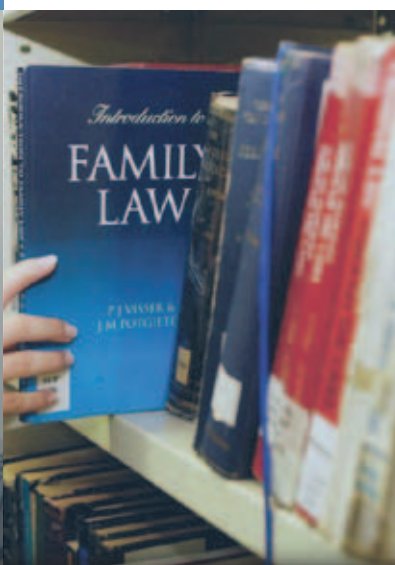




# Wits

## LAW ALUMNI

### Tracer Study 2012



UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WITWATERSRAND,  
JOHANNESBURG

## **Wits Law Alumnus**

*How did your Wits education help in your career?*

‘Wits provided a good basis for my career. Not only in terms of proper legal training but the brand counted a lot when one did not have any working experience’

## **Wits Law Alumnus**

*How did your Wits education help in your career?*

‘Helped a lot because now am one of the best graduates in my employment and my degree gives me the edge’

# Acknowledgement

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# | Executive Summary

In 2012 the Institutional Research Unit conducted a Tracer Study of Wits Law Alumni to gauge their views and satisfaction levels on their Wits experience. Specific focus was given to the educational academic experience, learning climate, institutional culture and professional development. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed; an online survey was used to access the alumni populace. A total of 121 law alumni participated in this study. This served as a baseline study to provide an initial platform for alumni to contribute to the institutional and educational enhancement of Wits.

Alumni rated the following aspects of the Wits experience as largely positive:

- Wits remains a University of first choice for many that seek a law qualification, 87% respondents chose Wits as the first option.
- The reputation of Wits as an Institution is a major draw-card for studying law at Wits, followed by Wits's reputation in the law discipline.
- 83% of the sample felt that Wits treated its students with principles of equality and fairness.
- 81% of the sample felt that the Wits School of Law made its students feel welcomed
- 84.29 % of the sample agreed that the School provided an atmosphere that was welcoming and conducive to learning.
- Wits law alumni showed high satisfaction ratings with the specified aspects of their Wits academic experience, in particular: course content, teaching staff, teaching style, teaching methods, teaching quality and career preparedness. However 19% were dissatisfied with teaching methods and this suggest a need for improvement in this area
- The top three areas cited as the best aspect of their Wits Education by most alumni were the teaching and learning model, such as lectures, teaching staff and teaching methods.

Based on the issues red-flagged by alumni, the following areas need further review and assessment in line with the strategic objectives of the University:

- Wits non-academic support services saw a 43.8% satisfaction rate and career development received 39.67% satisfaction. These were flagged as notable areas in need for improvement.
- Discrimination was experienced by 20% of respondents.
- The top three areas flagged for improvement with the Wits education were curriculum reform, career preparedness, and lecture enhancement.

# | Preface

This Tracer Study of Wits Law Alumni is the second in a series of professions-focused studies conducted across four disciplines: Accounting, Law, Engineering and Medical Sciences. In educational research, a tracer study extends to surveying former students (alumni). The information gained from survey items is useful for the improvement of the institution and increasing its efficiency (Millington, n.d.). Wits is committed to pursuing intellectual elitism as an approach that will nurture world leaders in their respective fields of engagement and graduates through professional development and educational programmes that compete with the best in the world. This is a critical prerequisite of achieving the University's goal of being in Top 100 universities by 2022 (see Wits Vision 2022).

The top-ranked world-class universities recognise the benefits of alumni studies to institutional enhancement. The University of Oxford conducts alumni surveys to measure the effectiveness of university-run programmes. The global best universities view alumni as key stakeholders, and hence invest in building a relationship with them. The Harvard Alumni Association keeps in contact with their alumni with an aim to continue the Harvard experience post-graduation and includes the provision of volunteer programmes. Similarly, Stanford University's Alumni Association provides opportunities to volunteer, including days of service in communities.

Other higher education institutions worldwide also recognise the importance of alumni and alumni engagement. A case in point is the belief by the University of Indonesia 'that integration holds an important role in becoming a World Class Research University'. Hence in 2007 it established its Directorate of Alumni to maintain the relationship between alumni and the university.<sup>1</sup>

Assessing the outcomes of higher education institutional performance has numerous benefits for understanding and promoting alumni satisfaction (Hartman and Schmidt, 1995). A tracer study of law alumni is beneficial to both institutional improvement of Wits and attainment of Vision 2022 strategic objectives. Alumni surveys provide higher education institutions with a useful tool for accountability, efficiency, and alignment with public needs, ensuring that their education yields maximum economic and social benefits (Cabrera et al., 2003).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ui.ac.id/en/alumni/page/overview>

# Background of Study

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Surveys of law alumni are a common feature of higher education institutions worldwide. The University of Richmond in the United States conducted an alumni survey focused on alumni-generated revenue, to determine the general characteristics and motivation of individuals who are more likely to give to their alma mater. The study covered graduates from 28 institutions with the objective of identifying individual characteristics identifiable for use by campus administrators (Monks, 2003).

Other law alumni studies include the University College Utrecht (USU) in the Netherlands, which surveyed graduates about work experience and solicited alumni advice for the USU programme based on their experiences as well as their opinion of their USU education (Grunefeld, 2006). The University of Michigan's Law School designed an alumni survey to explore the careers of its minority graduates from the classes of 1970 through 1996, and of a random sample of its white alumni who graduated during the same years. The objective of the study was to determine how minority students fared after they graduated from Law School and entered law practice or related careers (Lempert et al., 2000). Researchers identified alumni as an important stakeholder group to provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their educational experience (Stout et al., 2004). Successful higher education demands assessment, accountability and market-driven research to fulfil extensive internal and external needs (Dellow and Romano, 2002).

Alumni surveys elicit individual reflections about the quality of educational experiences, unlike surveys of other cohorts such as undergraduates, dropouts or graduate students (Moden and Williford, 1988, quoted in Pike, 1993a). The role of alumni surveys in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of education programmes is particularly significant (Pike, 1990, quoted in Pike, 1993a) and they are relied on for this purpose (Pike, 1993a: 66). Alumni research has been considered as the most productive field of assessment for linking accountability and improvement in higher education (Borden, 2005: 62). In educational research the tracer study is referred to as an alumni survey since its target group comprises former students, and the information gained from survey items can be used by the graduates' alma mater and other education stakeholders for curriculum development and reform (Millington, n.d.).

Tracer studies have been conducted by educational institutions for decades (ibid.). The growth in the United States as a case in point has been attributed to the number of internal and external demands for assessment (Dellow and Romano, 2002). Alumni surveys have long been used as an effective evaluation tool, for example Ohio University used them as part of an ongoing programme of institutional evaluation and improvement (Moden and Williford, 1988, quoted in Pike 1993a). This tracer study



sought to evaluate aspects of the quality of Wits law education with the intention of flagging areas requiring improvement. Alumni surveys are used to reach key audiences to have a positive impact on the advancement of higher education institutions (Cabrera et al., 2005). The evaluation of this study was conducted with the intention of advancing the attainment of Wits's strategic Imperative to provide high-quality, internationally competitive law education founded on high academic standards.

Higher education institutions have long used alumni surveys specifically to measure learning and development to assess their education programmes (Pike, 1993b: 23). Surveys of alumni perceptions are an important source of data concerning university outcomes (Vailga, 1982). Research suggests that dimensions of learning and development are positively related to each other and to satisfaction with higher educational institutions (Pike, 1993b: 23). The present study evaluated dimensions of learning and development through eliciting satisfaction levels and perceptions of key aspects of the teaching model and learning climate at Wits. The satisfaction level of a programme is highly congruent with the effectiveness of learning and development outcomes. In a report summarising United States' national results of a college student experience survey Pike (1989) found that all five dimensions of reported learning and development were positively related to satisfaction. Tracer studies also enable the evaluation of the results of the education and training provided by a particular institution, and examine and evaluate the current as well as future career and employment opportunities/prospects of graduates (Boaduo et al., 2009). The present study also profiled law alumni with respect to their personal, educational and career information.

Satisfaction with and perception of the quality of professional development rendered by Wits was also evaluated in the study. A 2009 study) undertaken by Higher Education South Africa and the South African Qualifications Authority, which focused on the quality of graduates produced by public higher education institutions in South Africa, highlights that governments in many countries have initiatives focusing on higher education and employment in the workplace (Griesel and Parker, 2009). This is due to the mounting pressure on higher education from government and employers to produce graduates who are employable in the sense that they have the attributes, capabilities and dispositions to work successfully. Hence, assessment of the quality of education in ensuring solid career preparedness is a key higher education focus in both the international and national contexts. For this reason this study also assessed the degree to which the Wits education provided the necessary preparation for a successful law career.

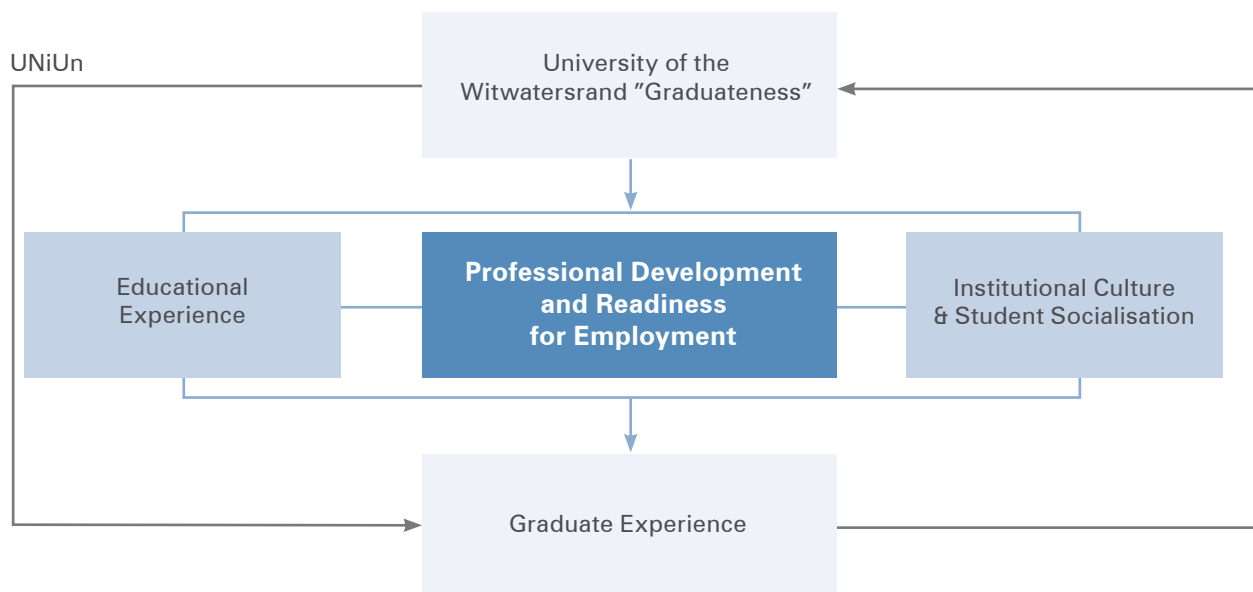
The learning climate and institutional culture are key components in providing a positive university experience and effective education. Higher education institutions must aspire to address and honour cultural diversity in teaching and learning to create an effective learning environment (Chan, 2004). The climate is a major contributor to the overall education benefits, thus its enhancement to benefit student learning is a central matter of concern for higher education institutions (Day, 2009: 9.1).

It has been argued that a learning climate cannot be planned and implemented in a mechanistic fashion; it should be a site of nurturing, sensitivity, flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness (ibid. 9.11). The Task Force on Higher Education and Society (1999) convened by the World Bank and UNESCO, which brought together education experts from 13 countries to explore the future of higher education in the developing world, noted that a well-qualified and highly motivated faculty [teaching staff] is critical to the quality of higher education institutions. Lecturers' consistent presence and availability to students and colleagues has an enormous influence in creating an atmosphere that encourages learning. Yet few institutions in developing countries enforce, or even have, strictures against moonlighting and excessive absenteeism. In many institutions students face difficult conditions for study (ibid.). This survey also solicited responses regarding the learning climate, specifically at the school/departmental level, as well as fairness and equality in the institutional culture. Alumni research is most effective when rooted in a systematic and integrated approach to higher education assessment, which

can be described as a culture of evidence that shows 'willingness not only to create measures and collect data on outcomes but also to use this information to redesign practices for improving quality' (National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, 2002). Alumni surveys can be used to help develop a more integrated and better-aligned assessment capacity (ibid. 71). Tracer study research emanates from a desire to improve the status quo, and hence provides recommendations for improvement (Cabrera et al., 2005).

# Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is premised on the conceptual assumption that there are four target-area determinants to assess satisfaction with the Wits experience and these are illustrated in Figure 1. The study argues that graduate experience depends on the quality of the Wits educational experience, educational experience (academic), institutional culture and learning climate (school/departmental) and professional development. The research instrument was structured to take cognisance of this framework.



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Wits experience*

*Adapted from Nhlanhla Cele, Postgraduate Student Experience Survey 2012*

**Educational experience:** The satisfaction level of an academic programme is highly congruent with the effectiveness of programme outcomes. This component explored the satisfaction levels and ratings of the Wits academic experience specifically course content, teaching staff, teaching style, teaching methods, teaching quality and non-academic support as well as career preparedness and Wits career development. It also solicits the best aspects of their Wits academic experience. Alumni perceptions and ratings of their academic education pose opportunities for institutional improvement. Literature suggests that Alumni feedback is an effective tool to assess the programme outcome and can be used as part of an ongoing programme of institutional evaluation and improvement.

**Professional development:** Alumni surveys gather individual reflections since graduation on the quality of education and career preparedness. This cohort have had the unique opportunity to test their Wits education against their career experience. The quality of Wits professional development was also evaluated in the study. The quality of graduates has been a pertinent issue for Governments and Higher Education Institutions and is this a key focus for this study. Wits commits to providing professional development of an exceptionally high standard. Issues of quality career preparedness and views on how Wits helped in career development is probed.

**Institutional culture:** Wits has enshrined the values of the South African Constitution in its institutional culture. Students should be treated fairly and equally at all times and not discriminated against on racial or gender grounds. An institutional culture of equality and fairness in a Higher Education institution is an important building block for an inclusive and positive environment. This component zones in on experiences of discrimination as well as perceptions of equality and fairness.

A conducive learning climate is key in fostering a positive Wits experience. Literature highlights the importance of honouring cultural diversity in teaching and learning. The learning climate is a major contributor to the overall experience and student benefit. Literature shows that a learning climate should be a site of nurturing, sensitivity, flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness. Similarly previous studies highlight the importance of a well qualified and highly motivated faculty [teaching staff]. The learning environment can hinder or encourage learning for the students. This aspect explored issues of feeling welcomed and a conducive learning climate and views on the general atmosphere.

**Graduateness:** While it is a given that there is no consensus in defining *graduateness*, in this study it is defined to embrace all attributes stated above. *Graduateness* is not synonymous to exit level competences as defined in outcomes based education, but defines peculiarity and exceptional conditionality where graduates stand out from the pack by being able to live in the future world through current imagination as defined by Makhanya (UNISA, 2010). *Graduateness* is thus deeper than mastery of subject content and completion of the official curriculum prescribed for learning programmes or meeting basic requirements for professional practice. It is more than possession of field-specific knowledge; shared qualification level competences; and career specific skills. *Graduateness* embodies attributes that embrace social values, critical thinking skills, functional knowledge, reflective competencies, and an appreciation of diversity and life's complexities as the definitive qualities of a global civil society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This refers to a "high calibre graduate... who possesses, and perhaps even exceeds expectations with regards to the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to be successful in the workplace." (Raymond and McNabb, 1993)

Wits holds the view that graduates produced from this university need to exude particular distinct attributes that separate them from those produced in other South African universities. In the *Teaching and Learning Plan 2010-2014*, the university stated that *graduateness* at Wits means more than the ability to pass exams, and includes the development of values such as academic freedom; independent enquiry and trust; depth of knowledge and the value of critical thinking; breadth of knowledge; collegiality; international comparability; social responsiveness; commitment to community service; social inclusivity and intellectual integrity (Wits, 2005). As often articulated in literature that *graduateness* is a state and extent of graduate readiness expressed through the combination of the following five broad characteristics:

- sound grounding in specialized knowledge domains and the agility to adapt to generic contexts
- the ability to be resilient and caring members of a global civil society
- the ability to think critically and innovatively
- an awareness of their own development needs and future challenges

As reflected in the *Wits Vision 2022 Strategic Framework*, Wits wishes to produce 'global citizen' graduates which exude the following attributes:

- a rich and in-depth knowledge of specialist knowledge areas
- intellectual integrity, a strong sense of professional ethics and public good values
- command high level problem solving and critical thinking skills
- have good communication social and business communication skills
- poses functional knowledge across a broad range of disciplines
- have understanding of life's complexities and ambiguities as well as a high level ability to work within these circumstances
- continuous development of cognitive skills through life-long learning
- command transferable skills and functional knowledge for purposes of different employment opportunities
- outstanding interpersonal skills and an ability to appreciate and embrace diversity
- an ability to bring about innovation and constructive change in their professions and in civil society
- leadership skills and an ability to mentor others
- broader understanding of human rights, social justice and environmental sustainability imperatives
- a strong sense of civic and social responsibility
- a distinct ability to think independently and imagine the future as underpinned by a sense of public good and values of global citizenship

## Aims of Tracer Study

This tracer study aimed to establish an institutional understanding of the experiences and satisfaction levels of law alumni, with the intention of enhancing the Wits experience. The four target areas of focus are:

1. Wits educational experience
2. Wits institutional culture
3. Wits professional development<sup>2</sup>

The study operated within the context of Wits's previously mentioned commitment to pursue intellectual elitism as an approach that will nurture world leaders in their respective fields of engagement, and graduates through professional development and educational programmes that compete with the best in the world (*Wits Vision 2022 Strategic Framework*). The University further aspires to be an institution built on principles of intellectual excellence, committed to providing high-quality, internationally competitive education founded on high academic standards, cutting-edge research, public engagement and productive partnership with leading institutions throughout the world (ibid.).

In line with the target areas listed above, the study operated within four primary research questions:

1. What are the alumni's satisfaction levels and views with regard to the Wits educational experience?
2. What are the alumni's satisfaction levels and views with regard to the Wits learning climate?
3. What are the alumni's satisfaction levels and views with regard to the Wits institutional culture?
4. What are the alumni's satisfaction levels and views with regard to the Wits career preparation and professional development?

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<sup>2</sup> This study understands professional development as skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement.

# Research Methodology

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and used an online once-off survey as the main tool for data collection. The methodology embedded five key features. Questions were designed to elicit the following information:

- Profiling of alumni
- Educational experiences and satisfaction levels
- Institutional culture experiences and satisfaction levels
- Professional development experiences and satisfaction levels

## QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions. Most questions were framed as closed-ended questions. At the end of the main sections respondents were invited to make any further comments they wished, and recommendations on how to enhance the Wits experience. The questionnaire was designed to be completed within 15 minutes and consideration was given to the inclusion of questions relating to the relative importance of the objectives of the study. Initial drafts of the questionnaire were piloted to identify any remaining ambiguities and problems. The satisfaction data used in the study emanated from questions concerning ratings of aspects of the alumni's experiences of Wits. Response options were: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

Best practices in the design of alumni surveys suggest collaboration among key internal stakeholders such as deans, institutional research and public affairs (Pollick, 1995; Pendel, 1985; Fisher, 1988). Associate Professor of Law Mtendeweka Mhango (Wits School of Law) was consulted for input into the development of the survey. His input assisted in developing the discipline-specific sections of the questionnaire. Professor Mhango was asked the following questions:

- Are there any specific questions that you would like law alumni to be asked?
- Does the Wits School of Law have a marketing strategy to market Wits as a first choice for potential law students?
- Does the School have any mechanisms in place to engage with its alumni (e.g. events, newsletters, etc.)?
- What achievements contribute to being regarded as a successful lawyer?

The questionnaire underwent an internal evaluation process, input and approval through structures within Wits (Wits Alumni Relations Office, School of Law and Strategic Planning Division).

## POPULATION AND SAMPLE DESIGN

The survey targeted law alumni from the University of the Witwatersrand across all years of graduation. All Wits law alumni with e-mail addresses registered with the Alumni Relations Office were sent an e-mail invitation to participate in the survey. A total of 121 Wits law alumni participated. The survey was sent to 3 718 alumni; of these e-mails 1 094 bounced back, so it was successfully sent to 2 624 law alumni. It has been noted that when a number of decades of graduates are covered by an alumni survey, it results in a very large number of observations and the ability to examine trends over time in education and career histories (Eesley, 2002). Confidentiality is an issue of legal, ethical and professional importance (Melchori, 1988), hence safeguards were put in place to ensure the individual identities of the respondents were protected and kept anonymous.

Data collection activities were undertaken during the period of May–June 2012. The information provided by respondents was collated and used in this study. As intimated above, all Wits law alumni with an e-mail address on the Wits Alumni Relations database were invited to participate in the survey through an e-mail invitation. There was no direct-access contact with respondents.

The main drawback of mail surveys is low response rates, but Stevenson et. al. (1985) recommend using multiple follow-up mailing to non-respondents to bolster response rates (Cabrera et al., 2005). After the survey was e-mailed to alumni, various steps were taken to promote it. Details of the survey were posted on the Alumni Relations LinkedIn account, which has 4 805 members, twitter account, and website. The survey was also mentioned in *TheEdge* newsletter (for Wits alumni) and the Wits news e-letter. A follow-up e-mail was sent to alumni a week before the closing date to persuade them to participate.

In addition, the Big 5 law firms and other law-related organisations were contacted via e-mail and telephone to encourage their Wits law alumni to participate in the survey. Many companies, via their human resources departments (who were able to filter their Wits graduates), sent the survey to their Wits alumni, and some uploaded the survey on their website intranet. Those contacted include:

- Webber Wentzel
- Bowman Gilfillan
- Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr
- Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs
- Norton Rose South Africa
- Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

## LIMITATIONS

Low response rates have been noted as a drawback in conducting alumni surveys (Eesley, 2012). The Wits Alumni Relations office has reported that approximately 5% of alumni e-mailed by Wits University open their e-mails. Hence the response rate of the study was affected by this; however the sample size was sufficient to conduct a strategic assessment within the remit of the study.



## PROFILING OF ALUMNI

The study begins with the profiling of the sample according to their personal, educational and career attributes. It establishes gender, age, country of origin, country currently living in, year of graduation and host school/department, educational levels, specialist sector as well as sector of employment, employment details and special achievements.

## Participant Profile

A total of 124 respondents participated in the study of which 40% (48) were female and 60% (72) male. This result shows a good gender representation of respondents. Table 1 presents the age breakdown of the sample. It shows that the majority of the sample were over the age of 40 (59%), with 22% in their 30s, followed by 18% in their 20s. Only 1% participants were under the age of 21.

	Count	%
<21 years	1	1.0%
21-24 years	3	2.0%
25-29 years	19	16.0%
30-34 years	12	10.0%
35-39 years	15	12.0%
>40 years	71	59.0%
	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Table 1: Age Breakdown*

Table 2 shows that the majority of the sample (81.82%) originates from South Africa. Other respondents originated from other African countries besides South Africa (i.e. Kenya, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Lesotho, Nigeria, Swaziland, Zambia), the United States, Asia (Hong Kong) and Europe (England, Germany, Italy).

	Count	%
South Africa	99	81.82%
England	3	2.48%
Kenya	3	2.48%
Zimbabwe	3	2.48%
United States	2	1.65%
(blank)	2	1.65%
Burundi	1	0.83%
Germany	1	0.83%
Hong Kong	1	0.83%
Italy	1	0.83%
Lesotho	1	0.83%
Nigeria	1	0.83%
Swaziland	1	0.83%
Zambia	1	0.83%
Spoiled data	1	0.83%
	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 2: Country of Origin

Most of the sample is currently living in South Africa (74%) while 26% lives outside South Africa= as summarised in Table 3 below.

	Count	%
Outside South Africa	32	26.0%
South Africa	89	74.0%
	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

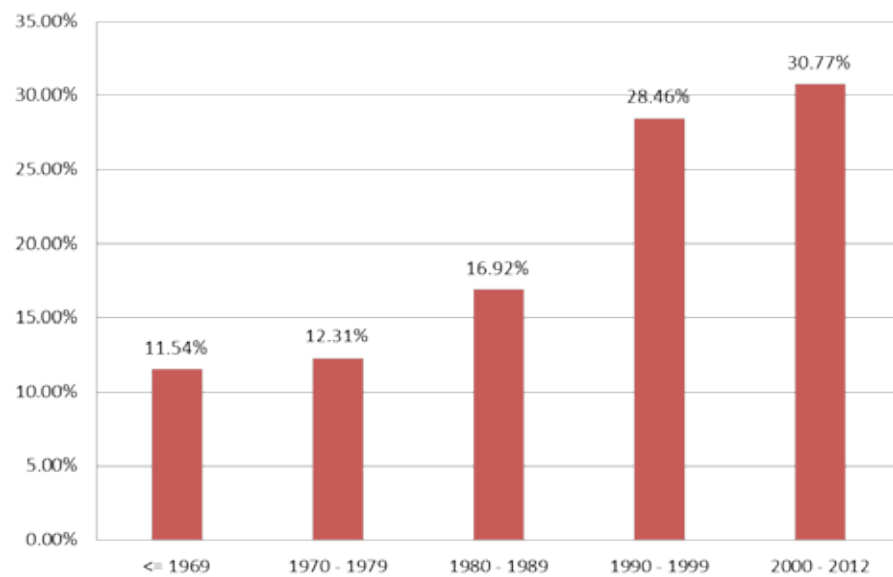
Table 3: Country Living In

The sample was asked their year/s of graduation. The results can be seen in Table 2. It should be noted that some respondents have multiple qualifications, and hence indicated more than one graduation year.

<= 1969		1970 – 1979		1980 - 1989		1990 - 1999		2000 - 2012	
1952	1	1970	3	1980	1	1990	1	2000	2
1949	1	1971	3	1981	4	1991	2	2002	2
1953	1	1972	1	1982	1	1992	3	2003	6
1954	1	1973	2	1983	1	1992	2	2004	5
1958	1	1974	1	1984	3	1993	3	2005	6
1962	4	1975	1	1985	3	1994	3	2006	3
1963	1	1976	1	1986	1	1995	8	2007	2
1966	1	1977	2	1987	2	1996	3	2008	5
1968	1	1979	2	1988	2	1997	4	2009	7
1968	1			1989	4	1998	4	2010	1
1969	3					1999	4	2012	1
<b>15</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>37</b>		<b>40</b>	
<b>11.54%</b>		<b>12.31%</b>		<b>16.92%</b>		<b>28.46%</b>		<b>30.77%</b>	

Table 4: Year of Graduation

Figure 2 provides a breakdown participants profile by decade of graduation. It shows that most respondents (30.77%) graduated in the past 10 years followed by 28.46% in the '90s. Fewer graduated in the '80s (16.92%) and '70s (12.31%) and the smallest group graduated before 1969 (11.54%).



*Figure 2: Year of Graduation*

Results indicate fair representation of respondents across decades with the bulk falling within the last 20 years (approximately 60%).

## Educational Profile

Table 5 shows that the bulk of the sample was from the School of Law (93%). A small percentage was from other Wits schools.

	Count	%
Other	2	2.0%
School of Accountancy	1	1.0%
School of Law	113	93.0%
School of Literature and Language Studies	1	1.0%
Wits School of Arts	4	3.0%
	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Table 5: Host School / Department*

The educational qualifications of the sample are given in Table 6 below. Almost half (46%) have a BA, followed by 21% with an LLB, 8% a BCom, and 6% a BProc. The remainder, that is, 17%, indicated they possess other qualifications.

	Count	%
Bachelor of Art	56	46.0%
Bachelor of Commerce	10	8.0%
BProc	7	6.0%
LLB	25	21.0%
Bachelor of Science	3	2.0%
Other	20	17.0%
	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Table 6: Respondent's Highest Qualification*

Figure 3 illustrates the specialist law sector in which respondents practice. It reveals that 49% specialise in corporate law, with the next largest group being the 43% who selected the 'other' option.

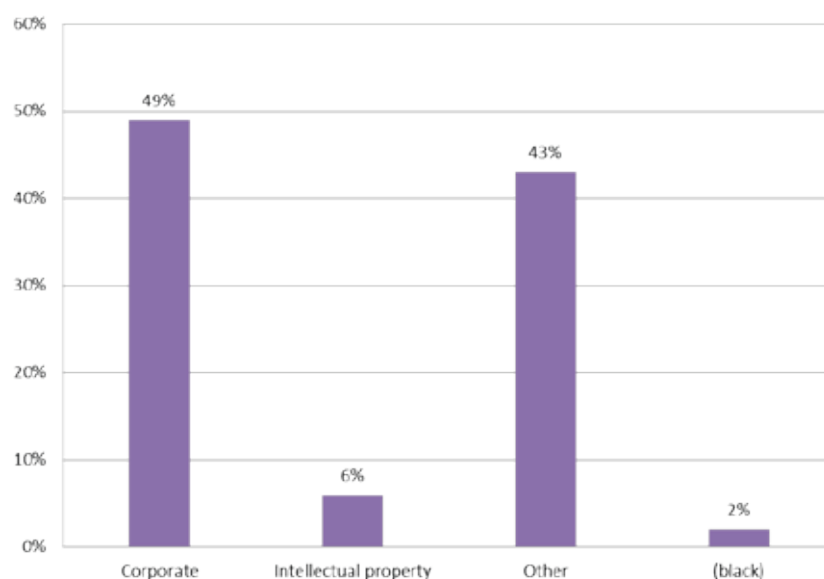


Figure 3: Specialist Sector

Individual responses for the 'other' option included taxation; crime and conduct; credit control and management; environmental and water-related issues; diplomacy, international relations and trade; banking; construction law; ocean freighting; and estate planning. Only 6% of the sample selected intellectual property.

The details of the sector of employment of law alumni can be seen in Figure 4 below. Most of the sample (45%) is employed in the corporate sector, 15% are entrepreneurs, and 9% are employed by government. Only 2% work for non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

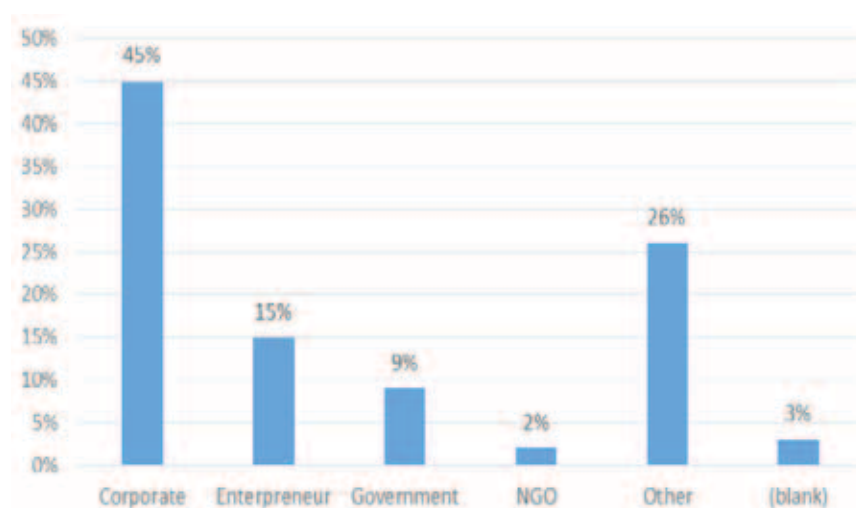


Figure 4: Sector of Employment

The employers of respondents include:

- Webber Wentzel
- National Prosecuting Authority
- SARB
- FirstRand Limited
- Tata Consultancy Services
- Top TV
- Eversheds attorneys
- Absa Capital
- Ground Water Consulting
- Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
- Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia
- SABMiller Global Consulting Services (Pty) Ltd
- Norton Rose
- Bowman Gilfillan, Fluxmans, Strategic Partners Group (Pty) Ltd
- University of Nairobi and Kenya School of law
- Transport Accident Commission, Victoria, Australia
- Premier Freight (Pty) Ltd, Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD)
- University of KwaZulu-Natal
- Sydney mid-tier law firm
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers
- South African Reserve Bank
- Trenchless Technologies cc
- Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr Inc.
- Lalemant (USA) Inc.

A substantial number of participants indicated that they were either self-employed or retired.

Figure 5 shows that close to half of the sample (38.84%) are practising as attorneys and 6.61% are advocates.

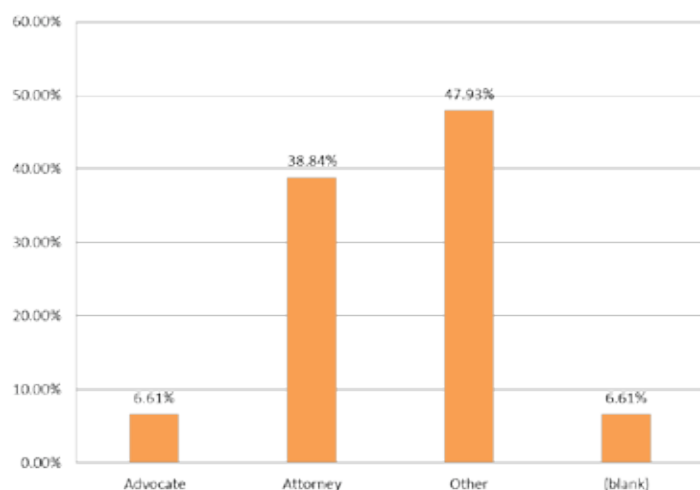


Figure 5: Currently Practicing As

Alumni were also asked details of their special achievements specific to the law profession: whether he or she is a member of the Bar, has been awarded an honorary degree, has worked on high-profile cases, has published books, is senior counsel (SC), has been published in local and/or internationally peer-reviewed journals, or has undertaken their own business ventures. Approximately 10% of participants were members of the Bar<sup>3</sup>, and about 2% of the sample has been awarded an honorary degree.<sup>4</sup>

As can be seen in Table 7, almost half of the sample has worked on high-profile cases. Due to confidentiality the details of these cases will not be discussed, and it was mentioned that a number of them are ongoing. Broadly, cases involve: the Constitutional Court, SARC, Top TV, the Minister of Safety and Security, SASOL, ICASA, arms-deal cases, organised crime, COSATU, Anglo Platinum, the Department of Transport and the Road Accident Fund, SA Roadlink and the State, as well as cases abroad. Data also shows that about 10% of the participants had published book/s<sup>5</sup> and 3% of the sample indicated they have been awarded silk<sup>6</sup>, and about 3% indicated they were senior counsel (SC)<sup>7</sup>. A relatively high number (27%) of the participants had article/s published in local journals<sup>8</sup>, while 12% had article/s published in internationally peer-reviewed journals<sup>9</sup>. Data also shows that 30% of participants the sample has business ventures.<sup>10</sup>

	Count	%
No	59	49.0%
Yes	58	48.0%
(blank)	4	3.0%
	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Table 7: Worked High-Profile Cases*

<sup>3</sup> 4% did not answer this survey question.

<sup>4</sup> 4% did not answer this survey question.

<sup>5</sup> 2% did not answer this survey question.

<sup>6</sup> 6% did not answer this survey question.

<sup>7</sup> 5% did not answer this survey question.

<sup>8</sup> 4% did not answer this survey question.

<sup>9</sup> 5% did not answer this survey question.

<sup>10</sup> 4% did not answer this survey question.



## Educational Experience

This section of the report discusses law alumni satisfaction levels with and views of the Wits educational experience, specifically the academic component. It firstly discusses why they chose to study at Wits, then ratings of selective educational components as well as the respondents' qualitative views of the best aspects of the Wits education.

Asked whether or not Wits was their first choice of university 87% of the sample answered 'Yes'.<sup>11</sup> This clearly shows that over a history of 90 years, Wits has enjoyed an outstanding reputation of being the first choice for most of its graduates. Table 8 below shows the breakdown of the reasons for this choice. The overall reputation of Wits (36.36%) was the leading reason, followed by the reputation of Wits Law (23.97%) and location of the University (19%).

	Count	%
Funding was available for me to study at this particular institution	4	3.31%
Graduates from this institution have good career and employment prospects	3	2.48%
Had no choice because the University I wanted did not accept my application	2	1.65%
It was recommended to me	6	4.96%
It was the only institution offering this programme	2	1.65%
The institution's reputation in my chosen subject area	29	23.97%
The location of the institution	23	19.01%
The overall reputation of the institution	44	36.36%
The reputation of the department	3	2.48%
Other (please specify)	5	4.13%
	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 8: Reasons for Choosing Wits

Fewer respondents indicated that they selected Wits because it was recommended to them (4.96%), funding was available for them (3.31%) or because of the reputation of the department (2.48%).

<sup>11</sup> 1% did not answer this survey question.

## SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Figure 6 shows the alumni ratings of selective aspects of Wits Education: course content, teaching staff, teaching style, teaching methods, teaching quality, career preparedness, non-academic support staff and career development.

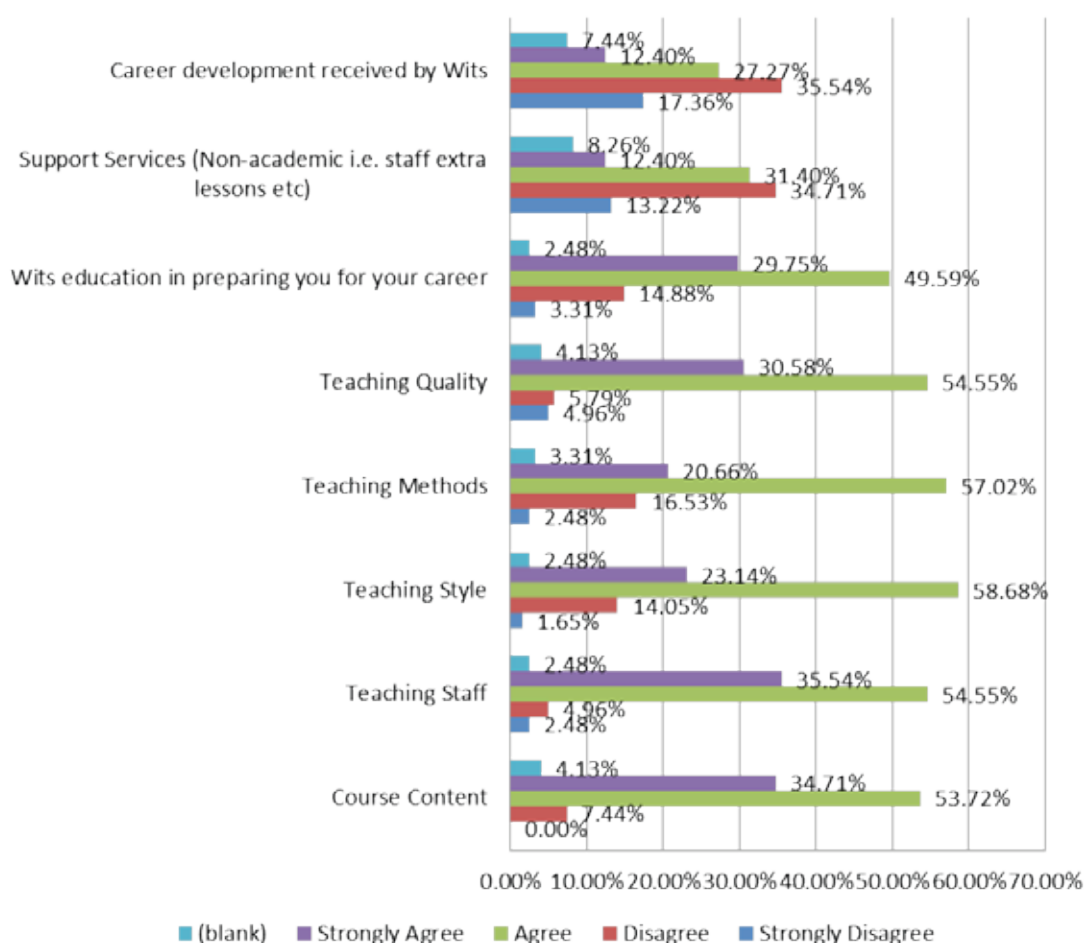


Figure 6: Satisfaction Ratings Wits Education

Results reveal the following satisfaction ratings:

**Course content:** This aspect of their Wits education received positive satisfaction ratings by 88.43% of the sample. A small percentage of 7.44% were not satisfied with the law course content. No respondent indicated strong dissatisfaction. This shows that graduates from the University law programmes that have been in practice for many years felt that they were adequately prepared by the University through curriculum choices made to structure their programmes. This also implies that the curriculum of the law programmes has been based on relevant of acceptable content over various decades, if different generations of participants who participated in this study have to be considered.

**Teaching staff:** Just over 90% of respondents felt satisfied with the law teaching staff. Just over 7% indicated dissatisfaction.

**Teaching style:** This was rated positively with just over 81% of the sample indicating they were satisfied with the teaching style. However, 15% revealed that they were dissatisfied and this indicates that there was need for improvement.

**Teaching methods:** 77.86% of the respondents showed a positive attitude towards the teaching methods they experienced; however, this aspect of the education offered could be enhanced, as about 19% were dissatisfied.

**Teaching quality:** 85.13% were content with the quality of the teaching received; on the other hand, 10.75% were dissatisfied and 4.96% who indicated strong dissatisfaction.

**Wits education in preparing you for your career:** According to 79.34% of the sample, their Wits academic education adequately prepared them for a career in law. However, given that almost a fifth of the sample (18.19%) was dissatisfied with the career preparation received and this suggests that this aspect of the Wits education could be enhanced.

**Non-Academic Support Services:** Less than half the respondents (43.8%) were satisfied in this respect, while nearly half 47.93% showed dissatisfaction, with 13.22% strongly dissatisfied. The non-academic support service of Wits pertaining to law shows room for improvement and enhancement. While it was not established in this study, what aspects of academic support services were the source of high levels of graduate dissatisfaction; it was clear that the University needs to put mechanisms in place to address the quality of service in academic support services. A follow up study may need to be conducted to establish areas of focus for such development.

**Career development received at Wits:** Only 39.67% of the sample was satisfied with the career development that had been offered to them at Wits. More than half, 52.9%, were dissatisfied, and of this total 17.36% were highly dissatisfied. Wits Law career development indicated significant dissatisfaction levels, suggestive of a need for improvement. Based on this data, there is a clear need for the University to provide better employment preparation programmes for law graduates before they exit the University.

On the whole, law alumni showed high satisfaction ratings with the interrogated aspects of their Wits academic experience, in particular: course content, teaching staff, teaching style, teaching methods, teaching quality and career preparedness. Wits non-academic support services and career development were flagged as notable areas of improvement.

One participant argued that the best educational experience was informed by 'the latitude given to students and the Socratic teaching methods allow students to prepare coherent, sustainable legal arguments independently'.

## BEST ASPECTS WITS EDUCATION

Respondents were asked to highlight the best aspects of their Wits educational (academic) experience.

Many responses involved the teaching and learning model, such as lectures, teaching staff and teaching methods. Comments worth noting:

- The law school was a fantastic place to be every day with lecturers and learners treated as equals. All my lecturers were always available to me when I had any sort of questions and all of them were approachable which made learning a very easy process.
- The teaching methods
- Enjoyed the stimulating learning environment and value the friendships made

The teaching staff and lecturers were also flagged as best aspects:

- Quality of my lecturers
- Outstanding lecturers
- Generally the quality of the staff
- Strength of law school lecturing team, many of whom were leaders in their field and had written the standard texts
- Some high-level lecturers at the Law Faculty
- Taught by renowned and capable experts in all the courses
- The lecturers were always willing to help and engage in classes, and the chosen material was very enjoyable

As in the comment above, the course content and material were praised by some law alumni. Other noteworthy comments include:

- The material covered in most subjects appeared to be comprehensive and provided a good introduction to the field.
- Quality of education
- The focus on practice is invaluable in the workplace and really places one a few notches ahead of the pack.
- Internationally recognised education
- Exposure to research methodology, opportunity to develop leadership skills. Wits also encouraged independence of thought, cultural diversity and academic freedom which are key values to me.
- Research methodology was quite helpful in preparing me for legal practice

Other participants flagged the Wits culture and its diversity nature including the internationalisation of the institution. Positive comments related to the following:

- Campus life
- Multiracial at a very difficult time, encouraged to challenge the norms
- Good education, good friendships, cultural diversity, being part of a liberation struggle
- The diversity of the students and staff
- Lively intellectual and political culture
- Being part of a great South African institution which lives up to its ideals, and brought me into contact with a wide variety of people.
- Very cosmopolitan university, with ideas from many different areas of society
- Being peers with some of the brightest students in a truly international institution allowed me to engage in robust debates that contributed far more to my learning than any lecturer could teach, and to re-imagine the possibilities and shift the boundaries of my aspiration, irrelevant in today's environment.

Law alumni also highlighted aspects outside the teaching and learning model and Wits culture. The Wits Law School and facilities as well as support staff were flagged as some of the best aspects. Comments showing these sentiments include:

- Law clinic course was outstanding educationally as it forced students to apply their knowledge to real-world situations under guidance
- The facilities are top notch
- The support staff was mostly very helpful - admissions office / when changing courses etc.
- The Wits Law Library was well resourced and all learning material accessible

One negative comment was made: 'A few lecturers were inspired and inspiring [but] most appeared to lecture reluctantly and did not care about the content or students'

## LEARNING CLIMATE

The learning environment and institutional climate have a significant bearing on the University's experience and effectiveness of education. As discussed above in the review of literature, higher education institutions must aspire to address and promote cultural diversity in teaching and learning to create an effective learning environment (Chan, 2004). The climate is key to the overall education benefits (Day, 2009: 9.1). The next section of the report discusses the responses from the law alumni to the atmosphere of the School of Law/Department as well as atmosphere of the learning environment.

## ATMOSPHERE OF THE SCHOOL / DEPARTMENT

The Wits School of Law has undergone historical changes. Prior to its establishment, faculties were organised into departments. Hence the sample was asked about the atmosphere of the school or department they attended, depending on which system existed during their tenure as a Wits student.

It should be noted that, as depicted in Table 5 above, 93% of the sample were from the School of Law. Of the remainder, 3% were from Wits School of Arts, 1% from the School of Accountancy, and 1% from the School of Literature and Language Studies. Hence the views that follow largely reflect views on the School of Law and its direct predecessors.

Firstly, the sample was asked if they felt welcomed by their school/department: 81% said they had, and 18% said they had not.<sup>12</sup> That a considerable majority of respondents answered 'yes' can be regarded as a positive finding.

Figure 7 below shows the satisfaction levels of alumni that 'the general atmosphere of the school/department was welcoming and conducive to learning'. Results reveal that 84.29% agreed affirmed this statement, including over a quarter of the sample (33.88%) who strongly agreed. However, 14.87% did not feel that the general atmosphere they encountered was welcoming and conducive to learning.

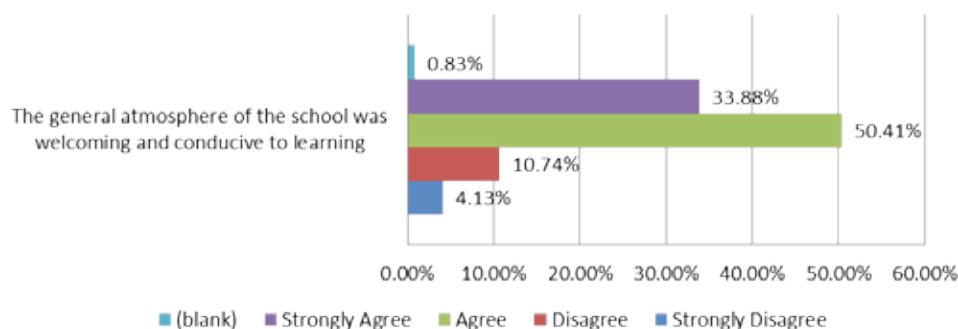


Figure 7: Atmosphere of the School / Department

<sup>12</sup> 1% did not answer this survey question

The law alumni were further asked to describe the general atmosphere of the school/department. Comments were largely positive with a few negative. Notable descriptions include:

- Professional, supportive, inspiring and fun
- Vibrant, exciting, welcoming, conducive to asking questions
- Conducive academically and socially
- Academic and collegiate
- Focused and energetic
- Accommodative
- Strong culture of excellence
- Focused on academic success and preparation for application of legal principles in the working world – good
- Conducive
- Atmosphere was generally positive and supportive
- Professional
- Good, relaxed and comfortable
- Large but friendly
- Exciting
- Intellectually stimulating
- Stimulating and diverse
- Inspiring
- Excellent
- Competitive

The negative descriptions noted:

- Distant
- Pressurised
- Stressful
- Indifferent
- Hostile
- Alienating
- Elitist
- Exclusive, snotty
- A bit disengaged
- Cold
- Intimidating to a student coming from disadvantaged background

Although the overall descriptions of the school/department's atmosphere were positive; the few negative descriptions indicate an area of concern for the School of Law.

## **ATMOSPHERE OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The next section asked specifically about the atmosphere of the direct learning environment, that is, lectures and teaching model. This resulted in the following descriptions:

- Focused and energetic
- One of the best learning environments in my experience of Wits and other Australian universities
- Perfect and first class
- Challenging
- Conducive
- A good environment

- Focused on academic and practical application of principles taught – good
- Socratic
- I experienced a high level of professionalism amongst lecturers and staff
- Charged, inquisitive, challenging
- It allowed for lateral thinking
- Stimulating
- Stimulating, Relevant
- Intellectually challenging
- Respectful
- Excellent, lecturers were well trained to suit everyone

A few negative experiences were highlighted:

- Basic and under-resourced
- Proper and anaesthetic 'Library access could sometimes be an issue.  
Otherwise excellent
- Average, some very poor lecturers, lack of innovation

On the whole the atmosphere of the Law School as well as its learning environment attracted largely positive sentiments, with very few negative.

# Institutional Culture

The institutional culture of a higher education institution can be understood as its personality. In addition, every school/department has a culture of its own. This section explores the principles of equality and fairness in the culture of Wits as an institution and its learning climate. The principles of fairness and equality are firmly enshrined in the South African Constitution and are sacrosanct values that must be respected by higher education institutions. South Africa's democracy was founded on values of: 'Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms as well as non-racialism and non-sexism' (Republic of South Africa, 1996: ch.1 s.1 [a]).

The attainment of democracy for South Africa in 1994 has seen measures being instituted by the State so as to transform the social terrain of higher education and this transformation has necessitated that all students, regardless of racial differences, access higher education in increased numbers (Machingambi, 2011: 1).

As maintained in the 1997 Department of Education White Paper 3, the principle of equity as a form of social inclusion requires fair opportunities for anyone to both enter higher education programmes and succeed in them. In other words, failure by the institutions of higher learning to strike a balance between equity of access and outcomes leads to the continued exclusion of historically marginalised groups from participating in the broader economic and social spheres of life (ibid.: 17).

## INCLUSIVENESS, FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY

As shown in Figure 8 the majority of participants believe that Wits adheres to principles of fairness and equality (83%), while the minority of participants (15%) disagreed that there was inclusiveness, fairness and equality at Wits.



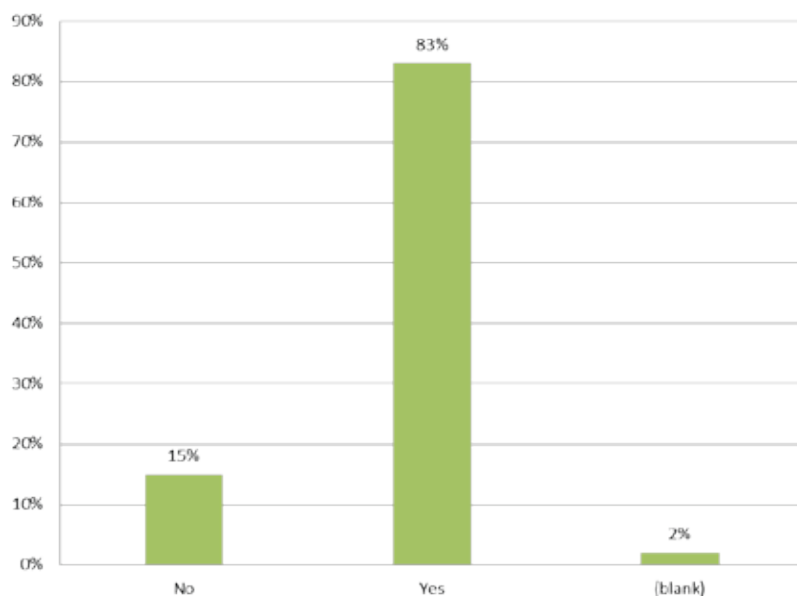


Figure 8: Principles of fairness and equality

Asked whether they had experienced any form of discrimination, 78% of the sample said 'no' and 20% said 'yes'.<sup>14</sup> The latter 20% were probed further and asked to record what kind of discrimination they had experienced and the options given were 'gender', 'special needs', 'racial' and 'other'. Results are summarised in Table 9 below.

Type	Gender	Other	Racial	(blank)
Grand Total	8%	25%	46%	21%

Table 9: Type of Discrimination Experienced

This group was encouraged to describe the episode/s of discrimination. The findings indicate that clashes between Muslims and Jews on campus were an issue. Other experiences included physical abuse during a student fee protest, racial discrimination pre-1994, anti-Semitism, anti-Israel bias on campus, gender bias in the 1950s towards female law students, and being accused of not knowing how to speak a 'black language' despite being born in South Africa. These responses reveal that the racial biases were largely based on students to student prejudice and unfairness.

<sup>13</sup> 2 % did not answer this survey question

# Professional Development and Career Preparedness

Producing quality graduates through professional development is a key focus of Wits's strategic imperatives. An assessment of the professional development offered to students by the University is necessary to examine the quality of career preparedness. This section considers alumni views on Wits adequately preparing respondents for the law profession.

As previously shown in the Figure 6 ratings, Wits career development scored only a 39.67% satisfaction level. However, 79.34% of the sample was satisfied that the academic education the alumni received at Wits adequately prepared them for their profession in law.

Participants were furthermore asked to elaborate on their views of career preparedness, in the form of qualitative responses on how their Wits qualification helped in their career. Thematic analysis of these responses showed the following results, with sample comments:

- Many agreed it gave them a solid foundation: 'Good foundation'
- Wits equipped students to play a professional role: 'Equipped me for my professional role'
- The Wits degree helped graduates find employment: 'Provided knowledge and competitive edge in job search'
- Wits set high standards: 'Wits School of Law (unlike UJ and other universities some of my friends have attended) had much higher standards, enabling critical thinking and problem-solving and not rote/parrot-fashion learning of principles. High standards must be kept up.'
- The Wits brand opened doors: 'Provided a good basis for my career. Not only in terms of proper legal training, but the brand counted a lot when one did not have any working experience'
- Wits training provided critical skills: 'It taught me how to analyse and communicate properly'; 'Independent thinking, ability to see solutions where others can't!'
- Students were taught to think logically: 'Taught me to think logically and out of the box'
- Career advancement was enhanced by the Wits education: 'It has been instrumental in advancing my career'; 'Good legal qualification has enhanced career prospects'
- Wits provided the basis for an international career: 'Gave me a well-rounded, sound knowledge base which enabled re-qualification in Australia and the high achievement aspirations Wits created have never failed me'

- Wits teaches one to think: 'Wits definitely DOES give you the edge – it teaches you to think and not be a sheep!'
- A Wits law education provides confidence: '[enabled me to act] with confidence at all times and in all places'
- The qualification opened the way to a successful legal career: 'I have had a successful legal career both in SA and in the UK'; 'Sought-after professional and met the work expectations'

## WITS PRODUCING GLOBAL CITIZENS

Wits aspires to produce graduates who will be global citizens equipped for international employment and competition. As discussed previously, 81.82% of the sample originated from South Africa, but only 74% currently live in South Africa. Hence up to 7.82% have emigrated from South Africa (some foreign graduates are probably included in the 74%). It can therefore be concluded that Wits is producing global citizens, and Wits law graduates are employed abroad.

	n	%
Australia	10	31.25%
United States	9	28.13%
England	5	15.63%
(blank)	2	6.25%
Azerbaijan	1	3.13%
Canada	1	3.13%
Kenya	1	3.13%
Kuwait	1	3.13%
Netherlands	1	3.13%
Nigeria	1	3.13%
	<b>32</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

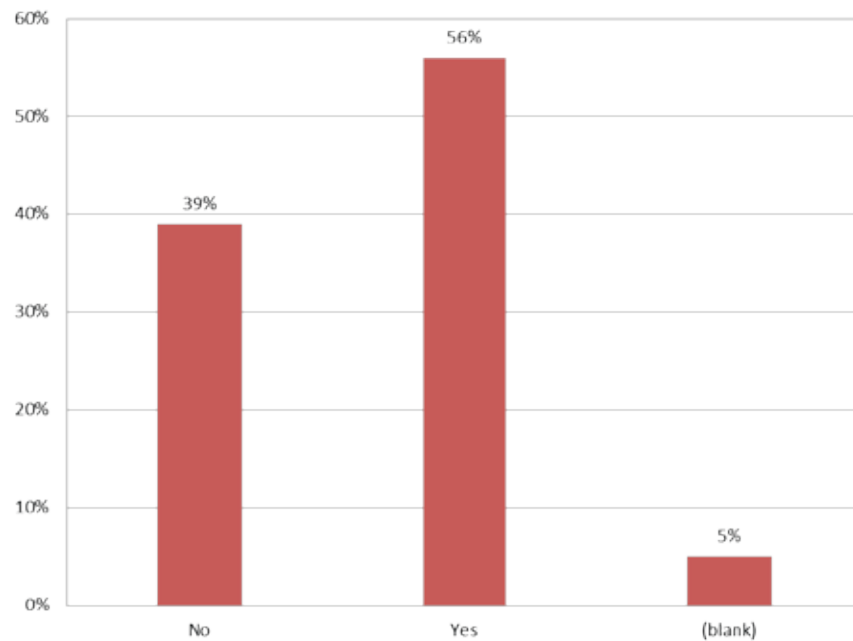
Table 10: Currently Living Outside South Africa

For those respondents who indicated they are currently living outside South Africa, Table 10 above shows their current country of residence. Almost a third of them live in Australia (31.25%), followed by the United States (28.13%) and England (15.63%). One each live in Azerbaijan, Canada, Kenya, Kuwait, Netherlands and Nigeria.

## ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT IN WITS MATTERS

Higher education institutions that engage in relationship management with their alumni may expect long-term relationships and higher levels of support and loyalty of them, and overall can better withstand the cyclical nature of aggressive challenges and environmental change (Harrison et al., 1995). Understanding and promoting alumni satisfaction provides numerous benefits in assessing the outcomes of higher education institutional performance programmes (Hartman and Schmidt, 1995). The alumni who participated in this study were also asked about their openness to getting involved with University activities such as mentorship and sponsorship. As seen in Figure 9 below, 56% indicated that they were open to involvement, and 39% that they were not.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> 4% of the sample did not answer this question



*Figure 9: Getting Involved with University Activities*

Those who answered 'no' were asked to elaborate on the reasons for their selection. Common reasons cited were time constraints, living abroad, old age, busy work schedule, involved in other community initiatives and other responsibilities. Although some of the given reasons are practically meaningful, findings suggest that the University has lost touch with a large number of alumni and mechanisms for enhancement of differentiated alumni involvement need to be explored.

Wits therefore needs to intensify is alumni involvement and develop a high-level relationship-management strategy for alumni to cultivate long-term relationships and loyal alumni to enhance the University as an institution and the overall Wits experience for current students. This study is a starting point in giving law alumni a platform to provide input into the attainment of the strategic imperatives and enhancement of the experience offered by the University.

# Recommendations Made by the Alumni

Alumni research has been argued to be the most productive assessment technique for higher education improvement and is frequently used by the alma mater concerned for reform. This study is a step towards using alumni surveys as an ongoing programme for institutional evaluation and improvement. However, alumni research is most effective when it is used as a culture of evidence that not only collects data outcomes, but goes a step further to improve quality by making recommendations for improvement. This section discusses the recommendations given by the sample group of law alumni.

The study also gave law alumni the opportunity to flag areas which they felt needed improvement with regard to the Wits experience. The top three areas flagged were curriculum reform, career preparedness and lecture enhancement. A significant number of respondents flagged the issue of curriculum reform. Comments included the following:

- Legal curriculum – more practical drafting of docs and court procedures
- The LLB curriculum should be more stringent with regard to who passes and who fails. The current ‘PLT’ [practical legal training] course should be incorporated into LLB, instead of it currently being used to bypass a year of articles of clerkship. Higher-level lecturers and more practical training are needed. A course on ‘business etiquette’ should also be introduced, which teaches students things like conducting themselves at meetings, letter writing
- The law curriculum needs a revamp, more practical courses and more courses related to current legal issues
- Introducing into the Wits LLB curriculum interpretation of statutes as one of the compulsory courses
- Need for comparative study or exposure so that the students also get exposed to the rest of the world! There is a world outside South Africa
- [the curriculum] needs to include a writing course so students improve their writing or grammar
- Whilst the Law Clinic was a step in the right direction, the number of law students who complete their legal degrees without ever attending our Courts in session still amazes me. That aspect needs work and, similarly, students should be able to, for example, have summons issued in Court and know exactly how to practically do that at Court. I only learned that during my articles and I believe it belongs at varsity

The need to improve career preparedness was also mentioned by a substantial number of the sample:

- There is a need for 'more preparation for employment
- Some emphasis on work experience or in-service training for senior or final-year students to make them ready for work or business. Possible incorporation of things like legal articles into the final year of LLB.
- The academic experience does not prepare the student for the workplace
- No practical training and assistance to obtain employment and experience
- Despite the lower entrance qualification criteria to accommodate our ailing school education, focus needs to be on the quality of teachers and teaching and the establishment of programmes to ensure that Wits produces graduates it can truly be proud of. Recent graduates I have interacted with show a marked decline in the level of quality of education they receive, a poor grasp of basic concepts and general unpreparedness to enter the professional field

The enhancement of lectures was also flagged by many alumni:

- Deeper, better lectures on fewer core subjects
- There is a need for 'more debate and student participation in learning and topic discussion rather than traditional lecture styles
- Having now studied overseas I feel that the standard expected from students at Wits needs to be raised. There needs to be more critical thinking, more engagement and more debate. Compared to the levels of work and knowledge international universities expect of law students, Wits was comparatively quite easy. Class interaction may be improved by pitching the lectures at a higher level
- It is important for 'extra tuition should be open to all students'

Following from this question, alumni were requested to give their recommendations so that Wits could improve the experience it offers. Recommendations largely touched on the issues of career preparedness and teaching model (methods and lecturers).

There were various suggestions on how to improve career preparedness of graduates put forward by participants:

- More career assistance
- More emphasis on what to expect in practice of law or job market
- Pair students with legal firms for winter vacations
- Wits should bring speakers from the business and legal world to Wits to inspire students and help them understand how to turn their degrees into success

Some suggestions were made in relation to teaching methods and these included the following:

- At times the class size was too large to engage in proper debate and analysis, which is essential to law. The tutorial classes helped but some more class interaction would have been useful
- Teaching methods are old fashioned and should welcome new techniques. Law school should encourage integration and [host] events to network with others
- Engaging with students and asking them what books they would like to read, or themes they would like to explore, is a good way to ensure that the students are exposed to material they find exciting and interesting

The University was also encouraged to improve the quality of its lectures by ensuring that:

- lawyers with practical experience in various legal disciplines should be employed to lecture on more relevant legal issues
- more tutorials and lecturer face to face time' is provided
- more student/lecturer interconnections, not just formally, but informally in issue debates'- is encouraged through teaching and learning arrangements

A smaller number of responses recommended improvement on issues pertaining to staff accountability, curriculum reform, publishing, residence, and non-academic support and these included the following:

- Staff accountability: 'Adopt a more practical approach aimed at assisting students to further their studies and not only at revenue collection of the institution, play an active role in the evaluation of the performance of teaching and administrative staff, subject all teaching staff to emotional intelligence training'
- Curriculum reform: 'Legal articles should form part of the final year LLB'; 'more practical experience'
- Publishing: 'More emphasis on publishing fresh research areas! Leadership of Wits on HIV-AIDS research noted due to publishing. There needs to be a body on campus that presents to final-year students doing research for the first time, the importance of publishing their works'
- Residence: 'Make the residences a safer place to live so that various cultures can live there without fear'
- Non-academic Support: 'Wits need to be mindful of students who do not fit the "normal" profile and offer assistance to them'

# Conclusion

This study managed to establish an institutional understanding of how law alumni experienced and rated their Wits experience. This was established across aspects of the conceptual framework.

## On the Educational Experience

- Wits was chosen by the bulk of the sample as a first option for study mainly because of the overall reputation of Wits and the reputation of Wits Law school, and advantageous location of the University.
- On the whole, law alumni showed high satisfaction ratings on selected aspects of the Wits academic experience. Particularly course content, teaching staff, teaching style, teaching methods, teaching quality and career preparedness received satisfactory ratings.
- A significant number of the sample indicated that the best aspect of their Wits academic educational experience involved the teaching and learning model, such as lectures, teaching staff and teaching methods. The law teaching staff and lecturers were also flagged as best aspects, followed by the course content, as well as the culture of Wits.
- It is recommended that mechanisms be put in place to ensure the enhancement of non-academic support, as well as career development as these were flagged as areas needing improvement.
- It is recommended that further consideration be given to the following issues that were put forth by respondents to enhance lectures:
  - Deeper and better lectures on fewer core subjects
  - More debate and student participation in learning and topic discussion rather than traditional lecture styles.
  - One respondent said that after travels overseas it was felt that the standard expected from students at Wits need to be raised, more critical thinking, more engagement and more debate. It was suggested that class interaction may be improved by pitching the lectures at a higher level.
  - Extra tuition should be open to all students,
- In terms of curriculum, teaching and learning and institutional reform it is recommended that the following issues be addressed:
  - The Legal curriculum includes more practical drafting of documents and court procedures.
  - A course on business etiquette should be introduced that would teach nuances like how to conduct oneself in a business meeting as well as letter writing,



- The law curriculum needs a revamp to take cognisance of more practical courses and more courses related to current legal issues.
  - Introduce interpretation of statutes as one of the compulsory courses of the LLB curriculum.
- Expose student to outside world beyond South Africa through comparative studies.
  - Include a writing course so students can improve their writing skills like grammar.
  - More experience in Court is need at Varsity level and not only at the articles stage.
  - More emphasis on publishing fresh research areas for final year students doing research for the first time.
  - Review of techniques should be welcomed and the School should encourage integration and events to network with others.
  - Lawyers with practical experience in various legal disciplines should be employed to lecture on more relevant legal issues.
  - More student/lecturer interconnections not just formally but informally in issue debates.
  - The university plays an active role in the evaluation of performance of teaching and administrative staff.
  - More practical and workplace readiness training and support be given to Wits graduates.
  - Although the descriptions of the school/department's atmosphere were generally positive in nature, the few negative descriptions indicate an area of improvement for the School of Law. For example, the atmosphere was described as 'distant', 'indifferent', 'hostile', 'alienating', 'elitist', 'exclusive', 'snotty', 'a bit disengaged', 'cold', and 'intimidating to a student coming from disadvantaged background'. It is recommended that caution be exercised to ensure a positive atmosphere is cultivated at all times.
  - About 20% of the respondents felt that they had experienced some form of unfair discrimination. The details of this discrimination involved clashes between Muslims and Jews on campus, physical abuse during a student fee protest, racial discrimination pre-1994, ignorance of fellow students toward African students, anti-Semitism, anti-Israel bias on campus, gender bias in the 1950s towards female law students, and being accused of not knowing how to speak a 'black language' despite being born in South Africa. Responses indicate that the discrimination experiences were largely students to student discrimination. The University may need to consider putting in place better forms of socialisation that expose students to diversity and inclusiveness.

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