-15.

In the US, students are returning but enrolment remains weak in many schools, in part because many believe law school may no longer be a safe bet as fewer legal jobs are available. Schools must also react to longer term changes in the nature of work, in which career paths are more flexible than before.

Law school graduates may begin careers by working in start-ups rather than established law firms, or in organisations going through strategic changes rather than the conservative firms of old. They may work in several countries where their employer has a presence.

Students are increasingly willing to study overseas. The student population of Madrid's IE Law School, for example, is drawn from more than 100 countries. On some of its courses, there are no local students at all.

Students also have expectations about how to study that are different from previous generations, according to Moray McLaren, who runs the lawyers' management programme at IE.

"We can assume that young lawyers who grew up texting friends with one hand, writing a thesis with the other, while playing online computer games with friends will not be running to the law-firm library," he says.

Common law is more popular than civil law, Mr McLaren notes. In response, IE allows students to co-qualify in both civil and common law jurisdictions, jointly with Northwestern College in the US and the University of Law in the UK.

Law firms are also evolving, even emulating the culture, look and feel of technology multinationals such as Google, according to Mr McLaren.

"We are in uncharted territory," he says. "The traditional law firm is both outmoded in some parts of the world and being seriously stress-tested in others. Allen & Overy, for instance, now describes itself as a 'hybrid firm'.



"The challenge with legal education is, therefore, what should we be teaching the future leaders of legal services while we figure out what the future will be? Everything is up for grabs," adds Mr McLaren.

Falling demand for a formal legal education remains a problem.

Although several US schools reported an uptick in interest from potential candidates this year, the US Law School Admission Council recorded 6.7 per cent fewer applications in 2015 than in 2014, across the country.

If the pace of decline continues as it

did last year, the number of people who applied to law school for the autumn 2016 semester will hit its lowest level in 15 years.

Indiana University's Maurer School of Law has recorded a small increase in applicants over the past four admissions test cycles (they hold four a year), although this has not made up for the significant drop in previous years.

This partly reflects a natural cycle in admissions, which follows the economic cycle, according to Austen Parrish, the school's dean, who is optimistic about a recovery in interest.

‘Everything is up for grabs’

Moray McLaren

But he warns that the cost of higher education has become a barrier to many. "I would love to go back to the situation 35 years ago when public education in the US was fully funded, but that is not going to happen," he says.

Ninety per cent of Maurer's students are on some form of scholarship, on average receiving \$25,000, thanks to donations from the school's alumni. Nevertheless, students often graduate with debts in the tens of thousands of dollars.

Part of the requirement for schools is to convince potential students of

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the value of such an expensive commitment, Mr Parrish says. "It is pretty clear that getting a good education from a top university in the US opens a lot of doors," he explains.

The likes of Maurer remain in a better position than lower-ranked US schools, several of which have lowered their admissions standards in the past 12 months. Accepted scores in the benchmark LSAT at many schools have dropped.

The State University of New York-Buffalo Law School and the University of Iowa College of Law, for example, announced this year that they would not require the LSAT for applicants from among top-performing students at their undergraduate institutions.

Some have turned to financial inducements, such as New York's Pace Law School, which this year set its tuition charges at the same rate that out-of-state students would pay at their local state schools.

As one of the world's most prestigious research and teaching institutions, Harvard Law School has had fewer concerns about dwindling numbers of applications.

However, Scott Westfahl, its professor of practice and executive education faculty director, notes there is

pressure on all law schools to show tuition costs are worth the money.

There is a push to impose new work placements for law school accreditation, Mr Westfahl says.

"The reasoning is that for what law schools charge, they should be more outcome-focused and graduate more 'practice-ready' graduates," he explains. Curricular changes are happening, but only slowly, according to Mr Westfahl.

"Increased pressure on tuition won't result in rapid change, because there are so many fixed costs, such as tenured faculty, buildings and libraries, and the deep, cultural expectations about what a law school is supposed to teach."

In the UK, the more pressing challenge is helping students find a job after graduation. "Things are getting worse for law graduates seeking a career in law," says Fatos Selita, president of the UK Law Students' Association.

"Law firms are expecting trainees to work longer hours and often make graduates work as paralegals for long periods before taking them on as trainees, if the latter happens," he says.

Scott Westfahl: value in demand



Employers want to discover which skills are required to develop a profitable practice in the current market.

As a result, students are demanding a shift from the more traditional negotiating, advisory or drafting skills to understanding financial metrics or how to ascertain a client's needs.

"We just have to read the recruitment adverts to see how rapidly those requirements are changing," Mr McLaren at IE says.

"This year, we have seen a higher demand for legal project managers, plus, of course, the ongoing struggle to find technologists within legal services.

"IE already has an optional course on legal project management for students, with some more exotic classes coming next year," he says.

There are opportunities for law schools that can keep abreast of market trends and student demand.

The challenge is for an industry with a reputation for conservatism and gradual development to move fast enough to keep up with the changing ambitions of the new generation of students.

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Innovative Law Schools

The bright stuff: what law firms want

Interview Robert Byk

The head of graduate recruitment at Slaughter and May talks to *Lindsay Fortado*

How do you go about hiring trainees?

The first point to note is the interesting and bizarre element of law: we invite students to apply two years before starting. They apply during the summer, or a little bit earlier, of their penultimate year [of university study]. You make an application through our online portal — it's just name and exam results — then attach a CV. There's no application form, no specific skills-based questions, just CVs read by our partners and HR team, and not filtered by a computer.

If you're invited to the interview stage, you'll do a written exercise, then an interview with a partner. Then you go with a trainee to have a look around, followed by a 15-20 minute chat with the recruitment team. The written exercise has some time pressure associated with it. Then there's the interview, where you'll be given a current affairs article as part of that process. We will be looking for determination to take an argument to its logical conclusion and test that argument. The process on the day takes two and a half to three hours. After your interview, the two interviewers will have a chat about whether they want to take the candidate forward, then at a weekly review meeting a group of partners will get together, that candidate will be presented, and the group will decide.

To what percentage of applicants do you offer trainee contracts?
We don't give out those figures. If you are invited to interview, it is because we are keen to find out more about you. Our retention levels at the end of the two-year training contract are high (historically around 90 per cent).

How do you seek diversity among your recruits?
There are people here from about 65 different educational institutions. So, it's about encouraging people to apply; it's about reputation. We do presentations. We've done a webinar. We advertise that on social media and do networking events.

Has your recruitment process changed in the past few years?
We've always thought the CV and cover letter are the best way. [They are] blank sheets



Robert Byk: looking for grit

of paper, and people have the opportunity to present themselves. The written test is not a law-based test; it's a scenario, and we've a number of them. It's mostly problem-solving; it's ability to write under pressure. Some of that is the ability to follow instructions, to finish the task and to synthesise well. We've looked at online testing that goes on with other firms and have concluded that's not a path we want to go

down. Last year we introduced a psychometric questionnaire for candidates we invited to interview, and it is in a pilot phase. We introduced it to find out more information about the candidates, not as a tool to filter in or filter out. We find that it's trickier to do the CV and cover letter [than an application form], and it tells us more about a person, because they don't know exactly what is expected of them. **What is the main attribute you look for in recruits?** Brightness, or intellectual ability. We need people with creative spark and ingenuity and those who can display necessary grit under a degree of pressure. And curiosity. Sense of humour is important. We're also very interested in what people do outside of studies.

Is there anything else in particular you look for, like language skills or international background?
The classic question is, if I have German language skills, would that be any better than being fantastic at maths? The answer is no; you are who you are. We're not ticking boxes but looking at the whole person. We recently recruited a Lego enthusiast: he has a Lego model of Singapore in his bedroom. They could be knitting enthusiasts, cage fighters or juggling studies with full-time work to make ends meet. The particular thing makes no difference to us; it just informs us. **What is innovative about how Slaughter and May recruits?**
In other firms you would spend a lot of time with HR, but we think it is right that [partners] do the bulk of presentations at universities.

Innovative Law Schools

Recruiters look beyond old hunting grounds

Career paths Companies seek newcomers from a wider talent pool, says *Lindsay Fortado*

Top British law firms are constantly reviewing and honing the way they recruit the next generation of talent. Recent innovations have included expanding the number of universities they recruit from, creating trainee schemes to attract students with foreign language skills and finding new interview techniques. Allen & Overy has been reviewing how it recruits after the Solicitors Regulation Authority this year withdrew from a voluntary code setting out a timetable for when law firms could make offers to students. The SRA said the decision was made because deciding the dates and processes by which employers and employees make recruitment choices was not part of its regulatory role.

Claire Wright, graduate recruitment partner at Allen & Overy, says the move gave the firm an opportunity to reconsider its graduate programme as talent is often to be found beyond the "traditional hunting ground". This meant measures such as offering vacation schemes to give candidates and the firm a better way to test who should be awarded a training contract. "It gives [students] a chance to sample several careers, or if they feel they want to pursue something completely different they can do that because they've a wide range of options," Ms Wright says. The company introduced A&O First, a work experience programme that lets first-year students spend time at the firm at an early stage of their career. Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, another top British law firm, has created a training contract for Mandarin and Korean speakers to encourage them to join the firm, says Andrew Austin, partner in charge of graduate recruitment. Under this scheme, trainees recruited from UK universities have a year's legal training in London before moving to Southeast Asia for a second year. The trainees will gain qualification in England and Wales after the two years, as well as in the other country they worked in. One of the biggest challenges for recruiters is that they are looking for law students who will not become practising lawyers until four, or even five years later. Firms generally recruit undergraduates, which means candidates have at least a year of university and a year of law school still to complete. Non-law graduates take longer to qualify. If students are offered a training contract, they will spend two further years as trainees before practising. "We're interviewing now for students who will join us at the earliest in 2018, probably 2019, so we're definitely recruiting for potential," Mr Austin says. "We're looking for people who will be great trainees three years from now." Clifford Chance, the law firm, is changing the way it interviews candidates to limit the preconceived notions recruiters may have. It is also creating an alternative route for candidates who want a way around the traditional process of submitting a CV and an application form. "Our process is constantly evolving," says Laura King, the firm's



Young talent: CVs and application forms may not be the best way to find it

Winning through Qualities top UK practices are looking for

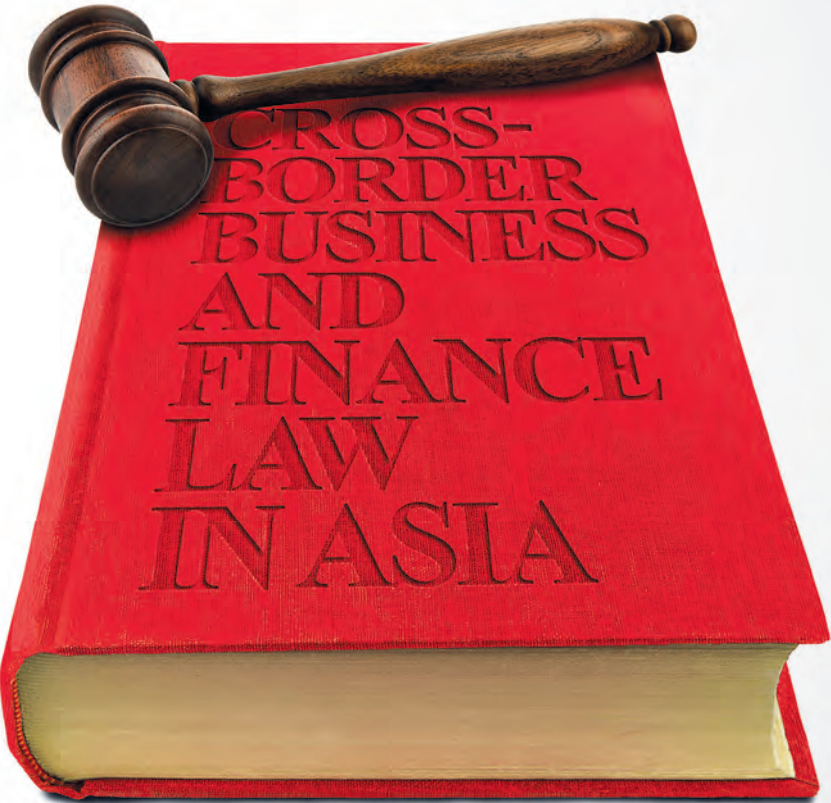
"We are interested in international or other cultural experiences, we're interested in commercial interest in the law, and we're interested in resilience," says Laura King, global head of people and talent at UK law firm Clifford Chance. "Technical excellence and intellectual calibre are a given," adds Claire Wright, graduate recruitment partner at Allen & Overy. "What we've moved on to is the demonstration of strong business and commercial sense, and being part of a team. The ability to act as part of a team — not just internally but being an extension of a client's team — is essential. "In recruiting trainees, we have got to find some evidence of entrepreneurial drive, that innovative thinking and, above all, resilience," Ms Wright says. "The ability to almost go wrong, but then be able to find a way to learn from the experience and come out stronger, rather than deciding you've failed." "Now, more than ever before, we need people who can operate in a global economy," she adds. "That global mindset, that sense that this is going to be an inevitable part of your work — and to find that exciting — is essential." "We want our lawyers to have an international outlook," says Andrew Austin, graduate recruitment partner at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. "They have to be interested in different cultures, the world of business, the world of law. You've got to be the type of person who's quite supportive of other people. You have to be bright, inquisitive and sharp. "We look for the potential in people," he says, adding not all applicants need to have perfect business acumen. "There are some brilliant technical lawyers."

global head of people and talent. "We did make some process changes [including] not having students' CVs with the interviewer. So essentially it's having the candidate be 'name only'. "Not having the benefit of the CV or knowledge of the student's school or background — not to say that doesn't come up in the discussion — "Not having the CV may make for a slightly more open meeting" may make for a slightly more open or less prejudging meeting. That was a change for students, certainly in law firm recruitment." Laura Yeates, the firm's graduate recruitment and development manager, adds: "The students seemed to really like it. It allowed candidates to position their strengths in a way they felt they could lead the interview." She says it also made candidates more comfortable and allowed them "to lead the narrative" better. Since these changes were introduced, Clifford Chance says the number of institutions from which it receives applications has increased. "Suddenly we were converting from a broader range of institutions," Ms King says. An alternative route into the profession offered by Clifford Chance is through its Intelligent Aid programme. Candidates taking this option are asked to submit a 600-word essay — this year's topic is ethics in business — and to structure an argument around it. It invites 40 finalists to its offices to make a presentation and 20 of them are offered vacation schemes during which they have the opportunity to win a training contract. Ms Wright at Allen & Overy says the recruitment reforms are part of the way it tries to find candidates who have individuality, toughness and a global outlook. "More than ever before we're going to need lawyers who are adaptable and agile, who are astute at securing and maintaining client relations," she says. "We can't have lawyers who say, 'Oh, I only do banking, I only do corporate'. Language skills are very interesting and will be noted. "If you find a Chinese student who's studied in Hong Kong, is doing a masters in England, has Hindi as a second language, clearly that sort of person is of interest. That shows an ability to adapt to different environments."

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Financial Times LLM programme listing 2015

98 of the top Master of Laws providers: schools are categorised by region and listed alphabetically by country

School information										Full-time study						Part-time study						
Law school	Principal country	Language	Law degree or equivalent required	Scholarships offered	Number of LLM programmes	General LLM programmes	Specialist LLM programmes	Joint programmes available with a business school	Online LLM programmes **	Full-time minimum length (months)	Full-time student intakes	Full-time student numbers 2014/15	Full-time non-national students 2014/15 (%)	Full-time minimum fees (currency)	Full-time minimum fees	Part-time minimum length (months)	Part-time student intakes	Part-time student numbers 2014/15	Part-time non-national students 2014/15 (%)	Part-time minimum fees (currency)	Part-time minimum fees	
North America																						
York University: Osgoode Hall	Canada	English		y	1		y			12	Sep	26	21	CS	*							
York University: Osgoode Professional Development	Canada	English	*		19	y	y			12	*	110	30	CS	22,983	24	*		300	5	CS	22,983
American University Washington College of Law	US	English/ Spanish	y	y	5	y	y	y	y	9	Jan/Aug	113	79	US\$	49,542	13	Jan/Aug	109	67	US\$	43,760	
Boston University	US	English	y	y	5	y	y		y	9	Sep/Jun	199	87	US\$	48,170	12	Jan/May/Sep/rolling	150	9	US\$	48,170	
College of William and Mary: Marshall-Wythe	US	English	y	y	2	y	y			10	Jan/Aug	36	100	US\$	39,800							
Columbia University	US	English	y	y	1	y				10	Aug	280	95	US\$	62,805							
Cornell University	US	English	y	y	1	y				9	Aug	85	100	US\$	66,563							
Duke University	US	English	y	y	2	y	y	y		9	Aug	118	86	US\$	56,500							
Fordham University	US	English	y	y	8	y	y			9	Aug/Jun	162	93	US\$	54,116	17	Aug/Jun	31	77	US\$	54,327	
George Washington University School	US	English	y	y	11	y	y			9	Jan/Aug	163	67	US\$	45,720	18	Jan/Aug	132	10	US\$	45,720	
Georgetown University	US	English	*	y	18	y	y	y	y	9	Aug	478	75	US\$	55,255	18	Aug	97	11	US\$	45,000	
Harvard Law School	US	English	y	y	1	y				10	Aug	182	99	US\$	60,982							
Illinois Institute of Technology: Chicago-Kent College of Law	US	English	y	y	5	y	y			9	Jan/Aug	110	95	US\$	39,980	14	Jan/Aug	1		US\$	*	
Indiana University: Maurer	US	English	y	y	1	y				9	Aug/Jun	40	100	US\$	40,800							
Loyola University Chicago	US	English	y	y	8		y		y	9	Jan/Aug/Sep	40 ***	75***	US\$	35,823	18	Jan/Aug/Sep	89 ***	7 ***	US\$	35,823	
New York University	US	English	y	y	10	y	y	y	y	9	Aug	447	75	US\$	59,330	18	Jan/Aug	**	**	**	**	
Northwestern University	US	English	y	y	10	y	y		y	4	May/Jun/Aug	188	82	US\$	60,492	10	Mar/Apr/Aug	68	93	US\$	71,880	
Southern Methodist University: Dedman	US	English	y	y	3	y	y	y		10	Jan/Aug	68	79	US\$	49,924	17	Jan/Aug	3		US\$	37,444	
Stanford University	US	English	y		3		y			9	Sep	57	98	US\$	54,366							
Temple University: Beasley	US	English	y	y	5	y	y		y	10	Jan/Aug	40	100	US\$	26,070	16	Rolling	135	3	US\$	29,184	
The Pennsylvania State University: Dickinson Law	US	English	y	y	1	y				12	Rolling	65***	100***	US\$	44,400							
The Pennsylvania State University: Penn State Law	US	English	y	y	1	y				9	Jan/Aug	65***	100***	US\$	45,380							
The University of Michigan Law School	US	English	y	y	2	y	y			9	Aug	45	98	US\$	56,112							
Tufts University: Fletcher	US	English	y	y	1		y			9	Aug	11	100	US\$	42,234							
Tulane University	US	English	y	y	4	y	y			10	Jul/Aug	57	84	US\$	51,130	16	Jan/Aug	1		US\$	*	
UConn School of Law	US	English	y	y	4	y	y		y	10	Rolling	35	45	US\$	28,000	24	Rolling	19	6	US\$	28,000	
University of California, Berkeley	US	English	y	y	2	y	y			6	May/Aug	418	94	US\$	56,077							
University of California, Los Angeles	US	English	y	y	9	y	y			9	Aug	157	96	US\$	57,100							
University of Chicago	US	English	y	y	1	y				9	Sep	73	100	US\$	57,957							
University of Denver Sturm College of Law	US	English	y	y	4	y	y	y	y	9	Jan/Mar/Jun/Aug/Sep	60	33	US\$	38,600	18	Jan/Mar/Jun/Aug/Sep	45	23	US\$	38,600	
University of Florida Levin College of Law	US	English	y	y	4	y	y			9	Aug/Jun	104	32	US\$	19,323	12	Aug/Jun	4		US\$	19,323	
University of Georgia	US	English	y	y	1	y		y		10	Aug	15	100	US\$	39,408							
University of Houston	US	English	y	y	6	y	y	y		9	Aug/Jun	59	68	US\$	39,000	36	Aug/Jun	63	30	US\$	39,000	
University of Illinois College of Law	US	English	y	y	1	y				9	Aug	52	100	US\$	53,343							
University of Miami	US	English/ Spanish	y	y	8		y	y	y	9	Aug/Jun	51	50	US\$	46,800	18	Aug/Jun	77	33	US\$	46,800	
University of Minnesota	US	English	y	y	2	y	y			10	Aug	73	100	US\$	57,300							
University of Pennsylvania	US	English	y	y	1	y		y		10	Aug	115	100	US\$	62,082							
University of San Diego	US	English	y	y	5	y	y			10	Aug/Jun	73	50	US\$	38,160	14	Aug/Jun	14		US\$	38,160	
University of Southern California: Gould	US	English	y	y	1	y			y	9	Aug	200	100	US\$	57,286	12	Sep/Jun/May	25	100	US\$	46,494	
University of Texas	US	English	y	y	6	y	y			9	Aug	61	90	US\$	42,686							
University of the Pacific: McGeorge	US	English	y	y	3	y	y			10	Aug	12	52	US\$	28,900	16	Aug	11	48	US\$	28,950	
University of Virginia	US	English	y	y	1	y		y		10	Aug	42	95	US\$	57,000							
University of Washington	US	English	*	y	7	y	y			9	Sep	136	62	US\$	18,978	12	Rolling	46		US\$	18,978	
University of Wisconsin-Madison	US	English	y	y	2	y	y			9	Sep/Jun	72	98	US\$	32,635							
Vanderbilt University	US	English	y	y	3	y	y			9	Rolling	63	100	US\$	50,900							
Wake Forest University	US	English	y	y	1	y		y		10	Aug	26	100	US\$	43,424							
Washington University in St Louis	US	English	*	y	5	y	y		y	12	Aug/Jun	**	**	US\$	51,216	12	Aug/Jun	**	**	US\$	51,216	
Latin America																						
FGV Direito SP	Brazil	Portuguese/ English	*	y	2	y	y			18	Feb	31	3	R\$	49,500	18	Mar	39		R\$	68,850	
Europe																						
College of Europe	Belgium	English/ French	y		1	y				10	Sep	101	89	Euro	24,000							
University of Copenhagen	Denmark	English	y	y	1	y	y			24	Sep	77	99	Danish Kr	150,000							
Edhec Business School	France	English		y	1	y				10	Sep	42	12	Euro	18,000							
Sorbonne-Assas International Law School	France	English	y		2	y		y		9	Oct/Jun	50	60	Euro	17,000	24	Oct	3	50	Euro	17,000	
Institute for Law and Finance, Goethe University	Germany	English		y	2		y			10	Oct	50	95	Euro	18,000	24	Oct	5	80	Euro	22,000	
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg	Germany	German	y		2	y	y	y		12	Oct	30	10	Euro	8,000	24	Oct	10	20	Euro	8,000	
Alba Graduate Business School	Greece	English	y	y	1		y	y		16	Sep							14	14	Euro	12,500	
University College Dublin: Sutherland	Ireland	English	y	y	6	y	y	y		11	Sep/Jun	64	40	Euro	7,950	23	Sep/Jun	12	8	Euro	8,000	
European University Institute, Florence	Italy	English	y	y	1	y				13	Sep	12	75	Euro	0 *							
University of Luxembourg	Luxembourg	French/ English	y	y	6	y	y			11	Sep	186	80	Euro	800	23	Sep	6	83	Euro	1,600	
Maastricht University	Netherlands	Dutch/ English	*		9		y			10	Sep/Feb	530	40	Euro	1,951							
Tilburg Law School	Netherlands	English	*	y	6		y			12	Sep/Jun	280	65	Euro	1,998							
Universidade Católica Portuguesa: Católica Global	Portugal	English	y	y	2	y	y	y		10	Sep	48	58	Euro	12,000							
Cunef	Spain	Spanish/ English	y	y	4	y	y			18	Sep	42	50	Euro	16,000							
Esade Law School	Spain	Spanish/ English	y	y	4	y	y	y		15	Sep	238	4	Euro	27,300	9	Oct	107	32	Euro	16,500	
IE Law School	Spain	English/ Spanish	*	y	8		y	y	y	10	Oct/Mar	284	45	Euro	29,700	9	Sep/Oct	38	54	Euro	24,200	
IEB (Instituto de Estudios Bursátiles)	Spain	Spanish/ English	y	y	1	y		y		18	Oct/Feb	15	20	Euro	18,000							
ISDE	Spain	English/ Spanish	y	y	18	y	y	y	y	12	Rolling	535	66	Euro	17,500	12	Rolling	609	73	Euro	11,500	
Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Icade	Spain	English/ Spanish	*	y	8	y	y	y		10	Oct	173	12	Euro	12,650	20	Oct	34	30	Euro	12,650	
The Graduate Institute, Geneva	Switzerland	English	y	y	4	y				10	Sep	103	98	Swiss Fr	15,000							
University of St Gallen	Switzerland	English		y	1		y			18	Rolling							30	53	Swiss Fr	38,500	
City University London	UK	English	*	y	3	y	y		y	12	Jan/Sep	70	55	UKE	10,000	24	Sep/Jun/Mar/May	40	20	UKE	8,550	
King's College London	UK	English	*	y	8	y	y	y		12	Sep	370	92	UKE	13,800	24	Sep	17	47	UKE	13,800	
Kingston University	UK	English	y	y	6	y	y			13	Sep/Jun	31	50	UKE	8,200	25	Sep/Jun	5	50	UKE	9,020	
Lancaster University	UK	English	y	y	10	y	y		y	12	Oct	54	78	UKE	6,250	24	Oct	1			6,250	
London School of Economics and Political Science	UK	English	y	*	2	y	y			12	Sep	265	47	UKE	14,208	24	Sep/Dec/April	38	66	UKE	14,208	
Nottingham Trent University	UK	English	*	y	10	y	y		y	12	Sep	80	50	UKE	5,510	24	Sep	10		UKE	5,510	

Innovative Law Schools

Financial Times LLM programme listing 2015

98 of the top Master of Laws providers: schools are categorised by region and listed alphabetically by country

Law school

Innovative Law Schools

Admissions overhaul for tough era

Applications Tide may be turning after enrolment hit lowest level for 40 years, writes *Gina Chon*

The past five years have been turbulent for US law schools. Applications to the once-booming legal-academic sector have dropped to their lowest level in years, causing heartache among administrators. Job prospects for graduates have been poor, with law firms cutting associate positions while reducing entry-level salaries. This has made it harder for students to pay off debt. Schools have responded by revising financial aid strategies, changing the curriculum and offering opportunities in high-demand sectors, such as technology. “Law schools are starting to think of constructive, creative strategies to address the very challenging environment,” says Daniel Rodríguez, dean of Northwestern University’s Pritzker School of Law. In 2014, he was president of the Association of American Law Schools. “No law school is immune from the changing legal marketplace and we, at the more elite schools, ignore those changes at our peril.” From 2010 to 2014, the number of applicants dropped 36 per cent from 87,900 to 55,700, according to the Law School Admission Council, which administers the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). The number of students entering law school in 2014 was the smallest in 40 years, coming in at 43,500. Critics suggest schools responded by lowering admissions standards. Last year, about one-third of the 200 accredited schools in the US admitted students with LSAT scores below 150, which is considered to be “at risk”, according to a study by Law School Transparency, a US non-profit legal education policy organisation. But several deans reject that idea, saying they maintained the quality of students and made changes elsewhere. The high cost has been one of the most daunting obstacles for prospective students. The average total debt after graduation hovers around \$150,000, significantly more than the \$100,000 in student debt that burdens about 2m in the US. Schools have recognised the cost problem, but struggle to balance this with their need for income. However, they have been more



Cornell University: increased financial assistance — Alamy

disciplined on tuition costs, capping or limiting increases, while also setting more aggressive fundraising goals and increasing needs-based financial aid. One example is Cornell University Law School, which increased financial aid, raised fundraising goals and reallocated resources, says Eduardo Peñalver, dean. The university raised a record \$672.9m in the 2015 fiscal year. About 80 per cent of students receive some kind of financial aid. For the 2014-15 school year, the cost of attending Cornell Law was almost \$80,000, including room and board and other expenses. Most US schools are limited in how much they can change their programmes if they want to be accredited by the American Bar Association. There are also the bar associations of the 50 states to consider. The ABA recently changed its rules to allow schools to have up to 10 per cent of a class with students who have not taken the LSAT. But those students have to be at the top of their college class. A handful of schools created programmes with three years of tuition completed in two years — but the programmes cost the same.

The University of Dayton’s School of Law in Ohio was, a decade ago, one of the first to create a two-year programme that targets older students for whom the opportunity cost is higher because they are working. Andrew Strauss, the dean, says law schools must be attuned to the economy and provide opportunities accordingly, including in technology. Even if applications increase they are unlikely to return to pre-crisis levels, he says. Schools need to think about where legal training might be needed next. “There are innovative sectors and businesses being created all the time and they need legal assistance,” he says. “The successful law schools of the future are going to figure out how to do that training.” Cornell has invested in growth areas, such as technology. The school has created a Master of Laws in Law, Technology and Entrepreneurship for students wanting to be lawyers in the start-up field. The programme is based at Cornell Tech, the graduate school in New York City and focuses on traditional course work. It also includes a business school curriculum and work on start-up projects. The goal is to encourage traditional law school students to spend time at Cornell Tech. “No programme at any other law school provides students with the opportunity for hands-on experience to work with tech start-ups,” says Mr Peñalver. “We are educating lawyers to understand the distinctive needs of start-ups.” However, the tide may be turning. This year, the number of people taking the LSAT, which is required by most schools, went up 6.6 per cent in June compared with the same period a year ago. It rose even further in the autumn testing period, by 7.4 per cent. About 88 per cent of admissions officers are confident their school will see a spike in applications for the 2015-2016 cycle, compared with only 46 per cent last year, according to a survey conducted by Kaplan Test Prep, the test preparation group. Still, the past few years have stung most schools, even the most prestigious. The biggest drop in applications has come from students at the top of the applicant pool. Mr Rodríguez is optimistic, saying the situation has put pressure on schools to innovate in ways that have made them better. “We’ll see American law schools emerging stronger,” he says. “We’re not in that heyday any more so we have to constantly explain our value proposition and that’s a good thing.”

Gaining the edge via work experience

Christina Albertson, a law student at the University of Virginia School of Law, is spending most of her last year at college working at legal clinics where she advises clients and appears in court. These practical skills, she believes, will help her land a job after graduation next year. It is the kind of experience she would not have been able to secure if law school was only two years long. “If you don’t have that time to build up your practical skills and experience, I’m not sure how you would find a job,” says Ms Albertson, who plans to pursue public service after graduation. “The more training you get in law school, the better off you will be when you leave.” The third year of law school — and whether it is necessary — has been a topic for growing debate as levels of student debt increase and job prospects remain dim. In 2013, President Obama, who attended Harvard Law School, waded into the debate, saying two years of law school classes was likely to be enough for students. He says students would be better off working as a clerk for a judge

or at a law firm in what would be their third year of law school. This is the kind of experience schools are increasingly offering. Ms Albertson works at a child advocacy clinic, which focuses on juvenile justice cases, and at a housing clinic, which handles eviction cases and related matters. She is taking only one class, which is on oral advocacy. The additional debt accrued in her third year concerns her, but she also receives a scholarship that will help ease that burden. Otherwise, she says law school would have been beyond her reach. She received a school grant last summer that allowed her to work at the Legal Aid Society and live in Washington DC. Without it she would not have been able to pursue that opportunity. Public-service sector positions for law school students are often unpaid. “UVA had us working from day one on what we needed to do to get a job after we graduate,” Ms Albertson says. “With the market the way it is, law schools are pretty conscious of that now.” **Gina Chon**

Innovative Law Schools

Students think twice as competition rises

Employment

A legal career is less attractive than it was before the financial crisis, says *Jane Croft*

Law has always been regarded as an attractive and lucrative career, but competition for jobs has intensified in recent years. In the UK, the changing nature of the profession — highlighted by a greater reliance on lower-paid paralegals, more outsourcing of legal work to cheaper cost centres and a collapse in legal aid work — has reduced the numbers of training contracts on offer at law firms, the final stage in qualifying as a solicitor. This has led to increased competition for jobs at a time

when those graduating from first degree law courses in England and Wales rose to a new high of 16,120 in summer 2014 — the fifth consecutive annual increase, according to Law Society figures. The number of practising solicitors has risen by more than 15,000 since July 2009 to 136,294. Nor is the tough employment situation unique to the UK. In the US, numbers of students enrolling at law schools have fallen, as students opt for careers in technology or business instead. The American Bar Association says that the 204 ABA-approved law schools saw 2014 juris doctor (JD) enrolment reach 119,775. This was the lowest since 1987 — and a 17.5 per cent decrease from the historic high in 2010. Pressure has extended to law schools, which are offering new courses to help students stand out.



Graduation: but fewer training contracts are on offer — AP

James Greif of the Association of American Law Schools, says some schools are offering courses on growth areas such as cyber law or healthcare law, or are reducing enrolment. Other regional schools have capitalised on their local strengths, such as the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, which offers qualifications on gaming law and regulation.

The James E Rogers College of Law at the University of Arizona has set up a global mining law centre, which includes courses on intellectual property (IP) and workplace safety. MIT recently joined forces with Boston University’s law school to open a free legal clinic for campus entrepreneurs. The clinic helps secure protection for their IP and

works with investors. It is tapping into a growing area of the economy, as patent applications have tripled over the past 20 years. In the UK, law schools are wooing applicants with eye-catching initiatives. In August, the University of Law, a private university in Guildford, promised that students who do not secure a job after nine months following graduation would receive half their tuition fees back. The pledge is aimed at students enrolling on the Legal Practice course. But while competition to secure jobs might be tough, the longer-term employment picture is more encouraging. In the US in a few years time, the number of jobs available will outpace the number of law graduates. In the UK, the profession is also changing and there are newer, more flexible ways to

become a solicitor for those who cannot secure a training contract. The Solicitors Regulation Authority, under its “equivalent means” system, is allowing individuals to be admitted as solicitors, provided they have the right skills and experience. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is planning to set up six-year legal apprenticeships for those wanting to be solicitors straight from school without going to university. Despite today’s fierce competition, lawyers say the legal profession remains attractive and opportunities are varied. “As long as you go into it with your eyes open and are flexible in terms of where you get your training, it’s still a career that is incredibly rewarding, says Simon Hart, training partner of law firm RPC. “Lawyers will always be around.”

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Innovative Law Schools

Thousands of hours of work for justice

Pro bono Students gain experience from supervised case work that can also change the lives of clients, writes *Jane Croft*

For any seasoned criminal lawyer, the overturning and quashing of a client’s murder conviction by the UK’s Court of Appeal would be a big victory. But what makes one case, that of Dwaine George, more unusual is that much of the work was done by Cardiff University students through the Cardiff Law School Innocence Project and Pro Bono Unit. The Innocence Project allows students who want to investigate alleged miscarriages of justice to work on cases of long-term prisoners who maintain their innocence of crimes for which they have been convicted. The innocence project movement started in the US but came to the UK about a decade ago. The Dwaine George case was significant because Cardiff was the first university innocence project in the UK to secure a conviction’s overturning by the Court of Appeal. A report by LawWorks, a charity that connects volunteer lawyers with people who need legal advice, found that at least 70 per cent of law schools in the UK are involved in pro bono projects and 45 per cent of clinics in the LawWorks network involve a law school. Such projects help students gain experience under close supervision by solicitors. Cardiff became involved in the Dwaine George case in 2006 and submitted his case in 2010, along with six others, to the Criminal Cases Review Commission. Mr George was convicted in 2002 of murder, attempted murder and



Dwaine George: conviction quashed

possession of a firearm for the killing of Daniel Dale in Manchester in 2001. He was sentenced to a minimum of 12 years in prison. He had always maintained he was a victim of a miscarriage of justice. Mr George’s appeal was based on scientific re-evaluation of the significance of gunshot residue, and new guidelines that cast doubt

‘It’s often the last chance for these people’

Clinics offer basis for broader experience

ABS licences

Training includes dealing with clients, says *Jane Croft*

The UK’s liberalised legal services market has attracted dozens of entrants over the past four years, ranging from The Co-operative to PwC. So far, more than 400 organisations have become Alternative Business Structures (ABS), authorised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). An ABS is an entity offering legal services, or a law firm that can raise external capital or bring non-lawyers on board. Among the latest ABS crop to be granted licences are two legal advice clinics linked to universities. Although most universities offer pro bono advice in legal clinics, the University of Law and Nottingham Law School have taken this tradition a stage further. In a competitive legal education market, law schools want to innovate and offer students practical experience. Graduates, for their part, need to demonstrate they have gained as much practical experience as possible during their studies.

Nottingham Law School at Nottingham Trent University received an ABS licence for its legal advice centre this year. It hopes students, under close supervision by qualified solicitors, will work in a fully regulated organisation as part of their studies. About 200 students so far have worked in the centre, which has more than 180 pro bono clients. It has provided more than 10,000 hours of free advice on property and environmental law, among other issues, since June 2014. Jenny Holloway, the school’s associate dean, says one reason for applying for the licence was to help future-proof the advice centre against changes to the current exemption, which permits it to undertake reserved activities (such as litigation). She adds, however: “Students find it very exciting that it is part of a teaching law firm. It’s a more effective vehicle for us to increase the variety of opportunities we can offer through the law centre.” “[The students] have a better context of how the law operates . . . and see how it



Advice: Nottingham Law School’s centre

affects real people,” says Nick Johnson, the centre’s pro bono director. By operating as an ABS, the centre gives students exposure to a broad range of areas of practice. The non-profit centre is also looking to set up entrepreneurial and intellectual property law services. The centre is considering charging a modest fee for such advice, aimed at very small start-ups — such as young artists or designers — who could not

normally afford legal services. “We have a big graduate population setting up businesses. These are not getting legal advice and cannot afford to as they are going it alone,” Mr Johnson says. But Ms Holloway would not expect all law clinics associated with law schools to opt for the ABS model. “You have to be very focused,” she says. Some academics say law schools with ABS status are part of wider changes in the

legal profession — including in the training of solicitors. The regulator is reviewing how solicitors are trained, and is expected to report next year. There is speculation it may permit different ways of work-based learning that demonstrate certain skills that solicitors need in order to gain a license. Legal work experience at university may become one such way. “How many law schools go down that route will depend on the SRA review,” says Jackie Panter, associate head of Manchester Law School at Manchester Metropolitan University. “Some may be setting up partly in anticipation of changes.” There are disadvantages for advice centres if they opt to become an ABS. They will be regulated like a law firm, and grapple with problems such as professional indemnity insurance. Continuity of client care may also be a factor in long-running cases — a challenge when there is a regular turnover of graduates each year. While all this is new to the UK, the US has seen a number of law schools carving a niche for themselves by starting up firms to employ and train recent graduates.

ASU Alumni Law Group was launched by Arizona State University and is a standalone, non-profit educational law firm. Modelled on a teaching hospital, it trains recent graduates from the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law in how to practise law while providing legal services to clients at below market rates. Rates vary depending on the complexity of the advice, the client’s ability to pay and the experience of the attorney assigned to the case. Experienced attorneys supervise new attorneys closely, while providing affordable legal services in a variety of practice areas. Marty Harper, ASU chief executive, says law schools are going to have to be “more pragmatic” and that the range of legal cases seen by his practice is much broader than at a typical pro bono clinic. US law schools do have pro bono clinics, but these may be narrowly focused on particular areas, such as housing, he adds. The firm charges rates that are lower than those of a typical law firm. “We make clients pay rates that are more affordable, but we do ask them to pay something,” Mr Harper says.

Innovative Law Schools

Professor Julie Price, director of the Cardiff Law School Innocence Project and head of its pro bono unit, says she and the students put thousands of hours into the nine years they worked on the case. The Innocence Project at Cardiff has submitted 20 substantive submissions in 12 different cases and now receives five or six letters a week from convicted prisoners wanting it to take up their cases. “It’s a huge effort and it’s often the last chance for these people,” Prof Price says. She adds that by getting involved “law students learn for themselves . . . and get a far deeper understanding of society rather than just law”. She says that some students might initially be attracted to work on such cases so that they can put the experience on their CV, “but then they really get into it and we end up with a small group of students who are with us for ever”. About 30 Cardiff students, past and present, attended Mr George’s Court of Appeal hearing and some have since qualified as solicitors. “In the George case, some students went on to become lawyers and still took an interest after they left,” Prof Price says, adding that one of the students is now doing a PhD on miscarriages of justice. Nor are Cardiff students the only ones making the headlines for their work on real legal cases. Last year, Kent Law Clinic, a pro bono service provided by students at the University of Kent, was recognised for its work in helping to secure asylum in the UK for an Afghan refugee. The case was submitted to the Home Office under the 1951 Refugee Convention on the grounds that if the client returned to Afghanistan he would face persecution. Students at Kent Law Clinic provided free legal support. They are supervised by qualified practising lawyers from the University of Kent’s law school with help from local lawyers. Claire Splawn, then a second-year law student, prepared the case under the supervision of clinic solicitor Sheona York. At a time when legal aid services have been cut back by the UK government, volunteering by law students — and law schools’ support for pro bono services — can make a vital difference to communities and to justice. At the same time, they provide valuable experience for the lawyers of the future.

on the use of small particles of gunshot residue as evidence. Last December, the Court of Appeal quashed Mr George’s conviction as it was no longer safe. Sir Brian Leveson, the lead Court of Appeal judge, praised the work of Cardiff’s Pro Bono Unit and the Innocence Project, which, he said, “took up the appellant’s case and pursued it so diligently”.

Prison Jail term brings meetings of minds

One Spanish law school has set up an unusual philosophy course that brings together law students and prisoners. The course, Philosophy Behind Bars, has been organised by Esade Law School in co-operation with the Catalan department of justice at Lledoners prison near Barcelona. Professor Sira Abenoza leads the school’s philosophy course, on which seven law students and seven inmates meet for weekly sessions over a term to think and reflect. The aim of the course is to bridge the gap between future criminal lawyers and the kind of people they will represent. Sessions are based on the practice of the Socratic method of discussion between individuals to explore philosophical concepts such as truth and fear. Some universities, notably in the US, have set up encounters between law students and inmates — for debating contests, for example — but these have tended to be limited, one-day events. The Esade course is unusual in that the student-inmate meetings are for an entire term and are to discuss philosophical and moral ideas. “Most law students have never been into a jail,” Prof Abenoza says. “It helps make students better lawyers.” She likens the meetings to the training doctors undergo. “A doctor does not end his education in medicine without going into the operating theatre,” she says. Students write diaries during the course and the inmates are encouraged to do so, too. A benefit of the sessions for the inmates, says Prof Abenoza, is that many are given hope that they can reintegrate into society after they are released. “Inmates say that spending an afternoon with university students makes them feel as if they are out of jail — the main reason is that they don’t feel judged,” she says. **Jane Croft**

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Innovative Law Schools

Millennials demand start-up skills

New careers Many students aspire to entrepreneurial working lives, writes *Jonathan Moules*

Any twenty-something who quits a legal career to join a start-up might be worried about his or her parents' reaction. But for Romeen Sheth — whose mother and father run their own businesses and have nurtured their children's entrepreneurial genes — making the leap was not a problem. "Our dinner conversations were about business ideas and how industries were evolving," the class of 2015 at Harvard Law School member explains. "Maybe not the most typical childhood."

It helped that Mr Sheth's employer operates in the legal sector. He is head of business development at Ravel Law, a San Francisco-based start-up

that recently raised just under \$10m and has entered a partnership with Harvard Law School to digitise the school's entire case law collection.

"For the first time in history, US case law will be fully free and available to the public, and we are playing an integral role in that effort," says Mr Sheth.

His parents might not be typical of baby boomers, who aspired to job security over going it alone, but he is typical of the millennials graduating from law school, for whom entrepreneurship is *de rigueur*.

Across the Atlantic in Madrid, Matan Ganani moved from law school graduate and MBA student to co-founding Never Empty, an online auction site enabling Spanish football clubs to fill unsold match seats.

He claims to have always known his future lay in start-ups. But he does not regret completing formal education, and appreciates the knowledge acquired through his law degree.

"My legal education was phenomenal in helping set up the company when we needed to draw up

agreements for shareholders, investors, my co-founder and suppliers," he says.

"When you know what you are talking about, particularly in the early stages when you are pitching your business to investors, when you can talk about things like the right of first refusal, that is a huge validation of you as a business person."

Mr Ganani spent much of his childhood in Israel, now recognised as one of the world's most dynamic start-up cultures. But his enthusiasm was ignited after he left law school, when he moved to Spain to study for an MBA at IE Business School.

Both Mr Sheth and Mr Ganani were supported in their endeavours by Law Without Walls (LWOW), an educational model backed by the University of Miami, which connects students from 30 law and business schools around the world with academic, business, entrepreneurial and legal mentors.

"The number one way to teach entrepreneurialism is to get people to do it," says Michele DeStefano,



Matan Ganani: no regrets

LWOW co-founder and a professor of law at the University of Miami, where she researches and writes about growing relationships between law, business and legal innovation.

This year, the university opened an entrepreneurship law clinic, providing free legal advice as well as providing an insight for law students at the university into how start-ups operate.

Daniel Ravicher, who runs the

clinic, started providing free legal work for technology company founders when he was in law school in the 1990s. "Miami has a booming start-up community and one missing piece of the puzzle is legal services for the earliest of start-ups who can't otherwise get the legal assistance they need," he says.

But not everyone is convinced about the wisdom of law schools adding entrepreneurship modules to the teaching schedule.

Fatos Selita trained as barrister and attorney, and as such has been able to practise law in the US as well as England and Wales. He is president of the UK Law Students' Association, whose membership consists of more than 25 British university law societies.

Mr Selita acknowledges entrepreneurship is a useful skill, but does not think it would help aspiring law students in England and Wales, because, unlike in the US, a law graduate is not allowed to practise unless he or she is hired by a law firm, a set of chambers or other authorised training organisation.



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