

National Review: Bachelor of Laws (LLB) programmes

Preliminary desktop evaluation of SERs

**Guidelines for evaluators**

**Background**

As indicated in the *Framework for National Review of Higher Education Programmes* (2015), the review comprises two phases. The first phase is an institutional self-evaluation of its LLB programme(s) measured against the recently developed qualification standard. As part of this phase, the institution identifies – as the case may be – aspects of the programme that need to be addressed in order to meet the standard.

The Framework describes the first phase thus:

In cases where an institution identifies its programme as falling short of the qualification standard and thus being in need of development − either as a whole or in respect of specific aspects of the standard − the self-evaluation report should include steps that are being taken or will be taken to address the issues. The report should also propose timelines within which the necessary steps might be accomplished. These timelines may be approved or, after further consultation, amended by the HEQC.

The institutional SER is subjected to a desktop evaluation by the CHE. The main purpose of this evaluation is to compare the programme with the national qualification standard, and to identify areas of good practice and shortcomings. It may recommend areas in need of attention, but it does not include any recommendation in respect of accreditation.

The evaluation report is sent to the HEI, which may, during the forthcoming site visit, provide further information by way of clarification, or elaborate on plans for development.

(Framework, 8.3)

As indicated above, this phase includes a desktop evaluation of the institutional SER by an expert in law education, appointed by the CHE. This desktop evaluation does not include any recommendation in respect of the re-accreditation of the programme.

A second phase of the review is an assessment of the LLB programme(s) currently offered, measured against specific criteria relating to programme delivery, process, output and impact. This phase, during which recommendations in respect of re-accreditation are made by site-visit review panels, is not part of the first-phase desktop evaluation.

**Aim and scope of the desktop evaluation**

The aims of the desktop evaluation are to:

* verify the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the institution’s interpretation of the qualification standard;
* evaluate claims made by the institution with regards to its meeting the standard;
* where relevant, identify the need for additional evidence to support claims made;
* in respect of matters raised by the institution that need to be addressed in order to meet the standard, evaluate the feasibility of plans made and timelines proposed;
* if applicable, recommend to the institution any other matter meriting address in order fully to meet the standard.

**Format of the desktop evaluation report**

The CHE provides the evaluator with a template for the report.

**Completion of the report**

The CHE and the desktop evaluator enter into a contract, which includes a date by which the report needs to be completed. It is accompanied by a confidentiality agreement and a statement by the evaluator confirming no conflict of interest.

**Submission of the report to the institution**

Subject to assessment of reports by the CHE for consistency in the application of the standard, the evaluation report is sent to the relevant institution.

Because the report is strictly advisory, the institution is not required to respond. However, should an institution seek to correct or elaborate further on any point raised by the evaluator, it may do so, provided that any further comment by the institution is received by a date specified by the CHE.



**THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF**

**BACHELOR OF LAW (LLB) PROGRAMMES**

**2016 -2017**

**DESKTOP EVALUATION**

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| **Name of Programme(s)\*** |  |
| **Name of Institution** |  |
| **Mode of Delivery** |  |
| **If contact, site(s) of delivery** |  |
| **If distance, administrative centre** |  |
| **Exit level on the NQF** |  |
| **Total number of credits** |  |
| **If the programme is offered on behalf of the awarding institution by any other institution(s), name the other institution(s), site(s) of delivery, and mode(s) of delivery** |  |
| **Desktop evaluator** |  |

\*If the institution offers more than one LLB programme (for example, a 4-year first integrated LLB and a 2-year second degree, list all variants.

This report provides an evaluation made by the desktop evaluator and forms part of the HEQC’s National Review of the Bachelor of Laws programme.

The LLB programme is assessed by the evaluator against the national qualification standard, taking into account relevant programme criteria as they impinge on the standard, on the basis of the information required in terms of the Self-Evaluation Report template designed by the CHE. The evaluation report meets the following expectation:

A report on each LLB degree programme will receive a desktop peer evaluation of the extent to which it meets all aspects of the standard, informed by the criteria. This phase of the Review will include an evaluation report sent to the institution for comment, but will not be accompanied by a re-accreditation judgement.

(National Review Manual)

In addition, the evaluation report identifies areas of above-threshold practice that merit commendation, as well as recommendation in respect of areas in which further information or data are required from the institution.

The desktop evaluation is based solely on the Self-Evaluation report submitted by the academic unit offering the programme, together with any supporting documentation submitted.

*Note*

*For each of the areas below, the evaluator comment should be preceded by a brief summary of the main points from the SER on which the comments are based, including reference to the section(s) or/and page(s) of the SER in which they are to be found.*

**Self-Evaluation Report**

***Preamble (refer to the LLB standard)***

*How does your LLB degree address the values and ethos expressed in the preamble? Your response should have particular reference, but is not limited, to the following aspects:*

*• transformative constitutionalism;*

*• responsiveness to social justice;*

*• inculcating student awareness of constitutional imperatives;*

*• responsiveness to globalization;*

*• responsiveness to ever-evolving information technology.*

*Note*

*When responding to a question dealing with a number of aspects, such as this one, the report may deal with each aspect separately or, if it is in the better interests of narrative cohesion and coherence, in an integrated manner. In the latter case, the institution was requested to indicate clearly which questions have been integrated.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Institutional alignment ( refer to the Criterion 1)**  *1. What alignment is there between the LLB programme and your institution’s mission, goals and strategic plans?*  *2. Is there any outsourcing of delivery of the programme, or any other form of allocation of teaching and assessment to another institution or body? If so, describe the arrangements, how they are aligned with the institution’s mission, goals and strategic plan, and what measures are in place to ensure comparable quality under those arrangements***.**  *Note*  *With regards to outsourcing, refer to Criteria for Programme Accreditation, Criterion 1(vi).*   |  | | --- | | ***Evaluator Comment*** | |

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| **Purpose (refer to the LLB standard)**  *1. How does your LLB prepare well-rounded graduates for the three career pathways stated, namely entry into legal practice, into a wide range of other careers that require the application of law, and for postgraduate studies in law?*  *2. What evidence do you have to show that the LLB degree attempts to address the stated purpose of the qualification?* |

*Note*

*If deemed to be in the best interests of cohesion and coherence, responses to these questions are regarded as integral with responses to questions in the section ‘Graduate attributes’, they may be integrated, provided that all questions are adequately addressed, and the manner of integration is clearly stated and justified.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **NQF level and Credits (refer to the LLB standard)**  *1.Explain how your LLB degree is designed (through logical sequencing and increasing complexity of module content and assessment) in order to ensure appropriate progression through ascending levels of competency.*  *2. With reference to the NQF level descriptors in annexure A, explain how your LLB degree meets the requirements of NQF exit level 8.*  *3. How is the credit rating of the modules constructed in terms of the student workload and the variety of teaching activities offered and learning activities expected?*  *4. How does this credit rating relate to the notional study hours undertaken in the LLB degree?*  *5. To what extent does the total allocation of credits in the LLB degree adequately meet the purpose, content and intended outcomes of the qualification?* |

*Guideline*

*A narrative response to question 4 should be accompanied by a table,, as recommended in the SER template. Notional study hours should be given as a number of hours and as a percentage of the total number allocated to the module.*

*Note*

*The institution was requested to indicate any significant changes to the curriculum during the last five years.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Student recruitment, selection, admission and support (refer to the Criteria 2 and 11)**  *1.Taking into account the NQF levels and the particular demands of the LLB, how do your policies and procedures for recruitment, selection and admission of students address issues including, but not limited to:*  *• legislative requirements*  *• equity*  *• diversity and transformation*  *• transparency*  *• institutional capacity*  *• demonstrated or assumed competence (as reflected in admission requirements)*  *• admission via RPL.*  *2. In cases of gaps between assumed competence at entrance level and assessed competence at (or shortly after) the commencement of the LLB programme, what policies, procedures and resources are in place to ensure adequate academic development support for students, and adequate training for staff members involved in such support activities? (This includes support in respect of language, numeracy, cognitive and referential skills.)* |

*Guide:*

*A narrative response to this section should be accompanied by a table (or tables) as suggested in the SER template, giving a clear indication of the student enrolment profile for at least the* ***most recent five*** *entrance cohorts.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Graduate Attributes (refer to the LLB standard)**  **a. Knowledge**  *1.How does your LLB degree impart to graduates ‘comprehensive and sound knowledge and understanding’ in relation to:*  *• South African law and the legal system;*  *• the associated values; and*  *• the historical background?*  *2.How, specifically, is ‘comprehensive and sound knowledge and understanding’ achieved in:*  *• basic areas of law – i.e., private, public, mercantile and formal law; international and comparative aspects of law; perspectives on law and the legal profession;*  *• the dynamic nature of law and its relationship with relevant contexts such as political, economic, commercial, social and cultural contexts;*  *• some discipline(s) other than law;*  *• select area(s) or*  *• specialization in one or more areas or*  *• clinical legal education.*  *3.In regard to discipline(s) other than law –*  *(1) what other discipline(s) may students pursue?; and*  *(2) are there any restrictions in the discipline(s) students may choose?*  *4. How many credits (if it applies, minimum and maximum number) are allocated, in (i) the LLB programme and (ii) in a first degree leading to the LLB, to discipline(s) other than law? Justify the ratio of these credits to the total number of credits as providing for an appropriate balance with law-related credits to deliver ‘well-rounded’ graduates.* |

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Graduate Attributes (refer to the LLB standard)**  **b.** **Skills**  *How does your LLB degree, in conceptualisation and overall design, meet the multiple career pathways referred to in the purpose statement in terms of*  *• the development of critical thinking skills?*  *• the development of research skills?*  *• the development of writing skills?* |

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Graduate Attributes (refer to the LLB standard)**  **c. Applied Competence**  *How does the conceptualisation and overall design of your LLB degree address the following areas of applied competence? (Show in detail how each of these areas of competence are taught and assessed in the LLB programme. In cases of the LLB as a second degree where one or more of the applied competences are taught in a first degree, evidence should be provided to show that the teaching and assessment are appropriate for and relevant to fields of law.) Elaboration of each competence is contained in the qualification standard.*  *• Ethics and integrity;*  *• Communication skills and literacy;*  *• Numeracy;*  *• Information technology;*  *• Problem solving;*  *• Self-management and collaboration;*  *• Transfer of acquired knowledge;*  *• Agency and accountability;*  *• Service to the community.* |

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Staffing resources (refer to the Criteria 3, 4 and 8)**  ***Academic staff resources***  *1. How is the academic staff profile, in terms of qualification, experience and levels of appointment, aligned with the programme structure and content to ensure that students are exposed to a diversity of expertise, ideas, styles and approaches, as well as the achievement of all the graduate attributes?*  *2. Taking into account what you consider to be an appropriate staff: student ratio to address all the graduate attributes, what measures are in place to ensure that academic staffing resources are compatible with the number of students registered for the degree and the needs of the curriculum? What is in place to ensure that there is an appropriate ratio of full-time and part-time staff? How are academic staff workloads designed and controlled to ensure a suitable balance between teaching, assessment, consultation, research and other activities? If there are shortcomings in the academic staff profile, what steps are being taken to address them?*  *3.What policies and practice apply to the recruitment, employment, induction, promotion and professional development of academic staff, to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, to promote demographic equity and diversity, to reflect in the academic staff profile the values embedded in the Preamble of the qualification standard, and generally to enhance the quality of the programme?* |

*Guide:*

*Responses to this section need to be accompanied by summary CVs for all staff members involved, and data requested in the tables, as suggested in the SER template. Detailed CVs are normally required only during the site visit.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Staffing resources (refer to the Criteria 3, 4 and 8)**  **Administrative and support staff resources**  *1.What evidence is there that the support staff resources available to the LLB programme (administrative, technical and academic support) are sufficient for its needs, including qualification, experience, and the needs of students, in terms of number and demographic profile?*  *2. What steps are in place to provide for induction of new support staff and development opportunities for all support staff members?*  *3. What measures are taken to ensure that administrative steps, such as admission, registration, recording of results, identification of students at risk, and certification are in line with institutional policy and LLB rules, and are consistent, transparent, equitable and reliable?*  *4.In the case of distance learning programmes: what evidence is there of sufficient administrative and technical staff resources available for effective achievement of specialised tasks of registry, dispatch, management of assignments, record-keeping and other tasks related to students’ needs?* |

*Note: the narrative report should be accompanied by the tables suggested in the SER template.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Teaching and learning strategy (refer to the Criteria 5 and 14)**  *1. How are the teaching and learning needs of the programme reflected in the institution’s central operating policies and procedures, including resource allocation, mode(s) of tuition, as well as staff appointments and promotion?*  *2. What teaching and learning approaches, strategies and methods are applied in the programme, in order to ensure that the purpose of the LLB, and all the graduate attributes associated with the purpose, are addressed and met?*  *3. How are the teaching and learning strategies aligned with the mode(s) of delivery# and the resources required for effective teaching and learning through the tuition mode(s)?*  *4. Where learning in a programme is wholly or partially dependent on the production of non-contact learning materials, what policy and procedures are in place to ensure quality in the conceptualisation, development, and regular evaluation of the materials, as well as the training and development of academic staff responsible for the materials?*  *5. What provision is made for student/graduate evaluation of teaching and assessment in the programme, and input in terms of programme review?*  *6. How does the programme cater for the identification and monitoring of students at risk, and for appropriate support for such students?* |

*Note:*

*Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Criterion 5(ii)) refer to three modes of delivery: ‘contact/distance/e-learning’. In cases where a blended mode is offered, full details of the blend must be provided.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Contexts and conditions for assessment (refer to the LLB standard, and Criteria 6, 13 and 14)**  *1. What variety of assessment methods, including formative and summative assessment, is used in the programme, and what evidence is there to show that they occur regularly throughout the course of study?*  *2. How are students provided with tasks requiring independent research; how are students supported in these tasks; and how are they assessed? List the modules in which independent research is required, and provide examples of the tasks set.*  *3.How does the programme ensure that students engage in authentic problem-solving either in real-life work contexts or simulated teaching and learning activities, and that such activities are assessed by staff suitably qualified to effect meaningful assessment? List the modules in which problem-solving activities are assessed, and provide examples of tasks that are required of students.*  *4. Taking into account the mode(s) of tuition provided, what IT resources are available to students to enable them to achieve the purpose of the qualification? What provision is there for the maintenance of these resources to keep abreast of ever-evolving technology?*  *5. What provision is there in the programme for regular and constructive feedback to enable graduates to have achieved all the attributes required by the qualification standard?*  *6. Taking your responses above to teaching, learning and assessment into account, what evidence is there to show that adequate resources are available so graduates’ learning, research and problem-solving attributes of the qualification are demonstrably achieved? These resources include (but are not limited to):*  *• an adequate student:staff ratio;*  *• adequate physical resources, such as teaching venues and audio-visual equipment;*  *• adequate access to library and e-resources (taking into account the mode(s) of tuition and institutional policy for access to resources);*  *• in cases where clinical legal education is a credit-bearing part of the programme, adequate resources for quality clinical practice and assessment.*  *7. What steps are in place for internal and external moderation/examination of the programme, and what role do these activities play in the quality assurance and review of the programme?*  *8. What evidence is there to show that the assessment system applied in the programme is consistent with institutional policies and rules, and is rigorous, reliable and secure?* |

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Progression ( refer to the LLB standard)**  *1. What policy and practice apply to the transfer of credits from other institutions or other programmes?*  *2. What policy and practice apply to the duration (shelf-life) of credits that may be awarded towards the LLB?*  *3. What vertical articulation (for example, into a master’s programme) and horizontal articulation (for example, into a post-graduate diploma) options are available to the graduate?* |

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Programme effectiveness and impact (refer to LLB standard: Purpose, and Criteria 17, 18 and 19)**  *1. What measures are in place to promote and monitor student throughput and graduation rates, in terms of faculty and institutional targets, and with a view to aiming for a graduate profile that resembles the entrant cohort profile?*  *2. What steps are taken in the programme to ensure, with a view to enhanced employability and in the light of the purpose of the qualification as described in the qualification standard, that graduates have been made aware of the career pathways made available to them through the award of the LLB?*  *3. Given a distinction between graduates’ employability and actual employment, and the purpose of the qualification as set out in the LLB standard, to what extent does the institution promote and practise graduate tracking? How does the institution make use of surveys, impact studies, alumnus tracking, or other means to gauge the status of the programme in the interests of graduates, the profession and other employer bodies? If such measures are taken, how do they influence reviews of the programme itself? Where there are constraints or limitations on the institution’s capacity to track its graduates’ career pathways, what are the constraints, and what measures could be introduced to address them? To what extent does the institution regard graduate career tracking as a responsibility of the profession rather than the institution? How does it know that the purpose of the qualification has been achieved in its graduates?* |

*Note: the narrative response should be accompanied by the tables suggested in the SER template.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **Programme coordination ( refer to the Criterion 10)**  *Programme coordination requires an effective combination of academic leadership, curricular coordination, programme administration controlling teaching, learning and assessment aspects of the programme, and provision for programme review based on internal and external evaluation. What systems and procedures are in place to provide for effective and long-term coordination of your LLB programme(s)?* |

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| 1. **General**   *If, based on your responses above, there are any aspects of your programme that you consider to be above the standard threshold, identify those aspects. (Unless further elaboration is required, it would be sufficient at this point simply to name the aspects and refer to the sections in your report in which they are described.)* |

*Note: the evaluator comment should be informed, but not necessarily governed, by the details included in the SER.*

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

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| **b. General**  *In the event that the programme does not yet meet some aspects of the qualification standard or the associated re-accreditation criteria, or that the self-evaluation has revealed issues meriting attention, please respond to the following questions.*  *1. What aspects of the standard or the re-accreditation criteria need to be addressed?*  *2. What are the major obstacles to addressing those aspects? (Identify and distinguish between obstacles that are a) internal to the faculty/school, b) experienced at institutional level, and c) external to the institution.)*  *3. What plans does the institution/faculty/school/department have for addressing those aspects needing attention?*  *4. Within what timelines will those plans be put into action?*  *5. Within what timelines are the plans likely to be fulfilled?* |

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| ***Evaluator Comment*** |

**Summary comments**

**Are there any instances of above-threshold practice that the institution has not specifically identified?**

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| **Evaluator comment** |

**Are there any aspects recommended as being in need of improvement that the institution has not identified?**

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| **Evaluator comment** |

**Are there any details or data relevant to the programme that the institution has not submitted, that should be requested prior to the institutional site visit?**

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| **Evaluator comment** |

**Are there any details or data relevant to the programme that the institution has not submitted, but should be presented during the institutional site visit?**

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| **Evaluator comment** |