

STAGE 1 PROGRAMME APPROVAL REPORT

Proposal: LLB in Legal Practice (Solicitor's Apprenticeship route)

Board of Studies: City Law School

Committee:

Professor David Bolton (DVC and Chair)

Dr Pam Parker (LEaD)

Kate Timms (Marketing and Communications)

Professor Christine McCourt (School of Health Sciences)

Professor Mireia Jofre-Bonet (School of Arts and Social Sciences)

Alison Edridge (Student and Academic Services)

Laura Tull (Student and Academic Services-secretary)

Presented by:

David Amos

Professor Carl Stychin

Decision:

Approved with conditions and recommendations

Date: 20th April 2016

Stage 1 documents:

Stage 1 Form

Draft Programme Specification

Professional Conduct and Regulation module specification

Competitor Analysis and Marketing information

Employer Fact Sheet

Information Leaflet

PARC minutes

Proposed implementation date: September 2016

Outcome of discussion:

The proposal was approved with conditions and recommendations;

Conditions

1. To clarify the level of the award and length of the programme, and ensure that this is accurately reflected in all publications, using consistent terminology.
2. To provide clarity around the potential implications for a student's employment if they fail the programme, as well as their place on the apprenticeship route if employment with the participating firm ceases. This should be clearly articulated to students to manage expectations.
3. To provide clarity around the admissions process, in particular;
 - articulate how the programme team will work with employers to ensure that students have the academic capabilities to complete the programme.

- provide further information on the mechanisms in place to aid social mobility.
4. To provide KIS information, given that the modules taken are different to the approved LLB programme.

Recommendations:

1. To consider distinguishing the apprenticeship route from the LLB by reflecting this in the title of the award.
2. To consider how students on the programme will be supported to ensure parity of student experience across both routes.
3. To liaise with LEaD to further enhance the programme specification.

Approval Process

City Law School had proposed an apprenticeship route through the existing LLB distance learning programme. The University had requested a light touch University level [Stage 1](#) approval process to address queries with the programme team (in attendance) and to begin gathering information and establishing best practice should other apprenticeship schemes be developed in the future.

Summary of discussion:

1. Rationale for the proposal

The Programme Director provided a contextual overview of the Solicitor's apprenticeship degree route. It was noted that the apprenticeship had been developed to address some key changes within both legal education and higher education more broadly. In particular, the move towards a greater diversity of routes into the legal profession in an effort to make it more accessible.

It was noted that City Law School had responded to these changes through the development of the LLB in Legal Practice offered with CILEx Law School. However, the apprenticeship route had not been embedded at this time due to the timing of the approval process with CILEx Law School. The apprenticeship route aimed to further build on the LLB in Legal Practice, which would offer the School and the University an opportunity to form relationships with leading law firms and other organisations. At the time of the Stage 1 meeting, City Law School had agreed to provide the training for apprentices in ITV's legal department. The School had also been invited to pitch for contracts with a number of large law firms seeking to take on apprentices.

The Committee raised concern that the length and level of the award was inconsistent throughout the documentation and associated publications. It was noted that references to years/parts/levels were also confusing. The Programme Director clarified that the apprenticeship would be a part-time four year programme in its current iteration, which mapped closely to the existing LLB in Legal Practice. It was noted that in the future this may be developed into a Masters level award which would span an additional 2 years pending approval. The Committee agreed that the level of the

award and length of the programme should be clarified and accurately reflected in all publications, ensuring that consistent terminology is used.

The Committee was interested to know the implications for a student's employment if they failed the programme, as well as their place on the apprenticeship if employment with the participating firm ceased. The Programme Director responded that if a student was made redundant then the University would assist with finding an alternative firm that would enable the student to complete the apprenticeship. It was acknowledged that in the event that a student failed the programme it would be the employer's decision as to whether employment with the firm would be terminated. It was noted that in this instance, it may be possible for the student to transfer onto the existing LLB in Legal Practice. It was agreed that this should be clearly articulated to students in order to manage expectations.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor noted that University had not yet made a strategic decision on whether to grow degree apprenticeship provision. However, the experience in developing and delivering this proposal could usefully inform future developments and strategic direction.

2. Market research and marketing

The Committee queried how the apprenticeship would be marketed if the title of the award remained the same as the existing LLB in Legal Practice. The Programme Director responded that the apprenticeship would be marketed differently as the School would approach firms directly, and consequently discuss the admissions procedure and qualifications on an individual basis. The Committee agreed that the programme team should consider distinguishing the apprenticeship route from the LLB by reflecting this in the title of the award.

The Committee asked the programme team to provide further details on the admissions process for the apprenticeship route. The programme director noted that the Government had set national standards for apprenticeships, which were three C's at A-level. In addition to this the University stated that students should have achieved two A's and one B at A-level. It was expected that firms would have other tools/mechanisms in place to in addition to academic qualifications to consider applicants' suitability to the programme and to aid social mobility. It was noted that this would be a joint decision between the employer and University. The Committee agreed that the programme team should provide clarity around the admissions process, in particular how the programme team will work with employers to ensure that students have the academic capabilities to complete the programme and to provide further information on the mechanisms in place to aid social mobility.

It was confirmed that initially students would not go through the UCAS system, although this may change in the future.

3. Programme content

The module diet of the apprenticeship route would be similar to the existing LLB in Legal Practice, with some differences in core and elective modules and the introduction of one new module

(Professional Conduct and Regulation). The mode of delivery would also differ from the existing programme as students' learning would be supplemented with monthly face to face sessions to allow students to consolidate their knowledge. As core modules would be different from the existing programme, it was agreed that KIS information should be provided for the apprenticeship route.

The Committee recommended that the programme team liaise with LEaD to further enhance the programme specification.

4. Resources

It was noted within the documentation that financially the apprenticeship would be linked to the LLB in Legal Practice in that it would be a distance learning programme but with the additional element of a separate induction programme and one day a month face to face teaching. It was noted that a space request form should be provided in light of this.

It was noted that the academic staff who were assigned to the LLB in Legal Practice would also teach on the apprenticeship route. The administrator for the LLB in Legal Practice would also deal with students on this programme. The management of the relationships with employers would be managed through the Law School's CPD Unit, although it was acknowledged that this would need to be reviewed depending on the number of students and participating firms. The programme team noted that should student numbers rise above 25 then this would require a business case for further resource to be submitted to the School.

The modules on the apprenticeship route would map closely to those currently provided on either the LLB or the Legal Practice Course. Thus whilst there would be some additional demand on library resources, the necessary sources were already available either on paper or electronically.

The Committee recommended that the programme team should consider how students on the apprenticeship route will be supported to ensure parity of student experience across both routes.

Laura Tull
Academic Development Officer
April 2016