



Victorian Legal Admissions Board Annual Report

2021-22

The Victorian Legal Admissions Board acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.

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September 2022

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This report is also published on the VLAB's website:

<https://www.lawadmissions.vic.gov.au/about-us/policies-and-reports>

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**The Honourable
David Habersberger QC**

Since the establishment of the Victorian Legal Admissions Board (VLAB) in 2015 I have served under the leadership of its inaugural Chair, the Hon. Bernard Teague AO. Bernard has been an eminent part of the admission of Australian Lawyers over many years, both before and after his time on the Supreme Court of Victoria. In all he served some fifteen years as a member of the Board of Examiners (BOE), including nine years as Chair. Bernard has remained a member of VLAB to ensure my seamless transition into the Chair and I express my personal gratitude to him for his invaluable wisdom and perception since I took over leadership of VLAB on 1 July 2021.

I have also witnessed the enormous contribution made by the honorary members of VLAB's Committees. On 30 June 2022 many members retired after years of service, and I wish to acknowledge their immeasurable contribution.

Victorian Legal Admissions Committee (VLAC)

- Maryjane Crabtree (2015-2021 VLAC, 2013-2015 BOE)
- Peter Holloway (2015-2021 VLAC, 2013-2015 BOE)
- Mary Padbury (2015-2021 VLAC)
- Jennifer Batrouney AM QC (2017-2021 VLAC)
- Nicholas Green QC (2018-2022 VLAC)

Academic Course Appraisal Committee (ACAC)

- Elizabeth Boros (Chair 2015-2021 ACAC, 2010-2015 Council of Legal Education COLE)
- Breen Creighton (2015-2021 ACAC, 2010-2015 COLE)
- Simon Evans (Chair 2021-2022 ACAC; 2015-2022 ACAC, 2012-2015 COLE)
- John Duns (2018-2021 ACAC)

Practical Legal Training Committee (PLTC)

- Sandford Clark AM (Chair 2015-2021 PLTC, 1974-2015 COLE)
- Hugh Murray (2015-2021 PLTC, 2010-2015 COLE)
- Breen Creighton (2015-2021 PLTC, 2010-2015 COLE)
- Mary Anne Noone (2018-2021 PLTC)
- Rachel Spencer (2018-2021 PLTC)

New appointments were made on 1 July 2021, and I am very appreciative of the commitment of both the new and continuing members on our Committees.

After the suspension of admission ceremonies for over two years as a result of the pandemic, in-person admission ceremonies have resumed, albeit in small numbers.

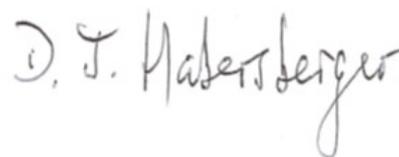
During the reporting period, 2044 applicants were admitted as Australian Lawyers, a decrease of 7.7% from the total of 2214 in 2020-21. Congratulations to all the new Australian Lawyers.

Due to the pandemic, VLAB has been unable to deliver its presentations to universities and practical legal training providers, but we are developing better methods of delivering admission information and disclosure requirements to prospective lawyers. We work closely with Victorian universities and practical legal training providers to improve the education of prospective lawyers so that the public's trust in the legal profession can be enhanced.

My membership on the Admissions Committee of the Legal Services Council (AC) and the Law Admissions Consultative Committee (LACC) allows discussion about admissions between the Uniform Law jurisdictions (VLAB, Legal Profession Admission Board (NSW) and from 1 July 2022, the Legal Practice Board of Western Australia) as well as on a broader national basis.

The VLAB Secretariat has continued to work remotely over the past twelve months and VLAB's office has remained closed to the public. All applications for admission are made online. Flexible working arrangements are being introduced to allow staff to work both remotely and, in the office, to build a better workplace culture whilst ensuring that business needs continue to be met.

The eleven employees of VLAB's secretariat have continued to work tirelessly and I thank them for their commitment and enthusiasm. I would particularly like to thank the Chief Executive Officer, Deborah Jones, for her caring and efficient leadership.



The Honourable David Habersberger QC

1.0

Organisational Structure

The Victorian Legal Admissions Board is a statutory body established under the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 (Vic) (the Act). The Legal Profession Uniform Admission Rules 2015 (the Rules) govern the admission of Australian lawyers in Victoria.

The Victorian Legal Admissions Board is also responsible for the accreditation, monitoring and reviewing of academic law courses and practical legal training providers.

1.1 Victorian Legal Admissions Board

The members of the Victorian Legal Admissions Board (the Board) are responsible for the governance, management and strategic direction of the regulatory authority and accountable for upholding its functions in accordance with the Act.

The Hon. David Habersberger QC (Chair)

Person nominated by the Chief Justice
1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

The Hon. Bernard Teague AO (Deputy Chair)

Retired Judge nominated by the Chief Justice
1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Caroline Counsel

Person nominated by the Law Institute
1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Alexandra Golding

Person nominated by the Victorian Bar
1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Shirley Southgate

Person nominated by the Attorney-General who has experience in the provision of legal education
1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

1.2 Victorian Legal Admissions Committee

Under an Instrument of Delegation, VLAB established the Victorian Legal Admissions Committee (the Committee) to assess whether an applicant is a fit and proper to be admitted to the Australian legal profession.

- The Hon. David Habersberger QC (Chair)
- The Hon. Bernard Teague AO (Deputy Chair)
- Ian Waller QC - Member
- Matthew Harvey - QC
- Sam Hay QC - Member
- Lisa Hannon QC - Member
- Alexandra Golding - Member
- Tamieka Spencer Bruce - Member
- Dr Magda Karagiannakis - Member
- Gerard Butcher RFD - Member
- Caroline Counsel - Member
- John Mengolian - Member
- Alison O'Brien PSM - Member
- Shirley Southgate - Member
- Dianna Gleeson - Member
- Tania Wolff - Member
- Kathleen Wilson - Member
- Meghan Warren – Member

1.3 Academic Course Appraisal Committee

VLAB accredits, monitors and reviews academic law courses in Victoria. Under an Instrument of Delegation, VLAB established the Academic Course Appraisal Committee (ACAC) to carry out these functions.

- Professor Simon Evans (Chair)
1 July 2021 – 17 December 2021
- Professor Marilyn Pittard (Chair)
18 December 2021 to current
- Professor Julian Webb – Member
- Assoc. Prof. Amanda Scardamaglia - Member
- Dr Magda Karagiannakis - Member
- Dr Jane Kotzman - Member
- Dr Jason Harkess - Member
- Shirley Southgate - Member
- The Hon. David Habersberger QC (ex officio)

1.4 Practical Legal Training Committee

VLAB accredits, monitors and reviews practical legal training providers in Victoria. Under an Instrument of Delegation, VLAB established the Practical Legal Training Committee (PLTC) to carry out these functions.

- Professor Jeffrey Giddings (Chair)
- Dr Elizabeth Curran - Member
- Alexandra Golding - Member
- Bradley Wright - Member
- Naomi Bryant - Member
- Syd Balachandran - Member
- The Hon. David Habersberger QC (ex officio)

1.5 Executive Committee

Under an Instrument of Delegation, VLAB established the Executive Committee to enable the Secretariat to effectively manage the day to day operations of VLAB.

- The Hon. David Habersberger QC (Chair)
- The Hon. Bernard Teague AC (Deputy Chair)
- Deborah Jones (Chief Executive Officer)

1.6 Secretariat

VLAB and its Committees are supported by staff employed under Part 3 of the Public Administration Act 2004.

- **Deborah Jones**
Chief Executive Officer
- **Kristen Murray**
Principal Policy Officer
- **Maria Di Palma**
Senior Advisor
- **Sam Botoulas**
Finance Coordinator
- **Gayle Camilleri**
Executive Assistant
- **Vanessa Wilde**
Compliance Officer
- **Janette Ibarra**
Compliance Officer
- **Lisa Rozanitis**
Compliance Officer
- **Irene Boltuc**
Compliance Officer (to Feb 2022)
- **Admira Walter**
Compliance Officer
- **Alannah Jones**
Compliance Officer
- **Petra Chang**
Compliance Officer

2.0

Admission to the Legal Profession

VLAB may grant a compliance certificate to allow the Supreme Court of Victoria to admit a person to the Australian legal profession as an Australian lawyer if the person:

- i. **has attained the academic qualification prerequisite;**
- ii. **has satisfactorily completed the practical legal training prerequisite; and**
- iii. **is determined to be a fit and proper person to be admitted to the Australia legal profession.**

2.1 Online Applications

All applications for admission must be made via the online application client portal on VLAB's website. VLAB will consider an application for admission in Victoria upon the commencement of an online application.

2.2 Objections

Notice of persons commencing an application for a compliance certificate are published on VLAB's website each fortnight for a period of 14 days.

Objections to the issue of a compliance certificate to any person named on the objection list, must be made in writing within 14 days of the publication date and clearly state the reasons for the objection.

VLAB will consider whether or not the objection affects the applicant's eligibility or suitability for admission and as a result may either, grant, refuse or delay the issue of a compliance certificate.

During the reporting period there were two objections received that are still under consideration.

2.3 Admission Figures

During the reporting period, VLAB issued compliance certificates for the following applications:

- **1999 applications under s19 of the Legal Profession Uniform Law (the Law); and**
- **45 applications pursuant to the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1977(Cth) as adopted in Victoria.**

2.4 Total Admissions

During the reporting period there was a decrease of 7.7% in total admissions.

Financial Year	Total Admissions
2017-18	1628
2018-19	1777
2019-20	1896
2020-21	2214
2021-22	2044

2.5 Appointment of Public Notary

"The office of public notary can be traced back to Roman times. Today, notaries certify as to the legal effect of documents for international purposes—frequently for use in foreign courts. The essential function of notarial acts is to provide an international guarantee of the authenticity and legality of those documents. The work of public notaries ranges from determining and applying evidentiary procedures in order to notarise a document to preparing documents of legal force.

Typical services a notary would perform today include attesting declarations or affidavits, attesting execution of documents and preparation of ships' protests. In many countries, properly executed notarial acts are accepted as conclusive evidence of the facts witnessed. With the continuing emphasis on international trade, it is expected that the role of notaries in a commercial context will grow in importance for Victoria."

(Public Notaries Bill 2011 – Explanatory Memorandum (18/5/2001))

Persons wishing to apply for the appointment of Public Notary, must satisfy the criteria set out in Part 2, Section 4 of the Public Notaries Act 2001. A person cannot be appointed as a Public Notary unless the person:

- is a natural person;
- is an Australian lawyer;
- has held a Principal's Practising Certificate for a period of 5 years; and
- has completed, to the satisfaction of VLAB, a course of study related to notarial practice.

There is only one institution in Victoria, **The Sir Zelman Cowen Centre for Continuing Legal Education**, that offers a course of study which satisfies the criteria.

During the reporting period there were 17 Public Notaries appointed.

3.0

Accreditation

For the purposes of s. 29 of the Law, VLAB may accredit or reaccredit law courses or practical legal training (PLT) providers in accordance with the Rules. In accrediting a course or provider, VLAB will examine any appraisal criteria and any report of a review conducted in relation to the course or provider.

3.1 Academic Institutions

In the State of Victoria, eight academic law institutions have been accredited by the VLAB.

- **Australian Catholic University**
Bachelor of Laws LLB
- **Deakin University**
Bachelor of Laws LLB, Juris Doctor JD
- **La Trobe University**
Bachelor of Laws LLB, Juris Doctor JD
- **Monash University**
Bachelor of Laws LLB, Juris Doctor JD
- **RMIT University**
Bachelor of Laws LLB, Juris Doctor JD
- **Swinburne University of Technology**
Dual Award Bachelor of Laws LLB
- **University of Melbourne**
Juris Doctor JD
- **Victoria University**
Bachelor of Laws LLB

3.1.1 Academic Prerequisites

The 'Priestley 11' are eleven compulsory law subjects required to be completed before seeking a compliance certificate.

The required academic qualification prerequisite is successfully completing a tertiary academic course in Australia, whether or not leading to a degree in law, which:

(a) includes the equivalent of at least 3 years' full time study of law;

(b) is accredited by VLAB; and

(c) VLAB determines will provide for an applicant to acquire and demonstrate appropriate understanding and competence in each elements of the academic areas of knowledge, or otherwise determined by the Admissions Committee after consultation with VLAB and NSW Legal Profession Admission Board (NSW LPAB).

The compulsory 'Priestley 11' subjects are:

- Administrative Law
- Civil Dispute Resolution
- Company Law
- Contracts
- Criminal Law and Procedure
- Equity (including Trusts)
- Ethics and Professional Responsibility
- Evidence
- Federal and State Constitutional Law
- Property
- Torts

3.1.2 Academic Course Appraisal Committee

ACAC's membership changed on 1 July 2021, at the expiration of Committee members' terms.

The Board is grateful for the tireless contribution made by the former Chair, Dr Elizabeth Boros of Counsel, and for former members' work.

Three former members agreed to serve on ACAC, including Professor Simon Evans as Chair. The remaining five new members were appointed following consultation with the Deans of Victoria's eight accredited law schools. The Chair of VLAB is an ex-officio member of ACAC. Professor Evans resigned as Chair in December 2021 as a result of him taking up a new position interstate and Professor Marilyn Pittard was appointed Chair.

ACAC applied its new template questionnaire to the reaccreditation review of the Australian Catholic University (ACU). ACAC commissioned external assessors to review the performance of ACU's LLB course (including combined courses). The assessors considered a comprehensive submission made by ACU against the LACC Accreditation Standards for Australian Law Courses to determine whether the three law courses were providing the specified academic qualifications prerequisite as set out in rule 5 of The Rules.

The assessors were unable to visit the campus in person due to COVID-related restrictions but held a series of remote meetings with key personnel, including student representatives. The review concluded in December 2021, with the ACU LLB course (including combined courses) being accredited for a further five years. ACAC is grateful to the faculty of ACU for their cooperation during the review process.

VLAB commissioned the reviewers to prepare a separate report evaluating the new template questionnaire and associated materials, such as process guidelines, used to guide reaccreditation reviews. The reviewers' recommendations for improvement were adopted by ACAC and will be applied in future reaccreditation reviews. ACAC suspended its reaccreditation program for six months, in recognition of the challenges law schools were facing in accommodating students' pandemic-related health and safety concerns.

The reaccreditation of Monash law school's LLB and JD degrees is scheduled for the second half of 2022.

ACAC also considered numerous applications for approval to vary the delivery and assessment of courses during the reporting period, generally and specifically in response to COVID-19 health advice.

ACAC granted numerous approvals to extend temporary changes to course delivery and assessment, including remote learning and the use of on-line exams in Priestley 11 subjects. ACAC finalised its consideration of an application by a law school to offer its LLB degree on-line, whereby program delivery would be delegated to a third-party provider. ACAC made a request for further information about matters including course content, standards for the recruitment and management of teaching staff, and assessment. Upon receipt of additional information, ACAC approved the application subject to the requirement that the Dean of the relevant law school report to the CEO of VLAB on the operation of the third-party teaching arrangements within twelve months of the teaching of the course.

ACAC also received an application from an accredited law course provider to introduce remotely proctored on-line exams in 10 of the 'Priestley 11' subjects, on a permanent basis. The application is the first of its type considered by ACAC (in contradistinction to approvals for temporary arrangements in response to COVID-19) and remains under active consideration.

Other requests to make substantive course changes on a permanent basis included a proposal to divide a Priestley 11 subject into two discrete units; to reduce the delivery time for one Priestley 11 subject; to deliver course content using a flipped classroom model; and to introduce optional on-line real time learning as an alternative to face-to-face learning.

3.2 PLT Providers

Once a person has successfully completed the academic qualification prerequisite, they must complete PLT. To satisfy the specified legal training prerequisite, a person should acquire and demonstrate an appropriate understanding and competence in each element of the Skills, Values and Practice Areas set out in Schedule 2 of the Rules.

The requirement may be fulfilled by completing either a PLT course conducted by a PLT provider or supervised legal training (see 3.2.4 of Report) in a workplace.

In the State of Victoria there are three courses that have been accredited by VLAB.

- College of Law
- Leo Cussen Centre for Law
- Swinburne University of Technology
Dual Award LLB & Leo Cussen Centre for Law

3.2.1 PLT Competencies

VLAB must be satisfied that a person has achieved the prescribed competence in the Skills, Compulsory and Optional Practice Areas and Values set out below:

Lawyer's Skills

- Problem Solving
- Work Management and Business Skills
- Trust and Office Accounting

Compulsory Practice Areas

- Civil Litigation Practice
- Commercial and Corporate Practice
- Property Law Practice

Any two Optional Practice Areas

- Administrative Law Practice
- Banking and Finance
- Criminal Law Practice
- Consumer Law Practice
- Employment and Industrial Relations Practice
- Family Law Practice
- Planning and Environmental Law Practice
- Wills and Estate Practice

Value

- Ethics and Professional Responsibility

3.2.2 Practical Legal Training Committee

PTLC's membership changed on 1 July 2021, at the expiration of Committee members' terms. No members nominated for re-appointment. The Board is grateful for the significant contribution made to the work of the PLTC by the former Chair, Professor Sandford Clark AM, and members.

The Board sought expressions of interest and a seven-member Committee was appointed, with Professor Jeff Giddings as Chair. The Chair of VLAB is an ex-officio member of the PTLC.

The most significant piece of work undertaken by the PLTC was the assessment of a submission from an applicant seeking accreditation as a new provider of a PLT course. The application proceeded in tandem with an application for approval from the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, the independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education.

The PLTC appointed two external assessors to review the accreditation application and to make recommendations to it about whether provider and course accreditation should be granted and, if so, on what conditions.

The assessors met with the applicants in November 2021. The assessors submitted their report and recommendations in late April 2022 and the applicant provided its response in early June 2022. The PLTC will make recommendations to the VLAB about accreditation and any conditions of accreditation.

The PLTC also considered a proposal for a 'refreshed' PLT course and that the course be piloted in August 2022. The PLTC agreed to the revised course being piloted and asked to be provided with evaluation outcomes before deciding whether to approve a wider course rollout.

The PLTC continued to monitor the delivery and assessment of PLT courses during the reporting period, generally and specifically in response to COVID-19 health advice. The PLTC wrote to accredited providers of PLT seeking information about the status of temporary substitutions for on-site workplace experience. Providers reaffirmed their commitment to offering students supported work placements when pandemic-related conditions abated.

3.2.3 Supervised Legal Training

Supervised Legal Training (SLT) is a minimum 12-month period of supervised legal training under an eligible supervisor. This pathway to admission offers practical placement in legal practice. During this time a person must acquire an appropriate understanding of, and competence in, each element of the Skills, Practice Areas and Values set out in the PLT Competencies. There was a 44.2% decrease in SLT admissions in the 2021-22 reporting period as compared to the 2020-21 period.

Financial Year	Number of trainees
2017-18	145
2018-19	135
2019-20	143
2020-21	129
2021-22	72

3.2.4 Concurrent Study

Concurrent study refers to the commencement of a PLT course before the completion of the academic qualification prerequisite.

The Rules provide for a PLT course to be undertaken simultaneously with an academic qualification if the applicant has completed all 11 Priestley subjects and has no more than two subjects remaining. Prior permission must be obtained from VLAB.

An applicant who commences a PLT course before completing an academic qualification and has not obtained approval from VLAB is not eligible to apply for admission in Victoria.

VLAB received **258 applications** for consent to commence a PLT course before completion of an academic qualification. This is a decrease of 28.13% on the 2020- 21 figure of 359 applications and a 20.12% decrease on the 2019-20 figure of 323 applications.

4.0

Fitness and Propriety

4.1 Suitability

A person needs to satisfy VLAB that they are of suitable character to be admitted to the Australian legal profession. A person making an application for a compliance certificate must provide a statutory declaration detailing matters which may have bearing on their fitness and propriety. A person may also file a capacity statement which relates to a health condition that may impede on a person's ability to practice law.

4.2 Victorian Legal Admissions Committee

During the reporting period, VLAB delegated powers to the Victorian Legal Admissions Committee (Committee) to consider suitability matters.

The Committee will consider any relevant material and determine whether the person seeking admission is of good fame and character and a fit and proper person to be admitted to the Australian legal profession.

In addition to granting compliance certificates to eligible applicants, the Committee may consider applications for a compliance certificate from any person whose name has been removed from the Supreme Court roll. There were no such applications during the reporting period.

The Committee, if of the view that an applicant may be unable, for reasons of health, to carry out the inherent requirements of practice of an Australian legal practitioner, may require the applicant to undertake a health assessment. Two applicants were requested to undertake an assessment.

- The matters which guide the Committee in deciding whether to grant or refuse a compliance certificate are:
- The applicant's expression of contrition for past misdemeanours and the sincerity of that expression.
- The insight demonstrated in relation to the commission of the misdemeanours.
- The self-assessment of whether, on reflection, the applicant engaged in appropriate conduct and whether it can lead to a new understanding of the conduct.

The matters above form the basis of whether the Committee is satisfied, at the time of hearing the application, that the applicant is a fit and proper person to be admitted to the Australian legal profession.

Of first importance is for the applicant to make full and frank disclosure which often requires the applicant to reveal unpleasant and embarrassing aspects of their past and to do so forthrightly.

The Committee received one appeal against its refusal to issue a compliance certificate and the matter is currently before the Court.

4.3 Disclosure Data

1563

Total Disclosures

1448

Disclosure
Statements

13

Capacity
Statements

102

Both Disclosure
and Capacity
Statements

76%

of admitted
applicants made
disclosure

24%

of admitted
applicants did not
make disclosure

5%

of all applicants
with disclosure
attended a meeting

54

applicants
attended an
informal meeting

17

applicants
attended a
formal meeting

4.4 English Language Proficiency (ELP)

VLAB must be satisfied that any person applying for admission to the legal profession has a satisfactory knowledge of written and spoken English to engage in legal practice in Australia.

VLAB has adopted the Law Admissions Consultative Committee English Language Proficiency Guidelines (the Guidelines). Each individual is required to nominate one of six pathways that best reflects their circumstances at conditions.

The Guidelines recognise two English language tests: 'International English Language Testing System' academic module (IELTS Academic) and 'Test of English as a Foreign Language' internet-based test (TOEFL iBT).

The Guidelines also contain a general discretionary category, pathway 6, which can be utilised by applicants who do not satisfy pathways 1 to 5. Any relevant matter can be taken into account under pathway 6. That may include, but is not limited to, evidence of formal instruction in English, periods of residence in an English speaking country, references, resumes or results of English language tests other than IELTS Academic and TOEFL iBT.

All Victorian legal admission applicants' English language knowledge is verified through an online portal to capture and accurately reflect language ability. Documentation, including that submitted in support of the grant of a general discretion, can be uploaded during the online application process.

5.0

Qualification Assessments

Any person relying on qualifications completed more than five years prior to applying for a compliance certificate must seek an assessment from VLAB. Common considerations which VLAB may choose to apply when considering the qualifications of an applicant are:

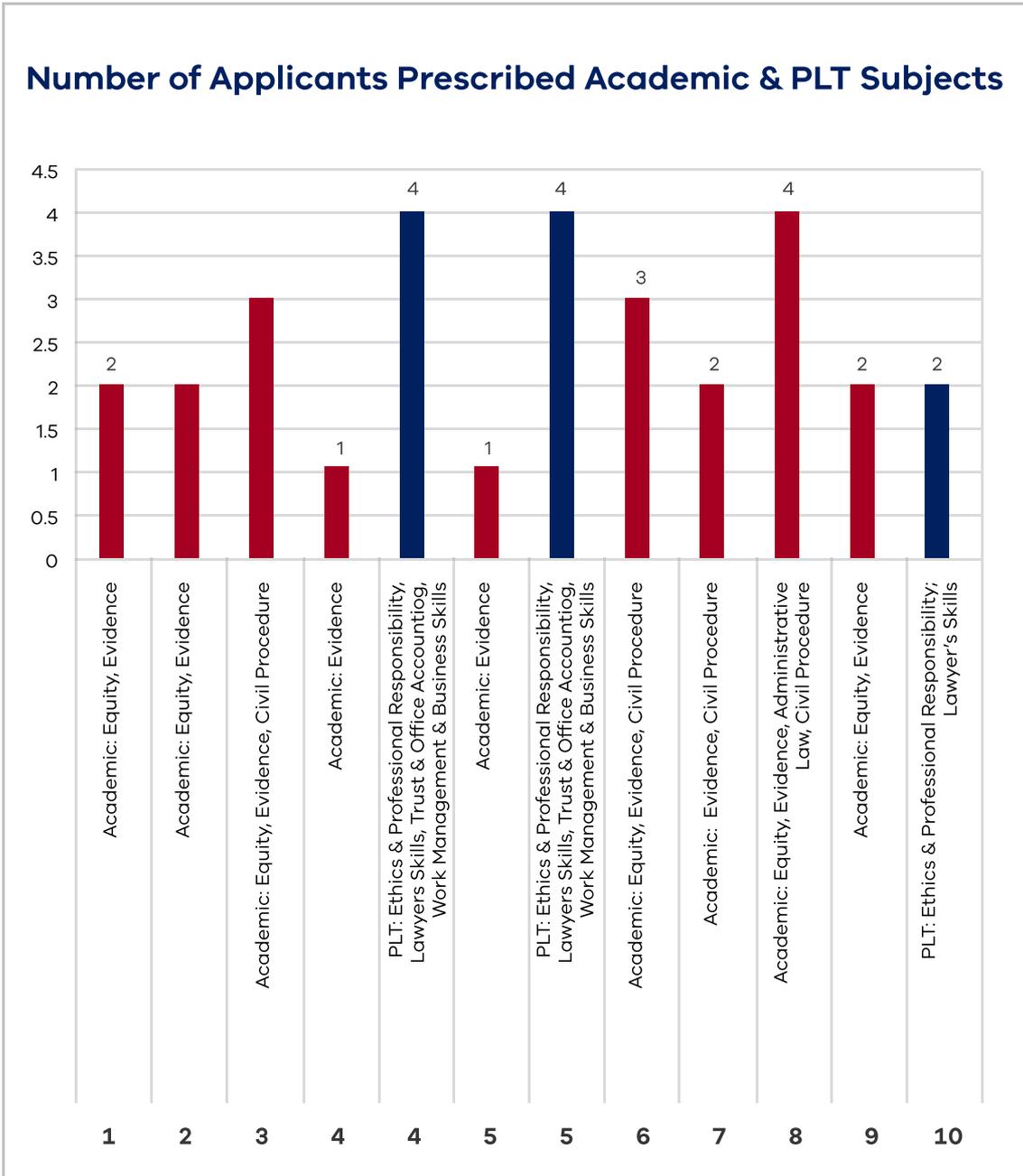
- the nature and quality of previous academic and PLT qualifications including the results obtained in subjects undertaken in Australia;
- the length of time since the person successfully completed an academic or PLT requirement;
- the person's verifiable experience in a law related occupation;
- whether there have been any significant changes in the relevant law since the applicant completed an academic or PLT requirement; and
- any other factor that may bear on the currency or relevance of the applicant's knowledge or experience in relation to an academic or PLT requirement.

VLAB may impose further requirements to refresh the previous qualification and experience of an applicant. In certain cases where appropriate, VLAB will require an applicant to undertake one or more academic or PLT training areas.

In the reporting period VLAB undertook **43 qualification assessments** including academic and PLT qualifications as compared to the 2021-22 period of 47 assessments.

Number of Qualification Assessments in reporting period 2021-22

Number exempted	33
Number prescribed academic subjects	7
Number Prescribed PLT subjects	1
Number Prescribed academic & PLT subjects	2
Total	43



6.0

Overseas Assessments

VLAB assesses foreign graduates and lawyers for admission and has regard to the Uniform Principles for Assessing Qualifications of Overseas Applicants for Admission to the Australian Legal Profession (Uniform Principles) prepared by LACC.

To be admitted to the legal profession in an Australian jurisdiction based on qualifications obtained outside Australia, a person must usually have satisfied the requirements set out in the Uniform Principles. A summary of requirements is as follows:

- **completion of an academic qualification which is substantially equivalent to a three-year full-time law course that leads to admission to the legal profession in Australia;**
- **completion of subjects which are the equivalent to areas of study which Australian applicants must successfully complete;**

- **acquisition and demonstration of a proper understanding of, and competence in, specific skills, practice areas, and values, which are substantially equivalent to that of Australian applicants**
- **competently met the requirements of English language proficiency.**

VLAB may dispense with one or more of the requirements in the case of an experienced practitioner from an overseas jurisdiction if it considers the applicant's experience is sufficiently relevant, substantial and current to justify a dispensation.

6.1 Overseas Assessment Data

VLAB received **238 applications** for assessment of overseas qualifications, which included, 31 assessments for applicants seeking admission in South Australia and 1 in Tasmania.

In addition, **24 applications** to review an assessment decision during the reporting period were requested.

Financial Year	No. of Assessments	Percentage from previous year
2017-18	336	3% increase
2018-19	281	16% increase
2019-20	197	30% decrease
2020-21	259	31.5% increase
2020-21	238	8.5% decrease

6.2 Overseas Assessment Data by Jurisdiction

In the reporting period there were **238 foreign assessments** recorded from 43 foreign jurisdictions. The following data does not include reviews of assessments.

Country	Assessments	Country	Assessments
United Kingdom	59	Afghanistan	1
India	54	Algeria	1
Hong Kong	21	Bangladesh	1
Sri Lanka	17	Belgium	1
South Africa	10	Bulgaria	1
United States	8	Denmark	1
Philippines	6	Ecuador	1
Pakistan	5	Egypt	1
Singapore	5	Indonesia	1
Colombia	4	Iran	1
England and Wales	4	Italy	1
China	3	Kenya	1
Fiji	3	Mexico	1
Brazil	2	New Zealand	1
Canada	2	Northern Ireland	1
Ghana	2	Papua New Guinea	1
Ireland	2	Serbia	1
Korea, (South)	2	Sweden	1
Malaysia	2	Syrian Arab Republic	1
Mauritius	2	Thailand	1
Nigeria	2	Turkey	1
Scotland	2	Total	238

7.0

Uniform Law

The Uniform Law is directive of the legal profession and is applied in both NSW and Victoria. The Rules provide for the Law's supporting operative elements.

The Uniform Law harmonises regulation of the legal profession, cuts red tape and creates a single system to govern legal practice. The scheme also promotes informed consumer choice and has strong consumer protection measures. The Uniform Law's overall objectives are to promote the administration of justice and an efficient and effective Australian legal profession through:

- consistency between States and Territories applying the law to the Australian legal profession;
- ensuring legal practitioners are competent and maintain high ethical and professional standards;
- enhancing the protection of clients and the public;
- empowering clients to make informed choices about their legal options;

- **efficient, effective, targeted and proportionate regulation, and**
- **a co-regulatory framework with appropriate independence for the legal profession.**

The Uniform Law is applied in NSW and Victoria by local application Acts. Certain jurisdiction-specific arrangements, such as the operation of local authorities and fees, are dealt with by local application Acts and Regulations.

7.1 Relationship with the Legal Services Council

The Legal Services Council monitors the overall operation of the Legal Profession Uniform Framework and is responsible for making Uniform Rules. The Chair of VLAB, the Hon. David Habersberger QC, is a member of the Legal Services Council's Admissions Committee. The Council's Admissions Committee develops the Rules and provides advice to the Council about admission matters. The Admissions Committee meets quarterly.

The Chair and the Principal Policy Officer are members of the Admissions Committee's Foreign Lawyers Working Group. The Working Group provides the Admissions Committee with advice on the sufficiency of the Law and the Rules as they pertain to assessing the qualifications of foreign lawyers and the admission of foreign lawyers to practice in Australia.

The Working Group has been extensively involved in developing proposed rule amendments to better accommodate the circumstances of experienced foreign lawyers.

The Working Group has also provided advice to the Admissions Committee about conditional admission of foreign lawyers, including options to ensure that the policy intent of the Law is given proper legal effect.

The Chair and the Principal Policy Officer are members of the Legal Services Council's Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE) Working Group. The SQE Working Group was established by the Admissions Committee to examine the implications for lawyers admitted in England and Wales via the SQE pathway applying for admission in Australia, particularly if those applicants do not hold a tertiary legal qualification, and to make recommendations to the Admissions Committee. The SQE Working Group will also consider the implications of the introduction of the SQE for Australian lawyers who are seeking to practise law in England and Wales.

8.0

Appendix

8.1 Appendix Acronyms

AO	Order of Australia – Officer of the Order
ACAC	Academic Course Appraisal Committee
AM	Order of Australia – Member of the Order
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ELP	English Language Proficiency
GDLP	Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
JD	Juris Doctor
LACC	Law Admissions Consultative Committee
LLB	Bachelor of Laws
LSC	Legal Services Council
PLT	Practical Legal Training
PLTC	Practical Legal Training Committee
PSM	Public Service Medal
QC	Queen’s Counsel
RFD	Reserve Force Decoration
SLT	Supervised Legal Training
SQE	Solicitors Qualifying Exam
TOEFL iBT	Test of English as a foreign language internet- based test
VLAB	Victorian Legal Admissions Board
VLAC	Victorian Legal Admissions Committee

8.2 Glossary

Admissions Committee	Appointed by the Legal Services Council to develop Rules and provide advice to the Council on admission matters
Act	Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014
Board	Members of the Victorian Legal Admissions Board
Committee	Victorian Legal Admissions Committee
Compliance Certificate	VLAB's certificate of recommendation
Eligible Supervisor	A legal practitioner working principally as a solicitor or barrister for a period of at least 5 years
Framework	The Legal Profession Uniform Framework
Instrument of Delegation	Legislation which confers an express power of delegation
Jurisdiction (Australian)	All Australian States and Territories
Jurisdiction (Foreign)	Any country other than Australia from which a person seeking admission to the Supreme Court of Victoria is admitted
Law	Legal Profession Uniform Law
NSW LPAB	New South Wales Legal Profession Admission Board
Person	Applicant seeking admission to the Australian legal profession or appointment as a Public Notary

8.2 Glossary

Rules	Legal Profession Uniform Admission Rules 2015
Secretariat	The office responsible for the management of the VLAB
Uniform Principles	Uniform Principles for Assessing Qualifications of Overseas Applicants for Admission to the Australian Legal Profession
VLAB	Victorian Legal Admissions Board

8.3 Relevant Legislation

- Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014
<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/legal-profession-uniform-law-application-act-2014/017>
- Public Administration Act 2014
<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/public-administration-act-2004/081>
- Public Notaries Act 2001
<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/public-notaries-act-2001/013>
- Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act (Cth) 1997
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021C00312>



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