



LAW SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRESS RELEASE

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**LAW SOCIETY WELCOMES REVIEW OF LLB DEGREE TO ENSURE BETTER
LEGAL SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) welcomes the investigation into the effectiveness of the South African LLB degree, announced by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) last month.

'The LSSA's discussions with government and with the university law deans for the past four years regarding a review of the LLB degree have been premised on concerns about the declining quality of law graduates entering the attorneys' profession,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Thoba Poyo-Dlwati and Henri van Rooyen. They add: 'We owe it to the public to ensure that they receive the best professional advice and efficient and professional service from adequately trained and well-equipped legal practitioners.'

For a number of years, the LSSA, with the assistance of the Attorneys Fidelity Fund, has invested significant funds in remedial numeracy, literacy and other training, in an attempt to address some of the inadequacies which it perceived among law graduates. 'We have determined what the minimum requirements should be for a law graduate to make a successful and professional attorney, and our view is that the LLB degree should satisfy these minimum requirements. We will support the CHE with its investigation and comment on the findings and recommendations to ensure the best possible outcome for the public,' say Ms Poyo-Dlwati and Mr Van Rooyen.

The LSSA's Director of Legal Education and Development, Nic Swart, indicates that the four-year LLB which was introduced in 1998, does not necessarily always sufficiently prepare law graduates for practice as attorneys. In addition, Mr Swart says there are large disparities between university law faculties, with one law faculty offering 90 courses and another only 24. 'The LSSA is of the view that the number of subjects is for universities to consider. However, the LSSA would like to see a special recognition of the profession's needs. This does not always happen,' says Mr Swart. As regards the necessity also to review the numeracy and literacy skills of graduates, Mr Swart points out that many students graduating with law degrees are unable to do simple legal research and are not able to draw up basic legal documents.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, THOBA POYO-DLWATI AND HENRI VAN ROOYEN

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Editor's note:

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers – in representing South Africa's 19 200 attorneys and 4 900 candidate attorneys.

In Afrikaans items, please refer to the 'Prokureursorde van Suid-Afrika'.